

Apologise, SC tells journalist

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THE SUPREME Court on Thursday sought an unconditional apology from a private TV channel reporter who conducted a sting operation and obtained bailable warrants from an Ahmedabad court against the then President, Chief Justice of India, a Supreme Court Judge and a senior advocate in 2004.

"You tender an unconditional apology and then we will consider whether to accept it or not," a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice K G Balakrishnan, told Zee TV reporter Vijay Shekhar, who had claimed to have done it to expose corruption in lower judiciary.

The bench said it was clear from

STING OPERATION

reports of the CBI and the High Court that it was an isolated incident and threatened to initiate criminal action against the reporter for bringing the entire judiciary into disrepute. "Entire criminal justice system was questioned. Everybody believed that this was happening... including the judges," the bench said.

It also gave liberty to the Bar Council of India to take action against the three lawyers allegedly involved in the case without waiting for the outcome of the CBI case.

On behalf of the reporter and

the TV channel, senior counsel Arun Jaitley submitted that sting operation was carried to expose corruption in the lower judiciary and there was no intention to tarnish the image of the judiciary by sensationalising the issue.

Jaitley and advocate Maninder Singh said the channel acted in a very responsible manner as it consulted a senior counsel, brought the matter to the court's notice, submitted the original tapes of the sting operation and then only telecast it.

However, the CJI asked: "What public good he (reporter) has done?...Prima facie the reporter has committed a serious crime." Justice Dalveer Bhandari agreed with him.

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