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Supreme Court Strength Hits 37 — Five New Judges Sworn In After Ordinance

2 June 2026 ·

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Supreme Court Strength Hits 37 — Five New Judges Sworn In After Ordinance

2 June 2026 · 4 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

On **June 2, 2026**, **Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant** administered the oath of office to **five new judges** of the Supreme Court, taking the court's working strength to a **historic 37 (out of a new sanctioned strength of 38 including the CJI)**. The increase in sanctioned strength was effected through the **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026**, passed to address the court's mounting backlog of over **93,000 cases**.

THE FIVE NEW JUDGES

- 1 **Justice Sheel Nagu** — former Chief Justice, Punjab and Haryana High Court
- 2 **Justice Shree Chandrashekhar** — former Chief Justice, Bombay High Court
- 3 **Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva** — former Chief Justice, Madhya Pradesh High Court
- 4 **Justice Arun Palli** — former Chief Justice, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court
- 5 **Justice V S Mohana** — Senior Advocate (elevated directly from the Bar)

Notable: Justice V S Mohana is the **second woman judge currently serving on the Supreme Court bench**, and only the **second woman ever elevated directly from the Bar** to the Supreme Court — the first being **Justice Indu Malhotra (2018)**.

THE ORDINANCE THAT ENABLED IT

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Instrument	Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026
Change	Sanctioned strength of SC judges raised from 34 to 38 (including the Chief Justice of India)
Purpose	Address backlog of 93,000+ pending cases ; enable more Constitution Bench sittings
CJI who swore in	CJI Surya Kant
Sanctioned strength (2026)	38 (incl. CJI) — raised from 34 by Ordinance
Working strength after swearing-in	37 (one vacancy remains out of 38)

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

PROVISION	DETAIL
Article 124(1)	Establishes the Supreme Court; the number of judges besides the CJI is determined by Parliament by law
Original Act	Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 — originally set at 10 judges (excluding CJI; total 11)
Progressive increases (total incl. CJI)	1956 → 11; 1960 → 14; 1977 → 18; 1986 → 26; 2009 → 31; 2019 → 34; 2026 → 38
Ordinance power	Article 123 — President can promulgate ordinances when Parliament is not in session; equivalent legislative force

APPOINTMENT PROCESS

STEP	DETAIL
Collegium recommendation	SC judges are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Collegium — the CJI + 4 senior-most judges
Third Judges Case (1998)	Binding SC judgment establishing the Collegium as the final authority on judicial appointments; NJAC Act (2014) struck down by SC in 2015
Direct Bar elevation	Very rare; requires exceptional standing and expertise; usually from HC Chief Justices

WOMEN IN THE SUPREME COURT — MILESTONES

YEAR	MILESTONE
1989	Justice M. Fathima Beevi — first woman judge of the Supreme Court
2018	Justice Indu Malhotra — first woman elevated directly from the Bar
2021	Justice B.V. Nagarathna — in line to become first woman CJI (expected ~October 2027)
2026	Justice V S Mohana — second woman elevated from Bar; second woman currently serving

WHY THE BACKLOG — AND WHY IT MATTERS

India's Supreme Court has the **dual jurisdiction** of:

- **Original jurisdiction** — Constitutional cases, interstate disputes
- **Appellate jurisdiction** — Appeals from High Courts, including ordinary civil, criminal, constitutional matters

This gives it an extremely wide entry point. India's total judicial **pendency** exceeds **5 crore cases** across all courts; the SC backlog of 93,000+ cases includes many Constitutional Bench matters pending for decades. A higher sanctioned strength enables:

- 1 More sittings of **Constitution Benches** (which require 5+ judges for cases involving “substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution”).
- 2 Faster disposal of **urgent ordinary matters**.

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	RELEVANCE
GS2	Judiciary — SC composition; appointment process; Collegium; Article 124; Constitutional Bench; NJAC; pendency
Mains	“The increase in the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court is a necessary but insufficient response to judicial backlog. Examine the structural reforms needed.”
Prelims	Article 124(1); SC strength 38 (2026); Collegium (Third Judges Case 1998); NJAC Act 2014 struck down; Justice Fathima Beevi (1989, first woman SC judge); Justice Indu Malhotra (2018, first direct Bar elevation); Article 123 (ordinance power)

FACTS CORNER

FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

SC STRENGTH 2026:

SC (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026 — raised sanctioned strength from 34 to 38 (incl. CJI)

Working strength: 37 (one vacancy); sworn in by CJI Surya Kant

Purpose: address 93,000+ pending cases

5 NEW JUDGES (JUNE 2, 2026): SHEEL NAGU, SHREE CHANDRASHEKHAR, SANJEEV SACHDEVA, ARUN PALLI, V S MOHANA

JUSTICE V S MOHANA: 2ND WOMAN ON SC BENCH; 2ND WOMAN ELEVATED DIRECTLY FROM BAR (1ST: JUSTICE INDU MALHOTRA, 2018)

ARTICLE 124(1): SC COMPOSITION SET BY PARLIAMENT BY LAW

PROGRESSIVE SC STRENGTH (INCL. CJI): 11 (1956 ACT) → 14 → 18 → 26 → 31 → 34 (2019) → 38 (2026 ORDINANCE)

FIRSTS: 1ST WOMAN SC JUDGE: JUSTICE M. FATHIMA BEEVI (1989)

COLLEGIUM: CJI + 4 SENIOR-MOST JUDGES; BINDING VIA THIRD JUDGES CASE (1998)

ARTICLE 123: PRESIDENT’S ORDINANCE POWER (WHEN PARLIAMENT NOT IN SESSION)

Sources: The Hindu, Supreme Court of India, Business Standard

Source: Supreme Court Strength Hits 37 — Five New Judges Sworn In After Ordinance — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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