

News

The Supreme Court permits victims of dog bites to get involved in stray dog cases without having to pay a deposit.



The Court had previously ordered that those who wanted to get involved must pay ₹2 lakh and ₹25,000, respectively. It did, however, make an exception for victims of dog bites today.

In the ongoing dispute involving stray dogs, the Supreme Court on Monday freed victims of dog bites from having to pay any money in order for their intervention motions to be considered [In Re: **"City Hounded By Strays, Kids Pay Price"** Versus The State Of Andhra

Pradesh].

Today, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and NV Anjaria clarified that victims of dog attacks would not be subject to the previous norm, which required people and organizations wishing to intervene to deposit ₹25,000 and ₹2 lakh, respectively, with the register.

The bench issued the exemption ruling today while keeping an eye on how the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, are being applied nationwide. With the exception of those from Telangana, West Bengal, and Delhi, all chief secretaries appeared before the court and provided compliance affidavits on behalf of their respective states.

With the exception of the Union territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, the Court noted that all States and Union Territories have now submitted compliance affidavits. It instructed Gaurav Agarwal, the amicus curiae, to compile and summarize the affidavits for review at a later time.

Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi brought up the fact that the majority of the compliance affidavits were lacking throughout the hearing. He said that important information was lacking, making meaningful supervision challenging, including the number of sterilizing centres, the number of canines sterilised, and the amounts allotted by each State.

According to Justice Nath, the Court will thoroughly examine each affidavit before providing more guidance.

He added that future hearings would concentrate on both compliance and responsibility, noting that certain States have demonstrated "complete lethargy" in carrying out sterilization and vaccination efforts.

Justice Nath added that employees of government and public sector organizations were causing an increasing "institutional menace" by feeding stray dogs in residential colonies and office complexes, which frequently resulted in confrontations.

In order to prevent safety risks, he said, the Court would issue orders to control such behaviors and guarantee that feeding takes place only in approved locations.

Senior Advocate Karuna Nandy, in the meantime, pointed out shortcomings in the way the directives were being carried out on the ground and that the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) be added as a party.

According to her, the process of allocating feeding locations was frequently ineffective and unscientific.

The bench decided to include AWBI in the matter and ordered that it be notified.

The Court also explained that dog bite victims do not have to pay anything in order for their claims to be considered, but all other intervenors must deposit the previously specified sums.

The order said that all victims' interim applications could proceed without charge and that deposits made by others would remain valid.

After reviewing the amicus and counsel's provided data on sterilization, immunization, and infrastructure, the Court will now issue additional directions on November 7.

Animal rights organizations protested when a court made up of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan ordered Delhi municipal authorities to collect and house stray dogs earlier this year, bringing the case to the attention of the country.

The current three-judge court, presided over by Justice Vikram Nath, later changed the ruling to require vaccination and the release of sterile canines rather than their perpetual housing.

In order to deter what it referred to as "frivolous or agenda-driven" petitions, the Court additionally placed deposits on individual intervenors and animal welfare organizations. However, the clarification made today represents a major exception for victims, guaranteeing that their views are heard without regard to their financial situation.