Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026

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Why in News?

The Union Cabinet recently approved the proposal to introduce the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026.

- **Amendment to –** The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956.
- **Objective –** To increase the number of Supreme Court judges from 33 to 37, *excluding the Chief Justice of India.*
- **Impact –** To enhance the efficiency of the Supreme Court and facilitate the delivery of timely justice.
- **Financial Provision –** The salaries of judges, supporting staff, and associated facilities will be financed through the *Consolidated Fund of India.*
- **Constitutional Basis –** According to *Article 124(1) of the Constitution of India*, "There shall be a Supreme Court of India with a *Chief Justice of India and up to 7 other judges,* unless Parliament decides to increase the number by law".

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF AMENDMENTS

SUPREME COURT JUDGE STRENGTH (EXCLUDING THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA)

YEAR	AMENDMENT / ACT	JUDGE STRENGTH (Excluding CJI)	KEY CHANGE / REMARK
1956	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956	10	Fixed the maximum strength of Supreme Court judges (excluding the CJI) at 10.
1960	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1960	13	Increased the sanctioned strength from 10 to 13.
1977	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1977	17	Increased the sanctioned strength from 13 to 17. However, the working strength was restricted to 15 judges (excluding the CJI) till the end of 1979 by a Cabinet decision.
1979	Cabinet Restriction Withdrawn	17	The restriction was withdrawn at the request of the Chief Justice of India, restoring the full sanctioned strength of 17 judges.
1986	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1986	25	Increased the sanctioned strength from 17 to 25.
2008	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2008	30	Increased the sanctioned strength from 25 to 30.
2019	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2019	33	Increased the sanctioned strength from 30 to 33.
2026	The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 (Proposed)	37	Proposes increasing the sanctioned strength from 33 to 37 to address the growing pendency of cases and improve judicial efficiency.

Note: All judge strengths are excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

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