

THE HINDU

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Corruption among judges will be dealt with Sandeep Joshi

Statutory provisions coming: Bhardwaj

Evolve foolproof appointment criteria: Jaitley

Judiciary should be more humane towards the poor: D. Raja

NEW DELHI: The Centre is planning to have statutory provisions to deal with cases of corruption and misconduct involving judges, Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj said on Tuesday.

He was replying to a debate in the Rajya Sabha, where the High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2009 Bill was passed after a debate. It was approved by the Lok Sabha last week.

The Bill proposes to increase the salary of the Chief Justice of India from Rs. 33,000 to Rs.1 lakh per month and that of other apex court judges from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 90,000. The salaries of the Chief Justices of High Courts will be hiked from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 90,000 and that of High Court judges from Rs. 26,000 to Rs.80,000.

Mr. Bhardwaj said the services of judges should not be measured in terms of the salary they received. "This is a nominal increase considering the dignity of the office of judiciary. This is a token increase after the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations."

Replying to members' demand for making the appointment of judges more fair and objective, he said there was a plea for setting up a broad-based National Judicial Commission upon which the consensus of political parties needed to be built.

Pointing out that judicial activism was good for democracy, Mr. Bhardwaj said Parliament was the supreme arbiter of policy-related matters.

Earlier, initiating the debate, Arun Jaitley (BJP) sought immediate changes in the appointment of judges and also a mechanism to look into allegations of misdemeanour. "The government needs to improve the quality of judges by evolving foolproof criteria for appointment. Discretion of the collegium in appointment of judges could be restricted through a legislative procedure," he said pointing to a fall in the quality and standards of judges.

Demanding the immediate formation of the National Judicial Commission, Ram Jethmalani (nominated) said the integrity of judges was increasingly being questioned and it was the duty of the Bar to expose corrupt judges. "The setting up of the National Judicial Commission is an imperative requirement of our legal system," he said, adding "jurisprudence is dead" and "judgments are becoming unreadable."

D. Raja (CPI) said the judiciary should be more humane towards the poor and should provide timely justice to all. "Judges should have integrity and should not suppress dissent as it is the fundamental right of the common man to protest," he said and called for judicial reforms. He also favoured judges disclosing their assets.