



Sanskriti IAS

14th Mar 2026



IMPORTANT

EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

DELHI CENTRE:
636, Mukherjee Nagar
New Delhi-110009

PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**

 **sanskritiias.com**

GS 2 : POLITY

THE HINDU PAGE : 1

INDIA bloc MPs submit notice in Parliament for removal of Chief Election Commissioner

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The INDIA bloc MPs on Friday submitted a notice in both the Houses of Parliament seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

This is the first time that such a notice has been formally submitted in Parliament.

The 10-page notice lists seven charges against Mr. Kumar – ranging from “partisan and discriminatory conduct in office” to “deliberate obstruction of investigation of electoral fraud”, and “mass disenfranchisement”.

Opposition parties have accused the CEC of aiding the ruling BJP on several



The rules require at least 50 MPs to sign the notice if it is moved in the Rajya Sabha and 100 if moved in the Lok Sabha. ANI

occasions, particularly during the special intensive revision (SIR), which they allege is being used to benefit the ruling party. They have cited examples from West Bengal, Bihar, and other States where the SIR has been done.

The Trinamool Congress is considering releasing the transcript of its delegation's meeting with the Election Commission on February 2. After that meeting, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had told reporters

that Mr. Kumar had “humiliated” the delegation.

Article 324(5) of the Constitution states: “Provided that the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court and the conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment.”

Under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, if notices for such a motion are submitted in both Houses on the same day, no inquiry committee may be constituted unless the motion is admitted in both Houses.

Once admitted, a committee must be constituted

jointly by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

The rules require at least 50 MPs to sign the notice if it is moved in the Rajya Sabha and 100 if moved in the Lok Sabha. The Opposition's notice exceeds these requirements, with 130 signatures in the Lok Sabha and 63 in the Rajya Sabha.

According to sources, the Trinamool Congress, which spearheaded the effort, debated whether to move the notice in only one House.

“[But] Opposition members of both Houses wanted to sign the notice to register their protest against the CEC's recent actions,” a senior leader said.

GS 2 : SOCIAL JUSTICE

THE HINDU PAGE : 5

Paid menstrual leave may hurt women's careers: SC

CJI distinguishes between creating a legally enforceable statutory right and a spontaneous act or policy from employers towards their women employees; court encourages voluntary initiatives

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed apprehensions that a law making paid leave during menstrual pain compulsory may damage the careers of young women and deprive them of equal opportunities.

"The moment you introduce this as a law and make it a compulsory condition, you may not be able to assess the amount of damage you may do to their career. Nobody may give them big responsibilities. In judicial services, people may not assign trials to them," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a Bench comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, voiced doubts.

The court, at the same time, encouraged "voluntary" initiatives in this regard by States like Odisha, Karnataka, and Kerala,

We see from the rights' regime, but look at it also from the business model. Will an employer be happy with the competing claims from the other gender?

JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
Judge, Supreme Court



which give leave to students in State-run universities and institutions up to 60 days annually for menstrual pain, and private entities.

Chief Justice Kant distinguished between creating a legally enforceable statutory right and a spontaneous act or policy from employers towards their women employees.

Plea seeks directions

The court was hearing a petition filed by advocate Shailendra Mani Tripathi seeking a direction to the government to enact a uniform law for paid men-

strual pain leave to working women and students in consonance with their fundamental right to dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution. Mr. Tripathi said a judicial order was necessary to fill up this legal vacuum in the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.

Mr. Tripathi said various private entities and NLIU Bhopal and MNLU Aurangabad had implemented menstrual leave policies. Punjab University has also approved and granted menstrual leave to the students.

Justice Bagchi said the court was in principle in

complete agreement with the petitioner's cause, and the "cause for affirmative action was recognised". But it had to keep an eye on the "practical reality of the job market". "We see from the rights' regime, but look at it also from the business model. Will an employer be happy with the competing claims from the other gender?" Justice Bagchi asked.

Mr. Tripathi's petition had stressed the fact that India had signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which recognises the need for non-discriminatory practices and for treating women with dignity.

"Countries like the United Kingdom, Wales, China, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, South Korea and Zambia have different policies or laws on the grant of menstrual leave," the petition had said.

