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## Ghaziabad judges scam to be heard in open court

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday posted for hearing in an open court on July 17 a petition seeking a CBI probe into what is called the “Ghaziabad judges scam”.

The case allegedly involves 26 judges — one Supreme Court judge, seven High Court judges, six retired High Court judges, ten serving district judges and two retired district judges.

The decision to hear the matter in an open court was taken after a brief hearing in the chambers of Chief Justice K. G. Balakrishnan. The Bench included Justice P. Sathasivam and Justice J. M. Panchal. The Court had issued notice to Solicitor-General G. E. Vahanvati last week to render assistance in the matter.

### Modalities discussed

On Monday, Mr. Vahanvati along with senior counsel Shanti Bhushan, Anil Divan and M. N. Krishnamani, appearing for the petitioners, discussed the modalities — should the case be probed by the CBI or a committee of judges?

The Chief Justice is understood to have told counsel that there should not be any impression that the Court was not inclined to hear the matter in an open court because judicial officers were involved. The Bench then agreed to hear the petition in an open court. The petitioners — Nahar Singh Yadav, advocate and Chairman of Adhivakta Kalyan Trust; and the Bar Association of Ghaziabad, through its Chairman Devendra Sharma — said the case related to alleged misappropriation of Rs.23 crore from the Provident Fund contributions of Class IV employees with the “connivance” of officials and judges.

### CBI probe demand

They said certain allegations against judicial officers and other high-ranking officials of the Ghaziabad court could potentially taint the image of the judiciary. The Allahabad High Court rejected their petition for a CBI probe. The present appeal was directed against that order.

The Bench will also hear on July 17 a writ petition filed by Transparency International (India) seeking a CBI probe into the scam. It said no fetters should be placed in the investigation merely because the persons involved “are judicial officers”. Media reports had created an impression that an attempt was being made to brush this scam under the carpet. It said any action to alter the regular course of investigation in favour of the judicial officers would be unreasonable and arbitrary.

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