



2026 INSC 938

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

CRIMINAL APPEAL No. 4109/2026
[Arising out of SLP (Crl.) No. 6801/2026]

RAJEEV SINGH AND ORS.

APPELLANTS

VERSUS

STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH AND ANR.

RESPONDENTS

J U D G M E N T

- 1.** Leave granted.
- 2.** Challenge is mounted by the appellants to an appellate judgment and order¹ dated 11th August, 2025 of a Single Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad², whereby, their appeal³ under Section 14A(2) of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989⁴ has been dismissed.
- 3.** Appellants figured as accused in an FIR⁵ registered at Police Station Kaptanganj, District Azamgarh under Sections 323/34, 324, 504, 506, 307/34, 336, 427, Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Sections

¹ impugned order

² High Court

³ Criminal Appeal No. 5968 of 2025

⁴ 1989 Act

⁵ Case Crime No. 204 of 2022

3(1)(d), 3(1)(r), 3(2)(va) of the SC/ST Act. They were, however, not shown as accused in the chargesheet that was filed upon completion of investigation on 3rd October, 2022. After trial commenced, an application under Section 319 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 was filed by the complainant, respondent no. 2 before us. The Special Judge, SC/ST Act, *vide* an order dated 11th June, 2025, allowed the said application and summoned the appellants to face trial. This order of the Special Judge has been upheld by the High Court *vide* the impugned order.

4. Reading the impugned order, one finds it to be spread over effectively two pages; it has eight paragraphs and fifteen sentences. The first paragraph records presence of the learned counsel for the parties who appeared before the High Court and were heard, as well as perusal of the records by the learned Judge; the second paragraph records provision of law upon invocation whereof, the criminal appeal was presented and the particulars of the order under challenge; the third paragraph records the prosecution story; the fourth paragraph records the submission of the learned counsel for the appellants; the fifth paragraph records the submissions advanced by the learned counsel for the State as well as the complainant, followed by the last three paragraphs which are quoted below:

"...6. I have considered the rival submissions made by the learned counsel for the parties and have gone through the entire record including the impugned order carefully.

7. Having regard to the facts and circumstances of the case and keeping in view the gravity of the offence, evidence, complicity of

the accused, specific allegations levelled against the appellants, this Court is of the opinion that there is no illegality or perversity in the impugned summoning order and the appeal deserves to be dismissed.

8. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.”

5. The impugned order, thus, does not spell out any reason for dismissal of the appeal.
6. Although, we are conscious of the immense burden that Hon’ble Judges of the High Court are required to shoulder, a laconic order (such as the impugned order) can neither be appreciated nor countenanced. Writing brief orders, in the circumstances of the heavy burden being shouldered, could be a prudent approach but not at the cost of reasons. Every judicial order must meet the basic minimum standard required from a Judge of the High Court while disposing of any matter before him, more so in a criminal appeal of the present nature, where the appellants not found involved initially is forced to face trial.
7. We may remind ourselves of the decision of this Court in ***Asma Lateef and Another versus Shabbir Ahmad and Others***⁶, where the observations made in paragraphs 57 and 58, though in respect of civil proceedings, have equal relevance even in respect of adjudication of criminal proceedings. The cardinal principle of the justice delivery system was reiterated that every judicial verdict, which determines the rights and liabilities of the parties to the

⁶ (2024) 4 SCC 696

proceedings, must disclose not only the outcome, but also the reasons therefor, i.e., why one party has succeeded and the other has not. The insistence on reasons for the decision is for the simple reason that it ensures application of mind by the adjudicator to the material on record and also enables the unsuccessful party to test the same before the higher forum. Lack of reasons, indicative of non-application of mind, handicaps the higher court from discerning the basis upon which the conclusion was arrived at and testing its legality and/or correctness.

8. Indeed, the impugned order does not meet the standards of a judgment/order, which is reasoned and speaking in the sense that the affected party is in a position to comprehend what weighed in the mind of the Judge to hold against him and in favour of the other.
9. It was the contention of the appellants before the Single Judge that the chargesheet did not list them as accused because the Investigating Officer found no evidence against them; yet, the Special Judge in a routine manner summoned them to face trial. This being the submission of the appellants, the minimum that was expected and required of the Single Judge was to refer to some evidence led in course of the trial which, upon application of the test laid down by the Constitution Bench of this Court in ***Hardeep Singh versus State of Punjab and Others***⁷, would have necessitated an order for the appellants to face trial. Unfortunately, as noted above, the impugned

⁷ (2014) 3 SCC 92

order does not refer to any evidence, far less cogent evidence, based whereon the High Court could reach a conclusion of the appellants' *prima facie* involvement in the crime.

10. It is on this short ground that we propose to interfere. The impugned order stands quashed. We order a remand of the criminal appeal to the roster Bench of the High Court. Such appeal shall now be disposed of expeditiously, in accordance with law, upon granting opportunity of hearing to the appellants, the State as well as the complainant.
11. The criminal appeal is, accordingly, allowed.
12. Connected applications, if any, stand disposed of.

.....J.
(DIPANKAR DATTA)

.....J.
(SHEEL NAGU)

New Delhi;
AUGUST 31, 2026.