GS 2 : INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE HINDU PAGE : 6

The India-Canada turnaround is about deliverables

When the Prime Minister of Canada, Mark Carney, visited India (February 27-March 2, 2026), the bilateral relationship saw a remarkable turnaround, especially in the backdrop of the no-nonsense style ties had taken under his predecessor, Justin Trudeau.

Mr. Carney's visit focused on deliverables and avoided getting bogged down by past issues. The visit also marked the culmination of bilateral efforts to put the relationship back on track, initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kananaskis (Canada) in June 2025 and, also the bilateral meeting in Johannesburg in November 2025. Canada has shown particular pragmatism in tidying over domestic politics to curate its relationship with India carefully, skirting some of the legacy issues.

Spotlight on economic issues

Coming on the back of significant geopolitical churn, the focus on economic issues was unmissable. Canada has faced pressure from its southern neighbour, the United States, which is among its largest trade partners, due to supply chains concentrated toward Washington. U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff policy, together with unending wars in Europe, West Asia, as well as the broader Levant region, have shaken global powers with economic momentum and purpose.

India and Canada perhaps fall in the same spectrum of countries which want to avoid war and focus on deliverables for their countries.

However, with global supply chains deeply interconnected, it is virtually impossible for countries to avoid some of the fallout from conflicts and realignments. India and Canada see diversification in trade, energy, investment, and security as essential.

**Harsh V. Pant**

is Vice-President, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi

**Vivek Mishra**

is Deputy Director, Strategic Studies Programme and Fellow, Americas, at the Observer Research Foundation

The Canadian Prime Minister's visit has strengthened India-Canada ties, with a focus on India's needs

The Carney visit resulted in at least eight agreements and contracts, spread over a slew of important sectors. At the top was, of course, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), for which the terms of agreement have been signed, marking the road map and structure of negotiations.

There was another memorandum of understanding (MoU) under the Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation Partnership on cooperation in technology and innovation, designed to support long-term partnership in these areas and enhance Ottawa's engagements with key Indo-Pacific countries.

The focus areas

There were other agreements on augmenting research partnership, cultural exchange, and collaboration in the areas of food and nutrition. Perhaps two of the most significant agreements were the commercial contract between India's Department of Atomic Energy and Canada's Cameco for the supply of uranium ore concentrates, as well as the MoU on critical minerals cooperation.

These areas of cooperation are aligned with the current needs of India, but also a future road map in which technology and critical minerals are indispensable. First, there is a global rush to secure critical mineral supply chains, vital for technology and everyday life in the modern age. Second, supply chains for critical minerals are concentrated in the hands of a few countries, most notably China.

After China showed its ability to leverage critical mineral supply chains – most recently against the U.S. in the face of tariffs imposed by the Trump administration – other nations have

recognised the need to secure their own supply chains that could be affected in times of crises. As such, the bilateral commitments on critical minerals between India and Canada are in sync with the U.S.-led Pax Silica coalition, strengthening strategic cooperation in AI and semiconductors, and which includes India among other 10-odd countries.

Energy at forefront

Among the sectors that India and Canada sought to strengthen, it was energy that took centre stage. Conventional and renewable energy are critical – Canada as a resource-rich nation, and India facing growing demand. For India, growth has to be a function of the usage of clean energy, given its sustainable development goals and zero-emission targets. The fastest way in which India can ensure energy sustainability and predictability is to reduce its reliance on external imports of energy and gradually increase homegrown production of energy. Arguably, the most efficient way to achieve this is by expanding the role of nuclear energy in India's energy mix. India's passing the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025 was seen as a step toward that goal. If the U.S. could be a source country for nuclear reactors, the long-term agreement with Canada for the supply of uranium ore concentrates can add predictability to fuel supply.

Overall, India's dependence on external actors for its energy sources has left it vulnerable in the new era of unending wars. Thus, the uranium deal with Canada is most apt for India in order to reduce external risks, help meet its development goals and also reach its target of achieving 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047.

