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I am a public servant: CJI

6 May 2008, 0229 hrs IST, Dhananjay Mahapatra, TNN

NEW DELHI: "I am a public servant," declared Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan settling the dust that had arisen over whether or not judges of the Supreme Court and high courts were public servants or not.

His remarks at the conclusion of the annual conference of Chief Justices of the high courts and the chief ministers had opened a big debate over the status of the judges of the higher and superior judiciary.

The clarification from the CJI came on the day when the judiciary took the historic first step to allow TV cameras to videograph the "people's court" proceedings held inside the SC's court rooms, which are always out of bound for cameras.

Speaking to The Times of India, Justice Balakrishnan laughed away the question whether judges of the SC and the HCs were public servants or not.

"How can any judge argue that he is not a public servant?" he counter questioned. It is a well settled position of law, as laid down in the five-judge constitution bench judgment of the Supreme Court in the Veeraswamy case, that judges of the high courts and the Supreme Court were public servants, he said.

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