

SC: Corruption a gigantic problem

R. SEDHURAMAN/LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 28

Observing that corruption among public servants was on the rise, the Supreme Court has confirmed the conviction of a patwari from Ferozpur district, but reduced the sentence from two years to one year.

“Day in and day out, the gigantic problem of corruption in the public servants is on the increase. Large-scale corruption retards the nation-building activities and everyone has to suffer on that count,” a Bench comprising Justices Arijit Pasayat and Asok Kumar Ganguly said in their verdict yesterday in the Surain Singh versus State of Punjab case.

The Bench quoted further from an earlier verdict that “corruption is corroding like cancerous lymph nodes the vital veins of the body politics, social fabric of efficiency in the public service and demoralising the honest officers.”

The efficiency in public service would improve only when the public servant devoted his sincere attention and did his duty diligently, truthfully, honestly and devoted himself assiduously to the performance of the duties of his post, it said.

Surain Singh, patwari of Gudher Dhandi circle, had been convicted in May 1996 by the trial court, which was subsequently confirmed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court, for accepting a bribe of Rs 300 for entering a mutation on the basis of a sale deed.

“Considering the peculiar facts of the case, we are of the view that the custodial sentence of one year, which is minimum prescribed, would meet the ends of justice,” the Bench said.