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Centre to push judges' appointments

SC Collegium recommendations have been pending for six months

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday offered to decide in three months the Supreme Court Collegium recommendations for appointment of judges in the High Courts pending with it for over half a year.

Appearing before a Special Bench of Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde and Justices S.K. Kaul and Surya Kant, Attorney-General K.K.

Venugopal made a statement that the High Courts continued to have 220 vacancies because their collegiums had not forwarded any names. Mr. Venugopal said those collegiums should be put on a clock to forward their recommendations.

'Share timeline'

Chief Justice Bobde shot back saying it would be helpful if the government shared its own timeline at each



K.K. Venugopal

stage of the appointment process.

"There are two timelines. One for the government and another for the HCs. The Chief Justice says he will deal with the High Court timelines. As regards the timeline

for the government, you tell us on the next date... We are only asking you to tell us the timeline within which the government and the judiciary will cooperate," Justice Kaul intervened.

Mr. Venugopal said the Memorandum of Procedure guided the government and the judiciary through the appointment process. The procedure did not insist on a deadline but only loosely says the process should be completed within a reasonable time.

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Centre to push HC judges' appointments

On March 23, the Bench had asked the government to come clear on the status of 55 recommendations made by the collegium for judicial appointments to various High Courts six months to nearly a year-and-a-half ago.

Forty-four of the pending recommendations were made to fill up vacancies in Calcutta, Madhya Pradesh, Gauhati, Rajasthan and Pun-

jab High Courts. Every one of these recommendations had been pending with the government for over seven months to a year. Recommendations of names made by the collegium to the Delhi High Court had been pending for seven months. "This is a matter of grave concern ... When do you propose to take a decision?" the Bench addressed Mr. Venugopal.