

News

The Supreme Court upholds the Rajasthan High Court's ban on derogatory remarks regarding judges.



The High Court mandated that judges be taught how to write judgments by the Rajasthan Judicial Academy. After that, the judge appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court on Friday halted the Rajasthan High Court's limitations and disparaging comments made about a special court judge under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act (POCSO Act) [Sonika Purohit v. State of Rajasthan].

An appeal against a May 2025 single-judge order from the Rajasthan High Court that alleged the special judge had neglected her duties and had prepared her ruling using the cut-copy-

paste method was being considered by a bench composed of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi.

The Rajasthan Judicial Academy was directed to train judges in authoring judgments by the High Court, which further stated that the verdict was prepared by a stenographer rather than the judge.

The Supreme Court provided notice to the State about the appeal filed by the relevant judge and delayed the High Court's decision on Friday.

"In four weeks, the returnable notification is due. The Supreme Court decided to temporarily halt any more actions conducted in accordance to the disputed order's orders.

A First Information Report (FIR) alleging POCSO Act violations was submitted in Jaisalmer, which marked the beginning of the case. Two separate trials were held, one against an adult perpetrator and one against a juvenile, based on the same FIR and overlapping evidence. In both cases, the defendants were found guilty by the trial court.

When the juvenile's conviction was challenged before the High Court in a criminal appeal with a suspension of sentence application, the trial court's ruling was thoroughly scrutinized. The High Court came to the conclusion that the paragraphs in the decision against the co-accused and the reasoning in the judgment against the juvenile were almost the same.

The trial judge engaged in a **"cut, copy, paste methodology"** and effectively disregarded her judicial responsibilities, according to the High Court. It even went so far as to say that the verdict appeared to have been prepared by a stenographer rather than the judge.

It therefore ordered that the Rajasthan Judicial Academy train the officer in crafting decisions and that these observations be incorporated into the judge's annual confidential report after demanding her answer.

The Supreme Court heard the judge's appeal of the ruling.

She claimed that because the critical remarks were the product of inadvertent clerical errors and had nothing to do with the real content of the judgment, they were excessively harsh.

Notably, despite refusing to stay the sentence, the High Court upheld the verdict and concluded that there was no wrongdoing on its own.

The petition acknowledged that a few minor clerical errors, such as an incorrect serial number for a prosecution witness, had inadvertently found their way into the decision, despite the fact that the body and content of the testimony had been properly recorded.

It was contended that these mistakes were just administrative in nature rather than significant, and that if the petitioner had been informed of them, the trial court might have fixed them in accordance with Section 362 CrPC.

As a Special Judge in the POCSO Court, she has continuously been able to finish cases as fast as the POCSO Act requires, and the amount of work she has finished shows that she has dedicated almost all of her free time to performing her judicial duties. As a result, the petition claimed that the petitioner's accusation of performing unrelated work was discouraging and depressing.

The High Court's decision was stayed by the top court on Friday.

The petitioner was represented by Senior Advocate Siddhartha Dave, Advocates **Javed Khan**, Vanya Gupta, **Shrey Kapoor**, and Tanisha Kaushal.