

SC grants Centre one more month to give PC to all women Army officers

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The Supreme Court Tuesday granted one more month to the Centre to implement its verdict directing that permanent commission be given to all serving SSC women officers in the Army. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra said the Centre will have to comply with all the directions in the verdict.

The Centre told the bench that decision making on the issue is at a final stage and only formal orders remain to be issued. It said the court's verdict will be complied with in letter and spirit. The top court's direction came on the Centre's application seeking six months' time, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, to implement the verdict.

Key Highlights

- In a landmark verdict on February 17, the top court had directed that women officers in the Army be granted permanent commission and command postings, rejecting the Centre's stand of their physiological limitations as being based on "sex stereotypes" and "gender discrimination against women".
- It had directed the Centre that within three months, all serving Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers have to be considered for Permanent Commission (PC) irrespective of them having crossed 14 years or, as the case may be, 20 years of service.
- It had said that the question of combat posting of women officers is a policy decision and was not dealt by the Delhi High Court in its 2010 verdict.
- The top court accepted the Centre's policy of February 25, 2019 to grant PC to SSC women officers in all the 10 streams in the Indian Army.
- Despite this policy, the Centre's stand in a matter before the top court was that provisions of

Army Act contemplate that women will be eligible for enrolment only in those segments which the government permits.

- The top court had said that women officers have got numerous commendation certificates and laurels and their track record of service to the nation is beyond reproach.
- There are total of 1,653 women officers which are a miniscule 4 per cent of the total strength of commissioned officers in the Army, it had said. The total of 1,653 officers includes — 77 having above 20 years of service, 255 having service tenure between 14 and 20 years and the fate of 322 women officers were to be decided by the verdict of the apex court.

SOURCE: The New Indian Express