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SC refuses to stay CAA

NEW DELHI, DHNS
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 The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 and indicated it will set up a Constitution bench to decide the validity of the contentious law which allows fast-tracked citizenship to non-Muslim religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.
 A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Sanjiv Khanna declined to pass any interim order on the CAA process being undertaken in states, particularly UP.
 "We are not going to pass any interim order without hearing all the parties," it said.
 Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners, asked the court to postpone the CAA's implementation by two or three months.
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 Once citizenship was granted, it can't be taken back, he said, highlighting the issue of irreversibility. Attorney General K K Venugopal opposed this, saying passing an order to postpone the implementation of the statute is as good as staying it.
 Senior advocate A M Singhvi, representing the petitioners, said some states had already started the exercise. In Uttar Pradesh, 40,000 people have been counted for granting citizenship. He said the matter should be taken up urgently for passing orders.
 K V Vishwanathan, also for the petitioners, submitted that a lot of people will be disenfranchised on the basis of the National Population Register (NPR) exercise. He said there is anguish among majority and fear among the minority community. Singhvi shared the concern and said there was chaos, insecurity and instability, and that people may lose their rights.
 Senior advocate Shyam Divan submitted for the petitioners that the court may not stay the statute but the issuance of naturalisation certificate for illegal immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan must be stopped.
 The court, however, preferred to grant four more weeks to the Centre to respond to the additional 80 petitions filed in the matter on a request made by the Attorney General.
 During the hearing, a plea was made for segregation of cases related to Tripura and Assam, which the court allowed for facilitating a response from the Centre. Various parties, including former minister Jairam Ramesh, MPs Mahua Moitra, Asaduddin Owaisi, Manoj Jha, political parties DMK, Kamal Hassan's MNM, Kerala's IUML and different other organisations and individuals filed the petitions challenging the validity of the CAA. As many as 144 petitions have been filed so far in the top court.