



Reviving Nehru's newspaper an emotional issue: Congress

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NEW DELHI: After Janata Party chief Subramanian Swamy urged the Election Commission to de-recognise the Congress for giving an interest-free loan to Associated Journals, the Congress said it was an "emotional issue".

Congress general secretary Janardan Dwivedi said reviving National Herald, founded by Jawaharlal Nehru, was an emotional issue for it and no commercial profit accrued to the party from the loan.

A day after the Congress admitted it gave the loan to the publisher of the National Herald, Swamy's petition to the poll panel said: "This loan (of such a substantial amount) is in violation of the guidelines and rules that has to be mandatorily followed by political parties for registration as well as recognition. Section 29A to C of the RPA (1951) and Section 13A of Income Tax Act (1961) do not make any provision for a political party to extend loans to companies, with or without interest."

After filing the petition, Mr Swamy tweeted: "A Rajiv Gandhi loyalist just called me on a safe phone to tell me that the AICC loan is illegal because CWC was not told!! No Minutes!"

"The Congress party has prima facie committed an offence under the electoral law as well as the income tax law for which it is necessary for you to hold hearings," said Mr Swamy's petition.

"The Election Commission therefore must decide under Paragraph 16-A of the said Symbol Order to de-recognise the All India Congress Party," it said.

"The Congress has done its duty in supporting The Associated Journals Ltd to help initiate a process to bring the newspaper back to health," Mr Dwivedi had said.

"The BJP clearly demands an inquiry into the matter, and demands that the Congress face the truth and answer questions, rather than running away for the ninth or tenth time on major critical issues of corruption," said BJP spokesperson Nirmala Sitharaman.

India Against Corruption leader Arvind Kejriwal said: "The issue needs to be probed."

Mr Swamy Thursday alleged "wrongdoing" by Congress president Sonia Gandhi and party general secretary Rahul Gandhi, which he said had led to the takeover of Herald House in Delhi.

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