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SUPREME COURT

Supreme Court Draws the Line

Abusive Words Alone Do Not Make Out an Obscenity Case

Sheikh Rayees • July 18, 2026

PUBLISHED REPORT

The Supreme Court has made it clear that foul language, however offensive or distasteful, cannot automatically be branded as “obscene” in the eyes of criminal law. A bench of Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice Vipul M. Pancholi held that mere swear words, profanities or vulgar expressions do not, by themselves, attract the offence under Section 294(b) of the Indian Penal Code. For the provision to apply, the prosecution must establish...

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