

Supreme Court notice to government on Mayawati plea

The Supreme Court Thursday issued notice to the union government on a plea by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati to scrap a corruption case against her for owning properties exceeding her legal income.

A bench of Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justices R.V. Raveendran and M.K. Sharma also issued notice to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) asking why the case should not be dismissed.

While seeking replies by the government and the CBI, the bench adjourned the hearing on Mayawati's plea to July 14.

In her petition for scrapping the case filed by the CBI, Mayawati alleged that the ongoing probe against her was aimed at 'character assassination' and the union government was misusing the investigating agency to settle political scores.

The CBI had registered a FIR against Mayawati Oct 5, 2003, on the direction of the apex court that had ordered the agency to investigate the Taj Heritage Corridor scam -- which involved the grant of land free of cost to Jaypee Industries to construct an eight-lane Taj expressway linking Agra to New Delhi.

The state government waived stamp duty worth about Rs.500 million and also gave the contractor exclusive rights to construct commercial hubs, including a couple of five-star hotels, along the expressway.

In her petition to the apex court, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief contended that the FIR lodged against her was illegal as no sanction was taken from the state and the agency had misinterpreted the apex court order which only directed investigation into the Taj Corridor case.

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