

HARYANA SIC SEEKS COMMENT ON REJOINDERS FROM KHEMKA

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Provisions related to UPSC, State PSCs and Civil Services in India, and their Role in Democracy

Ashok Khemka

The Haryana State Information Commission (SIC) has issued a notice, asking the office of the Chief Secretary (Political Department), and the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD), to give their comments on the rejoinders filed by senior IAS officer Ashok Khemka on the matter of an appeal under the Right to Information Act, in which he has sought initiation of “penal action” under Section 20 of the Act.

The matter pertains to the seeking of information relating to the Justice S.N. Dhingra Inquiry Commission set up in May 2015 to probe granting of Change of Land Use (CLU) licences in villages in Gurgaon during the rule of the Bhupinder Singh Hooda-led Congress government, including that between Congress leader Sonia Gandhi’s son-in-law Robert Vadra’s Sky Light Hospitality and real estate developer DLF Universal Limited. The one-man Commission submitted its report to the State government on August 31, 2016.

Mr. Khemka, Principal Secretary, Archaeological Department, Haryana, had in September 2020 approached the SIC with an appeal, complaining that complete information had not been not furnished by the respondents — the State Public Information Officer; the office of the Chief Secretary, Haryana (Political Department); and the office of the Director, Town and Country Planning Department, with regard to his application under the RTI Act.

Mr. Khemka said he had sought five-point information, including the total amount paid to Tushar Mehta, advocate, presently Solicitor-General of India, in the defence of CWP No.24139 of 2016 titled as “Bhupinder Singh Hooda vs State of Haryana and others” in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Mr. Khemka came to the limelight after he cancelled the mutation of a land deal between Mr.Vadra’s company and DLF.

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