

News

Supreme Court Directs P&H Bar Council to Recommend Retired High Court Judge for Overseeing Haryana Bar Polls

In a firm directive reflecting growing concern over the conduct of Bar Association elections in Haryana, the Supreme Court has instructed the Chairman of the Punjab and Haryana Bar Council to furnish, within two days, a concrete proposal nominating a former High Court judge to preside over the electoral process. The Court emphasized that the selected individual should ideally possess deep familiarity with the internal workings of Bar Councils and Associations, to ensure both credibility and competence in the oversight role.

The order came from a bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N. Kotiswar Singh, following the failure of the Bar Council's counsel to produce necessary instructions or feedback, despite earlier opportunities granted by the Court for stakeholders to express their views. Frustrated by the lack of progress, Justice Kant firmly observed, "Enough is enough."

The proceedings arise from two petitions concerning alleged irregularities in Bar elections at the district level—specifically in Karnal and Rohtak. Amid complaints casting doubt on the transparency and integrity of these elections, the Court acknowledged that while it was premature to assess the veracity of competing claims, it was crucial to safeguard the institutional integrity and perception of the Bar Council. As a proactive step, the Court reiterated its earlier suggestion to appoint a retired High Court judge, particularly one with intimate knowledge of Bar institutions, to function as an Election Tribunal responsible for state-wide Bar elections.

Noting continued silence from the Bar Council on the matter, the Court has now set a definitive deadline for action, and scheduled the matter for hearing during the initial working days after May 26.

These developments form part of broader judicial scrutiny into the management of Bar bodies in Haryana. One of the petitions concerns a disqualified candidate challenging his exclusion from the Karnal Bar Association election, while the other raises wider issues linked to the Rohtak Bar. In previous hearings, the Court had voiced strong dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Bar Council and the Karnal Bar Association, even requesting Senior Advocate R.S. Cheema to propose respected members of the Karnal Bar who could assume interim

charge of its operations.

Earlier, on April 15, the Court expressed deep dismay over the state of affairs in Haryana's legal circles and sought suggestions from advocates regarding suitable individuals—preferably retired High Court judges—to head an independent tribunal for conducting fair and impartial Bar elections across the state.

The proceedings have seen the participation of prominent legal voices including Senior Advocates R.S. Cheema, Narender Hooda, Menaka Guruswamy, Rajive Bhalla, Nakul Dewan, R.S. Malik, and others, with advocates-on-record and appearing counsel supporting the deliberations.

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