

# HC judge declares his assets

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Barely three weeks after the government's failed attempt in Parliament to keep the wealth details of judges secret, a Punjab and Haryana High Court judge has made public his family's assets.

"I've nothing to hide," said Justice K Kannan, perhaps the first judge to have voluntarily made his assets public. These include bank deposit (Rs 1.03 lakh), investments (Rs 3.87 lakh) and his wife's bank deposit (Rs 10.59 lakh).

His disclosure came two days after a Karnataka High Court judge, Justice D.V. Shylendra Kumar, wrote in a newspaper article that the majority of judges were not reluctant to reveal their assets.

"Though I hold the view that judges are not in the same league as politicians and do not agree in principle with demands to keep their wealth details in the public domain, yet I want to prove a point that we've nothing to hide," Justice Kannan told HT.

Asked about more judges declaring their assets, Justice Kumar said, "All I emphasise is that it's incorrect to say judges want protection for declaring their assets."

There have been instances of judges declaring assets to their respective chief justices, but this is the first time they are openly expressing views against the reluctance of top judges to declare their assets.

In January, lawyer and judicial accountability activist Prashant Bhushan had written to judges that they should voluntarily come forward to declare assets.

"The Karnataka HC judge has shown a lot courage by telling the world that judges are not opposed to declaring their assets," he said. "Now here is an exemplary case of voluntary disclosure by Justice Kannan."

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