RTI applicant seeks Taliban address, email!

Himaashi Dhawan | TNN

New Delhi: The Taliban has evoked fear, spawned an industry of literature and movies and even inspired "shock and awe". However, the curiosity it has inspired in Pune-based Kailash Pyarelal Nanda appears to be unmatched.

Nanda had filed an RTI application with the Supreme Court asking for the email and postal address of the Taliban besides the status of her petition.

Understandably, unable to provide answers to the RTI query, the central public information officer of the Supreme Court preferred to remain silent on the address issue and just gave the status of her PIL, mentioning that her petition was not found to be covered under the PIL guidelines and hence 'lodged' (kept in file). The appellate authority too had endorsed the decision.

Undeterred by the "snub", Nanda moved the Central Information Commission demanding a reply to her queries. At the hearing before the CIC, applicant's son Rajiv submitted that they wanted their grievance to be referred to CBI or any other independent agency for investigation as they had no faith in the local police. He expressed his disappointment that the apex court did not find merit in the PIL filed by them.

Chief information commissioner Satyananda Mishra, after hearing the arguments, told him that the status of the PIL had been communicated to his mother.

"As far as the address of the Taliban is concerned, it is understandable that the CPIO could not have provided any such information as there is no such information in existence," Mishra said while dismissing the plea.

Got no records of RTI 'misuse', says PMO

PM Manmohan Singh's recent speech expressing concern over frivolous and vexatious RTI applications, infringement of personal privacy and bringing public private partnerships under the RTI Act had sparked off a debate and was severely criticized by activists. Now, the PMO has said that it had no basis for making such a remark. In reply to an RTI application asking for documents on the basis of which these "concerns" were raised, the PMO said no such records were available with it. The response was based on an application by Dev Ashish Bhattacharya. When asked for available records on the basis of which the PM made the "observations" the PMO said, "No such information is available on the records held by this office."