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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Court Matter

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Show-cause notice issued to Sudarshan TV

Content of its programme 'Bindas Bol' accuses Muslims of 'infiltrating' civil services: govt.

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday informed the Supreme Court that a show-cause notice had been issued to Sudarshan TV under the Cable TV Network Act against the content of its programme 'Bindas Bol', which accuses Muslims of "infiltrating" the civil services with the help of funding from terror-linked organisations abroad.

On September 15, a three-judge Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud stayed the further telecast of the programme episodes. Four episodes had been telecast by the time the court issued the injunction.

"Had the court not intervened, the programme would have been over by now," Justice Chandrachud told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who in-



formed the court about the notice issued to the Hindi channel on September 23.

Mr. Mehta said the court's intervention is usually seen as a last resort. The court agreed to the law officer's submission to defer further hearings in the case. The channel has been given time till September 28 to respond to the show-cause notice.

The court directed the go-

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D.Y. CHANDRACHUD
Supreme Court judge

vernment to submit a report on the outcome of the notice. However, it said "further steps in pursuance of the notice shall be subject to the result of proceedings and orders of this court".

Meanwhile, the September 15 injunction on the telecast of the programme would continue. The Bench is examining questions, including the point beyond which free speech in the media crosses the Rubicon to breach the dignity of a community.

The court is also examining the larger aspect of strengthening the self-regulatory mechani-

ism for electronic media. It had observed that the manner of portrayal of the Muslim community in 'Bindas Bol' was "plainly hurtful".

In a recent hearing in the case, the court observed that a message should go out to the media that it cannot make a religious minority the target of its attacks. The dignity of a community was as important as journalistic freedom.

"We want a cohesive nation. We as citizens and judges are concerned about national security but we are also equally concerned about protecting human dignity... We as a court know what happened in the Emergency. So, we want a free flow of ideas. But we are also equally conscious about the right to dignity of a community", Justice Chandrachud had observed orally.