GS 3: ECONOMY

THE HINDU PAGE: 6

Price pressures

India must find sources of sustainable energy to curb inflation

The new series of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the second data release of which was issued on Thursday, does not yet have enough historical data for robust comparisons, but does include enough information to provide clues about the future. Retail inflation in India quickened to a 10-month high of 3.2% in February 2026, largely driven by food inflation and precious metal prices. This rise is something that the government should take note of early, avoiding any complacency that might have crept in due to the low inflation levels of the last year or so. Food has a lower weight in the new series as compared to the old one, but is nevertheless a major driver of inflation with a 36.75% weight in the overall CPI. Inflation in food and beverages rose to 3.35% in February from 2.1% in the previous month, driven by quickening price levels in the meat, oils, and fruits and nuts categories. Notably, inflation in tomato prices stood at more than 45%. Thankfully, this was accompanied by a contraction in prices of the two other staples – onions and potatoes – by 28% and 18%, respectively. A large part of the low inflation last year was due to a statistical base effect that is now gone. Looking ahead, there are various factors that could result in rapidly rising food inflation. The first is that climate scientists are predicting the return of the El Niño effect in the middle of the monsoon this year. A weak monsoon will naturally raise food prices. The second impact will depend on how long the conflict in West Asia continues. Sustained natural gas supply constraints will hurt fertilizer production, affecting food output and, eventually, prices.

The other factor that has driven inflation up, and which will likely remain a major driver in the near future, is the price of gold and silver. Gold jewellery saw inflation rise to 48.2% in February from an already-blistering 46.8% in January. Inflation in silver jewellery stood at more than 160% in both January and February. With global uncertainty and anxiety skyrocketing, the demand for safe-haven precious metals is not going to let up any time soon. Rising oil prices and LPG and LNG shortages are already raising input prices for industry, which will eventually be passed on to consumers. The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee has a tough job in its next meeting in April. Inflation is being driven by supply constraints, so trying to reduce demand by raising interest rates will not only have a minimal impact on inflation but could also further hurt growth when fuel constraints are already impacting it. The onus lies with the government and its efforts to expedite alternative sources of fuel.

GS 3 : SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**GS 4: MEDICAL ETHICS****THE HINDU PAGE: 6****Duty of care**

The state must not evade responsibility when it pushes for vaccination

The Supreme Court of India's directive in *Rachana Gangu* to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to design a no-fault compensation scheme for serious adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) arising from India's COVID-19 vaccination campaign marks a shift from a fault-based liability system to a no-fault one in state-run public health programmes. The case arose from writ petitions filed in various courts by families claiming that their relatives had died or suffered serious injury after receiving COVID-19 vaccines. *Rachana Gangu* was over the deaths, in 2021, of two women aged 18 and 20, allegedly from vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT), a rare complication of the Covishield vaccine. Affected families contended that India had no dedicated mechanism to compensate those harmed in a state-run programme. For several years, the government resisted establishing a compensation policy because it held that vaccination was voluntary, serious AEFI rates were extremely low, and aggrieved citizens could sue vaccine manufacturers in civil court – a position the Court has since rejected as being impractical for ordinary individuals. The new ruling also builds on *Jacob Puliyel* (2022), in which the Court rejected challenges to emergency vaccine approvals but emphasised the need to make AEFI data publicly available.

In 2024, a few years after scientists had established the same concern in medical literature, AstraZeneca acknowledged in a U.K. court document that Covishield could, in rare instances, cause VITT. Since most Indians were vaccinated with Covishield, the admission further undermined the government's position that links between the vaccine and certain deaths were unproven or coincidental. Despite operating one of the world's largest immunisation efforts, India has historically lacked a dedicated national vaccine injury compensation programme. Many countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., have such vaccine injury compensation programmes where claimants need not prove negligence, but only a plausible link to vaccination. Even the global COVAX facility established a no-fault mechanism for 92 low- and middle-income countries. During the pandemic, the government had reported over 1,100 deaths following vaccination across 219 crore doses administered. The Court ruled that for a welfare state, these represent individual human lives and that the absence of a formal policy left affected families in a legal vacuum. It has also been clear that its directive is not based on adjudicating whether the vaccines caused specific injuries or deaths nor does it replace all fault-based liabilities in public health. However, it sets an important precedent for future vaccination drives, including the new one for HPV, affirming the state's duty of care when endorsing medical interventions for the public good.

