

KHUSHWANT SINGH
PRESIDENT, ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS AND LITERATURE
and
CHAIRMAN, FOUNDATION OF SAARC WRITERS AND LITERATURE

Khushwant Singh seeks nod to set up welfare centres named after father

HAMARI JAMATIA
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A CHAIN of health centres in the Capital is likely to be named after Sir Sobha Singh, father of noted writer Khushwant Singh, soon. Singh, who lived from 1890 to 1978, had built many facilities in Delhi after it was made the country's capital city in 1911.

Khushwant Singh, on behalf of Sir Sobha Singh Public Charitable Trust, has told the government that he was interested in setting up health centres in the Capital on the condition that they are named after his father.

In a letter written to the government on September 13, 2009, the writer wrote, "I write to ask if you would help us with some more projects in and around Delhi, such as day and night shelters, free schools, dharamshalas, dispensaries and polyclinics, which we will build and hand over to government agencies provided, of course, the building carries the name of our father at a prominent place."

The Delhi government forwarded the letter to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), which was planning to build a health



Author Khushwant Singh has also sought help for setting up free schools and shelters EXPRESS ARCHIVE

facility at Qutubgarh. Following further correspondence between the trust and the corporation, the centre has been granted primary approval.

They have now come up with an agreement, which is awaiting final approval from the MCD's political wing. If the agreement comes through, a clinic and maternity home in Qutubgarh will be named Sir Sobha Singh Municipal Polyclinic-cum-Maternity Home.

Nearly a dozen villages in the area will benefit from the project, once it is completed. Though the local residents had originally wanted a 100-bed hospital in the place of an old dispensary in the area, the

MCD has given the consent for converting it into the polyclinic-cum-maternity home. This move is likely to help the municipal corporation too, because it is currently facing a shortage of funds.

The trust has reportedly agreed to bear the expense of building the hospital, and hand it over to the MCD after its completion. The institution would be spread over an area of 4.11 acres.

A senior MCD official said all construction plans will be approved by the corporation first. "Since it is the duty of the MCD to provide health care, the civic body has decided to go in for a public-private partnership, so such clinics can come up in the city," he said.