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Delhi HC defers hearing in Judges assets case to March 17

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The Delhi High Court deferred the hearing on a petition filed by the Supreme Court Registry challenging a Central Information Commission(CIC) order, directing the judges of the apex court to declare their assets.

Justice S Ravinder Bhat adjourned the matter and posted it for further hearing on March 17.

Acting on the petition filed by the Delhi High Court Bar association(DHBA) which wanted to be a party in the case, the court issued notice to the respondents and asked them to file their reply by the next date of hearing.

Mr Gaurav Duggal, lawyer for the Supreme Court Registry, opposed the plea of the Bar Association and said there was no need to make them a party at this stage.

The Supreme Court in its affidavit had said declaration of assets by its judges to the Chief Justice were 'personal' information which could not be revealed under the Right to Information Act.

The apex court, in a submission before the High Court, however, had made it clear that its judges are not opposed to declaring their assets but there is no legal obligation to do so as this is purely personal information which has no link with the public activity.

Earlier, the High Court had appointed senior advocate Fali Nariman to assist them in the matter but he declined to intervene as he found himself biased in his opinion and wanted the judges to make their assets public.

One Mr Aggarwal had sought the information from the Supreme Court that whether the judges who are governed by their own law are filing any details of their personal assets to the Chief Justice of India and how many judges have declared their assets so far.

The Supreme Court, however, refused to answer his query stating that the CJI did not come under the purview of the RTI Act. The CIC then directed the Supreme Court to furnish the information sought by Mr Aggarwal.

The apex court challenged the CIC's order in the High Court and the matter is since then pending in the Delhi High Court.

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