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 9

CHARTERED PLANE LEAVES KOCHI WITH SOME IRAN SAILORS, BODIES OF OTHERS KILLED IN U.S. ATTACK NEAR SRI LANKA

Will try our best: Iran envoy on safe passage for India-bound fuel ships

Two LPG tankers are reported to be transiting Strait of Hormuz

Shubhajt Roy
New Delhi, March 13

SIGNALLING HEADWAY in Delhi's efforts to persuade Tehran to let India-bound fuel ships transit the Strait of Hormuz, Mohammad Fathali, Iran's Ambassador to India, said Friday "we will try our best to remove the problems" and "I think you can expect good news in the near future".



Mohammad Fathali (right), Iran's envoy to India, and Abdul Majid Hakeem Ilahi, Supreme Leader's representative, in New Delhi. ANI

2 INDIANS KILLED AS DOWNED DRONE FALLS IN OMAN CITY P 6

The Reuters news agency reported that Iran had allowed two Indian-flagged LPG carriers to sail through the Strait of

Hormuz. Quoting sources, it identified the vessels as Shivalik and Nanda Devi.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

As BRICS chair, condemn attacks on Iran: Tehran's message to New Delhi

Along with Iran, grouping also has the UAE, Saudi Arabia as members

Shubhajt Roy
New Delhi, March 13

TEHRAN IS learnt to have reached out to Delhi to take the lead in issuing a statement on behalf of the BRICS, currently chaired by India, condemning the US and Israeli strikes against

Iran in the last two weeks.

This has put Delhi in a diplomatic pickle since it has stayed away from taking sides in the ongoing conflict.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken to leaders of the countries in the region

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Will try our best: Iran envoy on passage for India-bound ships

Another report by Reuters said a chartered plane arranged by Iran departed Kochi late Friday, carrying some sailors from a naval vessel that had docked in India, as well as the bodies of crew members killed in a US submarine attack off Sri Lanka.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi after an event to mark the Al-Quds Day, Fathali, on being asked whether Iran would allow India-bound ships safely transit through the Strait of Hormuz, said, "Yes. Because India and I are friends. You can see the future, and I think after two or three hours... Because we believe that. We believe that Iran and India are friends. We have common interests, we have common faith."

"Suffering of the people of India is our suffering and vice versa. And for this reason, the Government of India helps us, and we should help the Government of India because we have a common faith and common interest."

Sources in the government said there have been "multiple conversations at multiple levels" and "layers of conversation" between India and Iran over the past 24 hours. And, the negotiations are "delicately poised" since the lives of so many Indians are at stake.

Sources said it is "work in progress" and the intent is to get as many Indians out of the blocked waterway - there are

around 800 Indian seafarers on 28 ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz.

While Iran maintains Tehran has not closed the Strait, sources said that insurance companies have not been guaranteeing the movement of ships in the last two weeks because of the volatile situation.

Fathali said, "We have a good relation with the Government of India, and our officials talked yesterday with the Indian government and its officials. I think we should pray to Allah to remove all the obstacles in different fields. As for your question, we will try our best to remove the problems. I think you can expect good news in the near future."

Asked about the phone conversations between leaders of India and Iran over the last few days, he said they have had "good conversations".

"And Mr (Narendra) Modi and Mr (Masoud) Pezeshkian believe that they should try their best. Because several times we have announced that we don't want war, but we are ready for war. Iran re-entered the negotiations with the United States, but unfortunately they disturbed and destroyed the negotiations. Now we are saying to all the governments that Iran doesn't want war, but Iran is ready for war," Fathali said, adding, "Iran prefers peace."

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 9

• WAR IN WEST ASIA

Amid oil supply crunch, the big winner – Russia

Millions of barrels of Russian crude were languishing on the high seas. It is now in high demand as the war chokes energy flows & price spirals



SUKALP SHARMA

THIS WAR has no winners, except maybe one that is not even fighting in it.

As Iran effectively chokes off the Strait of Hormuz in its escalating response to the US and Israel's attacks, Russia is making a wind-fall on the back of the reduced supply of crude oil as well as its spiralling prices. According to a *Financial Times* report, Moscow is estimated to have earned around \$150 million a day in extra oil revenue since the effective closure of the narrow transit passage for a fifth of the world's energy supplies.

Till a few days back, millions of barrels of Russian crude were languishing on the high seas with few willing buyers, thanks to US efforts to starve Moscow of oil revenues that could fund the Ukraine war. Now, America's own war against Iran has taken precedence. After issuing a 30-day "waiver" to Indian refiners last week for buying Russian crude that is already sitting in tankers on water, the US has now extended it to other countries too.

