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'SABHARWAL'S SONS GOT FAVOURS FROM MULAYAM GOVT'

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A GROUP of jurists and intellectuals said on Wednesday that they had official documents to prove that the companies run by the sons of former Chief Justice of India Y.K. Sabharwal benefited from out-of-turn allotment of institutional and industrial plots in Noida in 2004-06, at rates far below the market price.

The group, known as Campaign for Judicial Accountability (CJA), said the documents, procured from the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority, prove the previous Uttar Pradesh government showed unjustified haste in the allotment of plots to Justice Sabharwal's sons. It said it would send the documents, along with its petition, to the Chief Justice of India, seeking a thorough probe into the allegations of misuse of office by Justice Sabharwal.

"In his signed article earlier this month, Mr Sabharwal had refuted the allegation of out-of-turn allotment of plots to his family in Noida. Now, it is clear from the official documents that not only is it a clear case of favouritism, but the former CJI's family also got these plots at rates far below the market price," campaign leader and Supreme Court lawyer Prashant Bhushan said.

Justice Sabharwal, in an article in an English daily on September 2, had described the plot allotment allegations as conspiracy theory, saying: "Four industrial plots were allotted to my sons at different points of time by the Noida Authority. These allotments were made in 1999, 2000 and 2006. All allotments were under schemes where entrepreneurs making investments and generating employment there were allotted plots. These were not stray, solitary or

discretionary allotments. Under these schemes, thousands of allotments were made at pre-determined prices.”

The CJA has challenged Justice Sabharwal’s argument, saying: “Documents show Pawan Impex Limited, one of the companies of Sabharwal’s sons, was invited to discuss the location of a 12,000 square metre institutional plot within four days of the application being deposited on October 30, 2004. This happened despite the fact that the company’s profits and losses were nil for two years — 2003 and 2004.”

It added: “The application of a company, Softedge Solutions Private Limited, was rejected by the Noida Authority on the grounds that it did not have sufficient technical experience and tie-ups in the field of IT. But Chetan Sabharwal, with nil business, no previous track record in IT, sails through with an institutional plot in Sector 125 for setting up a BPO.”

Bhushan also questioned the price at which the plot was allotted. “Justice Sabharwal says the plot was purchased at the allotment price of Rs 3,700 per square metre. The current circle rate in Sector 125 is Rs 11,000 per square metre and the market rate is over Rs 30,000 per square metre there,” he said.

The CJA said it would also question the allotment of a 12,000 square metre industrial plot to Sabs Exports, another company belonging to Justice Sabharwal’s sons, in Sector 68. “Sabs Exports already had three plots in Sector 63 of 800 square metres each. In November 2006, the company was allotted a huge plot of 12,000 square metres within days of applying. A bogus interview was conducted and the plot was theirs at a throwaway rate of Rs 4,000 per square metre. The circle rate in Sector 68 is Rs 8,000 per square metre and the market rate is Rs 20,000 per square metre,” the CJA statement said.