

Delhi HC sets aside AAP government's doorstep ration delivery scheme

Court said the Delhi govt is free to bring another doorstep delivery scheme but it cannot use grains provided by the Centre for this doorstep scheme

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The Delhi High Court Thursday set aside the AAP

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government's doorstep ration delivery scheme-- Mukhymantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh said the Delhi government is free to bring another doorstep delivery scheme but it cannot use grains provided by the Centre for this doorstep scheme.

The high court allowed two petitions filed by ration dealers challenging the scheme.

The high court had on January 10 reserved its order on the pleas by petitioners Delhi Sarkari Ration Dealers Sangh and Delhi Ration Dealers Union after holding extensive hearings.

Delhi government had defended the scheme on the ground that it was for the poor who were being threatened by fair price shop (FPS) owners to opt-out of the home delivery mode otherwise they would not be given ration.

The AAP government had earlier stated that there was a complete misconception that fair-price shops would cease to exist after the implementation of the scheme.

It had said states like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka's Bengaluru have identical doorstep delivery schemes.

The Centre, represented by Central government standing counsel Monika Arora, had opposed the Delhi government's doorstep ration delivery scheme, saying that the State could mitigate the architecture of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) while implementing it.

It had earlier said the court should not allow any state government to interfere with the structure of NFSA and destroy its architecture and that FPS is an integral part of the Act.

The Centre had explained that as per the NFSA, it gave food grains to states which have to take it from the godown of the Food Corporation of India to deliver it to the doorsteps of fair price shops for distributing it to the beneficiaries.

The Supreme Court had on November 15, 2021, refused to entertain the Centre's plea against the Delhi High Court order directing the AAP government not to stop or curtail the supply of foodgrains or flour to fair price shops.

The high court had on September 27 last year directed the Delhi government to issue communications to all the fair price shop dealers informing them of the particulars of ration cardholders who have opted to receive their rations at doorsteps.

It had said only thereafter, that the fair price shops dealers were not required to be supplied with the ration of the PDS beneficiaries who have opted for the other scheme.