

SC QUESTIONS BENGAL, U.P. ON RATION FOR SEX WORKERS

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The Supreme Court on Monday pulled up States such as West Bengal and poll-bound Uttar Pradesh for not filing affidavits on whether they are giving dry ration to sex workers, especially in the light of the third wave of the pandemic.

“This is serious... This is for their survival,” Justice L. Nageswara Rao addressed the West Bengal government counsel.

The Uttar Pradesh government counsel said a meeting would be held on Monday on the issue. He submitted that Aadhaar and voter ID cards were being distributed and 32,981 workers were being given dry rations.

“We realise that your State is going to elections, but that does not mean you cannot file an affidavit,” Justice Rao, who is heading the Bench comprising Justice B.R. Gavai, addressed the Uttar Pradesh lawyer.

Another State which has not filed an affidavit, Rajasthan, orally submitted that it had identified 12,713 sex workers with the help of NGOs and the State AIDS Control Society. It said the process of providing ration cards to them without insisting on ID proof had started. The court gave the States two weeks to file separate affidavits. Previously, the court had directed the States and the Union Territories to immediately start the process of issuing voter ID, Aadhaar and ration cards to sex workers across the country. It had declared that every person was entitled to basic rights regardless of his or her vocation.

The court had also found that its directions a decade ago to provide sex workers with ration cards was not complied with yet.

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