

DELHI'S DOORSTEP RATION DELIVERY PLAN QUASHED

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Dispute Redressal Mechanisms, and the Centre-State Relations

A woman collects ration distributed by the Delhi government at Adarsh Nagar in north Delhi. File Photo
SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Delhi High Court on Thursday set aside the State government's scheme for door-to-door delivery of ration, Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana.

A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh said the Delhi government could bring another scheme but cannot use foodgrain supplied by the Centre for it.

The doorstep delivery of ration to beneficiaries has been a bone of contention between the Centre and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government ever since it was announced by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in his Republic Day address last year.

Under the scheme, items such as wheat, rice and sugar could be sent directly to the homes of the 17,54,863 ration card holders in the Capital instead of them having to line up before fair price shops.

The scheme was challenged by the Delhi Sarkari Ration Dealers Sangh. The Centre, too, opposed it on the ground that the State cannot mitigate the architecture of the National Food Security Act while implementing the scheme.

The High Court in its order said the Delhi government could not have rolled out the scheme when Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Anil Baijal had expressed a difference of opinion on it. "In cases where differences arise between the Council of Ministers on the one hand and the Lieutenant-Governor on the other, the executive decision of the Council of Ministers is liable to be referred to the President for his decision," the Bench remarked.

L-G's objections

The L-G had recorded his objections on two occasions — March 20, 2018 and June 2, 2021 — proposing the adoption of direct benefit transfer of money to beneficiaries instead. He advised that the proposal be placed before the Government of India for approval.

However, the Council of Ministers headed by Mr. Kejriwal in a June 17, 2021 note observed that there appeared to be a serious misunderstanding and the matter before the L-G was not for approval of the scheme as it was already final.

"To us, it appears that the misunderstanding was not on the part of the Lieutenant-Governor but on the part of the Chief Minister himself," the court observed.

Reacting to the High Court order, the AAP government said on Thursday that it will study the judgment first before planning its future course of action.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

crackIAS.com