

CJI under RTI

May 4, 2020

Why is it in the news?

- In a major victory to the RTI Act, **Supreme Court declared itself as a public authority under RTI**. The case which has been sub-judice for the past 10 years has finally been resolved in favour of Transparency and Disclosure.

RTI Act

- RTI Act is an act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out the practical regime of right to information for citizens.
- Under the provisions of the Act, any citizen of India may request information from a “public authority” which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days.
- Judgment of SC
- The Supreme Court upheld the 2010 judgment of the Delhi High Court and held that the office of the Chief Justice of India comes under the definition of “public authority” under the RTI Act, 2005.
- SC bench led by CJI Ranjan Gogoi declared that “transparency doesn’t undermine judicial independence”.
- This judgment enables the disclosure of information such as the judges’ personal assets.
- The information related to issues such as **judicial appointments** will also be subject to the test of public interest.
- The Bench unanimously argued that the right to know under the RTI Act was **not absolute** and this had to be balanced with the right of privacy of judges. Hence RTI can’t be used as a tool of surveillance.