"To increase the global reach of existing supply, @USTreasury is providing a temporary authorization to permit countries to purchase Russian oil currently stranded at sea. This narrowly tailored, short-term measure applies only to oil already in transit and will not provide significant financial benefit to the Russian government, which derives the majority of its energy revenue from taxes assessed at the point of extraction," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent posted on social media platform X.

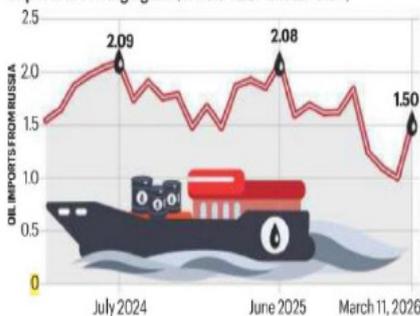
How does Russian oil waiver work?

The easing of sanctions, which will be in place for a month, means that the US will have no problem if countries import Russian crude that was loaded on or before 12:01 am eastern daylight time, or 9:31 am India time, on March 12.

While this move could help other countries secure some oil supplies, it is likely to help New Delhi as well as the India-specific waiver was for oil loaded on tankers before March 5.

• Uneven flow

In recent months, India significantly cut down oil imports from Russia, its largest supplier. Now, amid the US waiver, imports are rising again. (FIGURES IN MILLION BARRELS PER DAY)



An oil tanker hit by an Iranian strike at Khor al-Zubair port in Iraq, Wednesday, AP

According to industry watchers, the US could be forced to ease sanctions further on Russian crude if the disruption to the global oil supplies via the Strait of Hormuz persists for an extended period.

Experts see these moves from Washington as part of Donald Trump's effort to prevent a further and sustained spike in international oil prices — and the consequent rise in domestic fuel prices in the US — given the midterm elections later this year.

"So far, there is only one winner in this war — Russia. It steadily undermines Ukraine's position by flouting international law. It gains new resources to finance its war against Ukraine as energy prices rise," European Council President António Costa said earlier this week at the European Union Ambassadors Conference in Brussels.

And while Bessent said in his X post on Friday that the temporary easing of sanctions on Russian oil on water will not provide significant financial benefit to Moscow, he said earlier that the financial gains Russia would accrue would be "unfortunate".

How has Russia benefited?

The West Asia war has led to a spurt in crude oil prices, which remain extremely volatile. At noon on Friday, benchmark Brent crude was around \$100 per barrel, almost 37% higher than nearly \$73 per barrel just before the US and Israel launched military strikes on Iran on February 28. So, like any other oil producer who is able to sell crude in this market, Russia gains from

higher oil prices. But that's not all. The price of Russian crude grades — mainly its flagship Urals — have appreciated more given the availability in an otherwise tight market and buyer interest.

Russian oil used to trade at a discount to crude benchmarks. The discounts have now largely disappeared, and there are reports of Russian oil even selling at a premium in some cases. Add to that the fact that the easing of sanctions by the US has made large volumes of Russian crude kosher for international buyers.

Around 130 million barrels of Russian crude was estimated to be on ships on water as of early March. Some of those volumes would have already been gobbled up by India and China, the biggest buyers of seaborne Russian crude. Additional volumes are likely to have come on water over the past couple of weeks as well.

"From a market perspective, Russian crude currently acts as one of the best supply hedges for Asian refiners. With persistent risks around the Strait of Hormuz and Middle East supply routes, refiners in Asia are naturally looking for barrels that are more secure and priced competitively, and Russian crude fits that role," said Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst, Refining & Modeling at Kpler, a commodity market analytics firm.

All this means Russia could rake in billions of dollars more as the war continues. And the longer the West Asian oil flows remain constricted, the more it benefits Rus-

sia, which has been facing a slowing economy and expanding budget deficit owing to its Ukraine war expenditure.

How is India affected?

With the conflict — now into its second week — suspending traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, India's Russian oil imports have shot up. In the first 11 days of the month, India imported 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian oil, up around 50% from February levels, as per ship tracking data from Kpler. These volumes could increase if regular West Asian oil volumes through the strait are not resumed soon. Around 2.5-2.7 million bpd of India's crude imports — accounting for around half of the country's total oil imports — have crossed the strait in recent months; the longer-term average is around 40%. This oil is mainly from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait.

