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Hindustan Times Follow-up

Judiciary opaque, courts trouble

Punjab High Court malpractices are the result of a larger problem

Nagendar Sharma
New Delhi, June 4

NO SITTING high court or Supreme Court judge has been sacked so far in the 60 years since Independence, and not for the lack of errant judges. Some blame the lengthy process for it, others say there is no will.

The Punjab vigilance depart-

ment gave the high court of the state a damning report about some judicial malpractices and referred to some judges without linking the two. But no action has been taken a year since.

Hindustan Times reported that two high court judges were mentioned in conversations between two private persons about judicial malpractices like

case list fixing and organising favourable hearings.

Despite a clear recommendation from the chief justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court to transfer Justice Mehtab Singh Gill, one of the two judges mentioned, nothing happened.

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NOT ACCOUNTABLE?

■ In January, the Supreme Court refused to accept the Central Information Commission's order asking it to furnish details under the RTI whether judges declare their assets to the CJI or not. It challenged the order in Delhi High Court, where a decision is pending

■ The judiciary has resisted changes in the four-decade-old Judges Inquiry Act, 1968

■ In 1993, appointments and promotions of judges were taken over by the judiciary, ending the government's say in the matter

“A roadmap for judicial reform to be outlined in six months and implemented in a time-bound manner.” **PRESIDENT PRATIBHA PATIL**

“The credibility of the judiciary is at stake. I am not commenting on any individual case, but rising allegations of corruption have dented the judiciary's image.”

J.S. VERMA, Former CJI

“The issue of corruption in judiciary has to be addressed by both the govt and the judiciary. No public authority can say I am not accountable to society, to the nation and to the system.”

M. VEERAPPA MOILY, Law Minister

These comments came in response to a Hindustan Times exclusive on a vigilance department report on malpractices in Punjab and Haryana High Court

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