

## Activists want judges' assets made public

TNN 18 July 2009, 02:33am IST

NEW DELHI: Eminent jurists, social activists and human rights activists came together on Friday to demand substantive change in the Centre's proposed legislation on declaration of assets by judges of the higher judiciary saying it would serve no purpose unless they were forced to make it public.

"Unless the declaration of assets of judges or other public servants are made known to the people, such declaration will not serve any purpose," said the statement signed by eminent lawyers Fali S Nariman, Shanti Bhushan, Anil Divan and Justice Rajinder Sachar.

They were joined by activists including Aruna Roy, Arvind Kejriwal, Jean Dreze and Kuldip Nayar in trashing the apprehension of the judges that they would be harassed by misguided litigants.

Indicating that there was enough remedies in law against such frivolous litigation, they said: "Making baseless allegations is civil and criminal defamation for which action can be taken by judges more easily than other persons."

"Only a public and annual declaration of assets as is done by all federal judges of the US including the judges of the US Supreme Court would ensure that the objective of transparency through this proposed Bill is achieved," they said.

As for protection of reputation of judges, they said: "The reputation of persons in public office is not sullied by baseless allegations of motivated persons. It is built upon their actions and behaviour, which is generally known."