

SC to hear UP scam involving judges in open court on July 17

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The supreme court on Monday reached a "unanimous" agreement that the infamous UP provident fund scam, unearthed from a Ghaziabad court recently allegedly involving several sitting and retired judges, needed to be probed thoroughly.

Following in-chamber deliberations that took place as ordered earlier, a Bench headed by Chief Justice K G Balakrishnan said further hearing in the matter would be held in an open court on July 17.

The Adhivakta Kalyan Trust, Ghaziabad, and Bar Association of Ghaziabad had sought a judicial probe into the corruption case. They referred to an FIR involving withdrawal of crores of rupees from the provident fund account of third- and fourth-grade employees in Ghaziabad region between 2001 and 2008.

However, on Saturday, another petition by Transparency International was filed, which opposed the idea of holding a probe into the scam by a retired or sitting judge of the apex court and instead sought an "unfettered probe".

The organisation submitted that a judicial probe would not only be against the Code of Criminal Procedure but would further strengthen the growing public perception that judiciary appears to be closing ranks to prevent any investigation into the scam.

During the last hearing, senior advocate Fali S Nariman, appearing for the lawyers' bodies, had described the scam as a "serious matter." The scam in which names of 26 members of judiciary, including an apex court judge and seven Allahabad High Court judges, had cropped up could not be probed either by the police or the CBI, he contended.