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Panel at work to check stubble burning: Centre

There are many Commissions working but they have to be effective, says CJI

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government informed the Supreme Court on Friday that the new Commission to check stubble burning by farmers in the adjoining States of Delhi would start functioning this day.

"The Commission will start functioning from today [November 6] itself," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde.

Chief Justice Bobde said, "There are many Commissions working, but at the end

they have to be effective".

The Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance of 2020 was promulgated by the Centre recently.

It is meant to both prevent and monitor stubble burning by farmers of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The air pollution caused by the indiscriminate burning of fields is choking Delhi.

Former Delhi Chief Secretary M.M. Kutty was appointed chairperson of this Commission. The members are: Mukesh Khare of the Indian

Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi; Ramesh K.J., Ex-Director General, India Meteorological Department; and A.K. Nautiyal, a joint secretary in the Ministry. Ajay Mathur, Director General, The Energy Resources Institute, and Ashish Dhawan of the Air Pollution Action Group have been appointed as representatives of NGOs.

"We have representation from NGOs. They are experts in the field", Mr. Mehta submitted.

During the hearing, Chief Justice Bobde reminded that it was for the government to

take timely steps to stop pollution. The government had the resources and money. "Ultimately we are a court of law. A court of law has limitations, not of power, but functionality", he remarked.

'Pollution has worsened'
Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for petitioners, said the pollution had worsened in Delhi. "Something drastic needs to be done," he submitted.

The court agreed to hear the case after Deepavali vacation the whole of next week.