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Judges can't reveal assets like netas: HC

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court on Tuesday observed that judges couldn't be put on the same footing as MPs and MLAs on the issue of asset declaration since such information may be misused.

"Public interest standard for the judiciary has to be different from other institutions. So judges have to be treated differently from people's representative on the issue," Justice S Ravindra Bhat said while hearing an RTI applicant who argued that that judges, like MPs and MLAs, should declare their assets.

HC was hearing a petition filed by the Supreme Court challenging the January 2006 order passed by the CIC directing the apex court to reveal information pertaining to assets declared by its judges before the Chief Justice.

The high court had on January 19 stayed CIC's order in which the commission had held that the office of Chief Justice of India comes within the ambit of the RTI Act and information given to CJI has to be revealed to the RTI applicant. The court opined that judiciary should be liberated from all kinds of fear that personal information of judges might be misused if divulged under RTI Act, echoing the argument put forward by the Supreme Court in its submissions before HC.

"Judges have to work according to law and without fear. For the proper functioning of judiciary it has to be liberated from all kinds of fear. Election Commission and other such institutions are vibrant because they are independent," Justice Bhat observed, also pointing out that if a judge refused to disclose his assets there was no law that can force him to do so.

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