

News

Before reporting, did you confirm? The Karnataka High Court requests a media outlet to be sued by a minister for defamation.



"Do you know what the average reader feels when he sees the headline of the article or report?" the judge inquired.

Ravi Hegde, the chief editor of Kannada Prabha, was questioned by the Karnataka High Court on Wednesday regarding whether or not newspaper reports on specific accusations against Energy Minister KJ George were adequately checked before being published [Sri Ravi Hegde v. Kelachandra Joseph George].

MI Justice Arun inquired as to whether George's reaction was requested or whether a disclaimer had been issued, as well as whether the claims made during a press conference had been confirmed.

Before the information was published, was the accused person's version obtained? Was there a disclaimer saying that the accusations were not their responsibility? Hegde's attorney, Advocate S. Sudharshan, was asked verbally by the judge.

"We solely covered the press conference's statements. Only we have been charged with defamation, even though other media sites reported the same thing. **"No independent opinion has been expressed by the newspaper,"** Sudharshan said.

The impact of such information on the average person was likewise questioned by the Court.

"It seems that the last article is somewhat slanderous. Do you know how the typical reader reacts when he reads the article or report's headline? The judge declared, "The press (is) having a lot of freedom without verifications."

"The report also reveals who has made these allegations," Sudarshan retorted.

The editorial head of Kannada Prabha petitioned the court to dismiss George's defamation lawsuit against the publication for a piece that contained slanderous and malicious accusations against him, according to the Minister.

Ravikrishna Reddy, the head of the Karnataka Rashtra Samithi, and NR Ramesh, a leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), were also named in the defamation complaint on the grounds that they falsely accused George.

According to reports, Reddy and Ramesh complained to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in 2019 that George had accumulated unlawful properties outside of India.

In the same year, George filed a defamation lawsuit against them, alleging that they had made malicious and careless accusations against him. In a similar vein, Kannada Prabha was sued for defamation for publishing the allegedly false claims.

The media organization entered a plea to dismiss this slander case in 2021.

KJ George's attorney argued during yesterday's hearing that an apology during an interview would not be enough to correct false information that was made public.

He went on to say that the apology could really do more damage than the original publishing.

On August 23, the case will be heard again.