

Not opposed to RTI, says Chief Justice of India

Nagendra Sharma New Delhi, January 18, 2010

The Chief Justice of India, K.G. Balakrishnan, on Sunday said he was not opposed to the Right to Information (RTI) Act and did not want any exemptions from it. Also, the Supreme Court had not yet decided if it should challenge the Delhi High Court judgment on the issue.

In an interview to *HT*, Justice Balakrishnan said the judges were doing a fine job and he didn't agree with the perception that corruption in the judiciary is on the rise.

"We don't want exemption from the RTI Act. A lot of misinformation is being spread about what I've said and not said. We only have a limited problem about a particular kind of information sought from my office," he said. "The problem is that if I divulge information containing opinions about judges' appointments, it'll affect the judiciary's independence."

On last week's high court ruling, which put his office under RTI, the CJI said: "We haven't taken a decision on whether to appeal against the judgment. The full court meeting will not decide. We have many options." He hinted the matter could be referred to Parliament to "solve the problem. We are not interested in a stay on proceedings or anything like that".

Asked about the options, Balakrishnan said: "The collegium (panel of top five SC judges) can decide, so can I. The issue is not within our control, it is for Parliament to do it."

On rising cases of corruption in the judiciary, the CJI said: "Look at the number of judges in the country, we have a vast institution. Corruption in judiciary is very less and everybody will have to accept this fact."

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