

News

What must Lord Krishna be thinking: Supreme Court on legal fight between ISKCON Mumbai and ISKCON Bengaluru



"They (ISKCON Bangalore) have taken something that belongs to us," Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal appearing for ISKCON Mumbai said during the meeting.

The Supreme Court recently took a dim view of the legal fight between International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) Mumbai and ISKCON Bengaluru over the ownership of the Hare Krishna Temple in Bengaluru [ISKCON Mumbai vs. ISKCON Bangalore & Ors.].

A three-judge bench comprising Justices MM Sundresh, Satish Chandra Sharma, and

PK Mishra flagged repeated rounds of litigation concerning the temple and noted in lighter spirit,

"What Lord Krishna might be thinking about all this."

The Court was hearing a batch of review petitions filed by ISKCON Mumbai seeking reconsideration of the top court's May 2025 ruling that recognised ISKCON Bangalore as a separate legal entity and owner of the Hare Krishna Temple in Bengaluru.

The May 16 verdict had decided that ISKCON Bangalore is a distinct legal entity registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960, and not a branch of ISKCON Mumbai.

The Court then had upheld the trial court's finding recognising ISKCON Bangalore's independent standing and ownership of the Hare Krishna Temple in Bengaluru, while setting aside the Karnataka High Court's 2011 decision that had favoured ISKCON Mumbai.

Aggrieved by this decision, ISKCON Mumbai approached the Supreme Court again, asking review of the May 16 judgement that went against it.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AG Masih on November 8 gave a split verdict while considering the review petitions.

While Justice Masih dismissed the review applications, Justice Maheshwari allowed them.

This difference in opinion led the matter to be brought before the Chief Justice of India who then constituted the new three-judge bench to look into the case.

During the hearing of the case on December 3, the counsel acting for ISKCON Mumbai said there were several judicial admissions that were not taken into consideration by the May 16 judgement.

He said that ISKCON Mumbai was in fact the parent society and that ISKCON Bangalore was merely its subsidiary and hence cannot claim ownership of the disputed temple.

"We will hear it both on merit and scope of review", the bench said after taking note of

the comments.

It then proceeded to give notice to the respondents

While giving notice, the bench stopped short of passing any interim order in favour of ISKCON Mumbai. It posted the matter for directions in the third week of January for the limited purpose of ensuring that all the parties interested are served with the Court's notice.

The counsel standing for ISKCON Bangalore said,

"There have been attempts at settlement, we have made offers. The Bangalore society has started the Akshay Patra plan. Two billion meals are being served," he said.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal appearing for the Mumbai side interrupted at this point.

"They have taken something that belongs to us," he said.

"Obviously both sides think nothing belongs to them (but to Lord Krishna),"
the bench remarked as the hearing drew to a close.