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27

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# Consider putting on hold new farm laws: SC to govt

Not Possible,  
But Will Talk  
To Centre: AG

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre to consider deferring implementation of the contentious farm laws as a step towards resumption of dialogue with farm unions opposing the legislations and who are adamant on scrapping the laws, while observing that the farmers' constitutional right to protest could not impede citizens' right to free movement.

The suggestion of deferment came towards the end of an hour-long hearing before a



**SC** We recognise the fundamental right of farmers to protest against a law. It should be allowed to continue. But it can't infringe rights of other citizens to move freely. The purpose of protest can be achieved only by talking with govt. Otherwise you will sit for years and nothing will happen (For) an effective solution to the stalemate, we consider it appropriate to constitute a committee comprising independent and impartial persons, including agri experts - Supreme Court

bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, where any forward movement on the vexed issue became a challenge as none of the im-

portant protesting farmer unions were represented.

Attorney general K K Venugopal's immediate response was, "That is not possible." When the bench said the gov-

Kejriwal tears copies of govt's farm laws

The Delhi assembly on Thursday passed a resolution against the Centre's three new agriculture laws with chief minister Arvind Kejriwal tearing up the copies, saying he cannot betray the farmers of the country. Addressing the assembly, he also alleged the laws have been made for "electoral funding of the BJP and not the farmers." Kejriwal further said that 20 protesting farmers have died so far and asked the Centre when it will "wake up". PTI

ernment could consider this to help resume stalled talks, the AG relented and said he would discuss with the Centre.

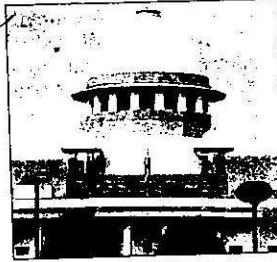
► Fundamental right, P 12

# Right to protest is part of a fundamental right: SC

► Continued from page 1

However, solicitor general Tushar Mehta vehemently said deferment was out of question. The bench told the SG not to put a spoke when the AG had already said that he would discuss with the government and respond. In its comments, the court held up the farm unions' right to protest but also noted that talks were needed or else the protest could drag on without results. It also noted that the right to protest should not infringe upon the right of other citizens to go about their daily lives and businesses.

There was no outcome from the long hearing as only the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu) was represented by a lawyer. This faction was termed a non-entity by the government. The SC asked the AG to help serve the petitions on important protesting farmers' unions and move the court for urgent hearing during the winter vacation if the need arose. As breaking the ice between the Centre and the agitating farm unions seemed diffi-



The court noted that talks were needed or else the farmers' protest could drag on without results

cult, the bench did not even give a definite date for the next hearing.

Importantly, the bench said the SC would not interfere with the farm protests. "Indeed, the right to protest is part of a fundamental right and can, as a matter of fact, be exercised subject to public order. There can certainly be no impediment in the exercise of such rights as long as it is non-violent and does not result in damage to life and property of other citizens and is in accordance with law. We are of the view at this stage that the farmers' protest should be allowed to continue without impediment

and without any breach of peace either by the protesters or the police," the CJI-led bench said.

It reiterated its intent to set up a committee to break the deadlock in talks. "The purpose of the protest can be achieved only by talking and discussing the issues with the government. Otherwise you (farmers) will sit for years and nothing will happen," the bench said while reiterating its intention to form a committee to break the ice.

The bench said, "In order to bring about an effective solution to the present stalemate between protesters and the government of India, we consider it appropriate in the interests of justice to constitute a committee comprising independent and impartial persons, including experts in the field of agriculture for the purpose. This may not be possible without hearing all the necessary parties. Till the parties come before us, it would be advisable to obtain suggestions about the constitution of the said committee from all the parties which may be submitted by them on the date of next hearing in the matter."