India had, in recent months, significantly cut down its oil imports from Russia, its largest oil supplier, amid trade negotiations with the US, as Washington made it a prerequisite for scrapping its 25% additional penal tariff (see chart).

In February, India had imported just over one million bpd of Russian crude, almost half of the 2025 peak of over 2 million bpd. Loadings of Russian crude for Indian ports, which averaged 1.7 million bpd last year, was just 0.7 million bpd in February. India is the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 88% of its oil requirement.

But now the US is counting on India to buy more Russian oil. On Wednesday, Ambassador Sergio Gor said: "India has been a great partner in maintaining stable oil prices around the world. The United States recognizes ongoing purchases of Russian oil are a part of this effort. India is one of the largest consumers and refiners of oil and it is essential for the United States and India to work hand in hand for market stability for Americans and Indians."

A senior government official had said last week that India never stopped buying Russian crude, and the "waiver" appeared to be more for Washington's own legal and procedural requirements.

"What the waiver does is reduce some of the uncertainty around the trade and could potentially open the door for other Asian buyers who had stayed away (from Russian oil) since 2022," said Ritolia.

Surge price

At this stage, the US waiver on buying Russian oil does not change much for countries such as India, China and Turkey, which were already buying despite sanctions.

• But now, increased competition for Russian barrels could lead to even higher prices.

GS 2: POLITY

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 9

• LEGAL

OBC creamy layer: Why SC ruled against 'hostile'Shyam Lal Yadav
New Delhi, March 13

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday ruled that income cannot be the sole criterion to decide the "creamy layer" among Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and settled the long-pending question of equivalence between public sector undertakings (PSUs) and private sector employees and those in the government sector. Those included in the creamy layer are not entitled to OBC reservation benefits.

What the top court said

The Division Bench of Justices PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan held: "The object of excluding the creamy layer is... not to create artificial distinctions between equally placed members of the same social class.... unequal treatment of similarly placed OBC candidates would not only be legally erroneous but constitutionally impermissible."

The Bench was hearing petitions arising due to an October 14, 2004, letter issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) with regard to the creamy layer criterion, clarifying an Official Memorandum (OM) issued on September 8, 1993. The OM noted who is classified as OBC and who belongs to the creamy layer among them.

DoPT's clarification

Para 9 of DoPT's October 2004 clarification said that "the creamy layer status of sons and daughters of persons employed in organisations where equivalence or comparability of posts vis-à-vis posts in Government has not been evaluated is determined as follows: Income of the parents from the salaries and from the other sources (other than salaries and agriculture land) is determined separately. If either the income of the parents from the salaries or the income of the parents from other sources (other than salaries and agricultural land) exceeds the limit of Rs 2.5 lakh per annum [as it was then] for a period of three consecutive years, the sons and daughters of such persons shall be treated to fall in creamy layer."

The court noted that while the OM had excluded income from salary and agricultural income from the income/wealth test for determination of creamy layer status, the October 2004 letter directed inclusion of salary income of PSU and private sector employees. This resulted in hostile discrimination between wards of government servants and those of PSU and private sector employees, "thereby attracting the rigour of the equality doctrine under Articles 14, 15 and 16." FULL REPORT ON

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM/EXPLAINED**Creamy layer in OBC quota**

The concept of creamy layer within the OBCs was introduced following the landmark 1992 SC ruling in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India*, also known as the Mandal verdict.

For those in government jobs, the creamy layer specifies groups such as persons occupying constitutional posts; Group-A/Class-I officers of All India Services, Central services and state services; Group-B/Class-II services of Centre and state; employees of PSUs; officers of Armed Forces; professionals and those from trade and industry; property owners; and an income/wealth test. In a nutshell, if either parent is a direct recruit of Group-A, or is promoted before the age of 40, their children cannot take advantage of the OBC quota. Similarly, if both parents are Group-B direct recruits, their children will be covered under the creamy layer. The criterion for those not in the government sector was set at Rs 1 lakh per annum in 1993. It was revised in due course and since 2017, this income limit is Rs 8 lakh.