

PM's soft jibe at Judiciary, don't be 'Perception-Driven'

Written by JPNN

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Jehlum Post News Network/New Delhi /Apr 05, 2015/Advising judiciary to avoid "perception-driven" verdicts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday said it should have an internal mechanism of "self-assessment" as judges are considered "divine" and seldom face any criticism unlike the political class. Addressing a conference of top judges from across the country here, he said while the judiciary is getting powerful, it is necessary that it also becomes "perfect" to live up to the expectations of the people. "It is easy to deliver judgements based on the law and the Constitution. There is a need to be cautious against perception-driven verdicts," he said, adding that "perceptions are often driven by five star activists". Noting that the judiciary is considered "divine" and next only to the God, he advised it to have an internal mechanism for self-assessment, which he said, is a "difficult" task. "We (the political class) are lucky that people watch us, assess us and rip us apart. You (Judiciary) are not as lucky. "If you order a person to death, he also comes out and says that he believes in the judiciary...When there is little scope for criticism, the need of the hour is to develop an internal mechanism for self-assessment where the government and the politicians have no role," the Prime Minister said addressing the joint conference of Chief Justices of the 24 High Courts and Chief Ministers. He said if such a mechanism is not evolved and the faith in the judiciary is affected even a little bit, it will hurt the nation. "If the politicians or the government make a mistake, there is a scope to repair the damage by the judiciary. But if you commit a mistake, then everthing will end," he said. Modi's remarks came close on the heels of an impeachment motion being moved in Parliament against a judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court for alleged sexual harassmtent of a woman judicial officer. Talking about the scrutiny that the government and political class faces, the Prime Minister said the Executive has set up institutions like Election Commission, RTI and Lokpal despite knowing that these would place a check on the Executive. "Politicians are under increased scrutiny today. Earlier, items, which did not find a place even in gossip columns of newspapers, become breaking news today," he said.

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He also favoured a comprehensive review of the system of government-appointed Tribunals to assess their efficacy and effectiveness. Committed to scrap obsolete Acts, Modi said laws are sometimes not drafted well and therefore lead to multiple interpretations. "There should be minimum grey areas, and therefore, drafting of laws requires special attention," he said, adding that though no law can have "zero defect", the grey areas in legislations can be reduced. Noting that nearly 1700 redundant laws have been identified for repeal, he said he hopes to repeal one redundant law per day in his tenure. He said good infrastructure for the Judiciary was a priority for the government, and an amount of Rs 9749 crore had been earmarked for strengthening the Judiciary under the 14th Finance Commission. He hoped that states would not divert the funds meant for improving judicial infrastructure given under the 14th Finance Commission. Under the Digital India Programme, technology should be deployed to bring about a qualitative change in the Judiciary, the Prime Minister said. He stressed that quality manpower was required for the Judiciary as he voiced concern about the Human Resource as also physical infrastructure. Modi stressed the need for more educational institutions dealing with law and legal services.

Without going into the details of pendency in litigation and corruption in the Judiciary, Modi hoped the conclave of judges would suggest some fresh approaches to deal with these issues. He said Lok Adalats were an effective way of dispensing justice for the common man, and this mechanism should be strengthened further. Laying stress on the importance of family courts, Modi said such institutions were necessary as families were fast breaking up and there was a need to check the trend. He stressed the need for preparing for emerging areas of litigation such as maritime law and cyber crime. He said acquaintance with forensic science is now a must for those associated with the legal profession. Agency