

## No need for privacy in court, says SC

This was a follow-up to their March order to have CCTVs installed inside courtrooms and at vantage points within court complexes in at least two districts across States and Union Territories.

Dismissing apprehensions raised that such recordings would intrude into the privacy of judicial minds in action, Justice Goel responded, "There is no privacy in a court. We are sitting here for all."

Appearing for the government, Additional Solicitor General Pinky Anand submitted that the government has "already taken steps" and the financial outlay of the project is under preparation.

Justice Goel said the government should "not prolong matters". The court sought a report from Ms. Anand in two days' time on the progress made so far.

The Bench had asked why the judiciary in India should be considered any different from the judges of other countries who do not consider recording of proceedings a violation of privacy of court proceedings.

The Bench has even mulled the possibility of recording tribunal proceedings.

The court has expanded the scope of a petition filed by Pradyuman Bisht for installing CCTV cameras in criminal courts as a measure to ensure fair trials.

On March 28, the Supreme Court had directed that in at least "two districts in every State/Union Territory (with the exception of small States/Union Territories where it may be considered to be difficult to do so by the concerned High Courts) CCTV cameras (without audio recording) may be installed inside the courts and at such important locations of the court complexes as may be considered appropriate".

### Not under RTI

"Monitor thereof may be in the chamber of the District and Session Judge concerned. Location of the district courts and any other issues concerning the subject may be decided by the respective High Courts. We make it clear that the footage of the CCTV camera will not be available under the RTI and will not be supplied to anyone without permission of the High Court concerned," the Supreme Court had ordered.

The court had ordered that the installation of such cameras should be completed within three months. It said the Registrar Generals of the respective High Courts should hand over a status report to the Secretary General of the apex court a month after the installations are completed.

END