

Supreme Court to hear sealing plea on Wednesday

The Supreme Court will hear on Wednesday a central government petition seeking mercy for the 25,000 traders who had given an undertaking that they would stop commercial activity in the capital's residential areas.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Y.K. Sabharwal fixed the date of hearing after Solicitor General G.E. Vahanvati made a mention about their petition and pleaded for early listing.

The central government in its petition submitted that the 25,000 traders who had filed the affidavits to stop commercial activity were covered under the two government notifications issued on Sep 7 and 15 granting exemption from the sealing operation.

The petition said the court had already allowed hundreds of thousands of traders who had not given any such undertaking but were covered by the notifications. It said all traders should be treated alike and benefits should be extended uniformly.

The central government, however, made it clear that about 5,000 traders who had not given an undertaking and were not covered by the two notifications would have to stop their commercial activity and that steps would be taken to seal these premises.

In another application, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) sought similar relief. It stated that after the Supreme Court rejected the petition on Sep 6, it had commenced the sealing operation and so far about 266 establishments, including huge showrooms, shopping malls, large offices and automobile showrooms, had been closed.

It said the situation prevailing now and the one before Nov 6 were entirely different. The law and order situation had been brought under control and it did not face any problem in continuing with the sealing operation.

The MCD, however, requested the court to grant permission to de-seal the premises that were already sealed in the event of the court permitting those who had given undertaking to continue the commercial activity.

The Supreme Court had on Nov 6 directed the capital's civic authorities to immediately resume the sealing drive and had severely castigated them for their inability to handle the situation.

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