

Government moves apex court on quota in civil services

The central government Friday moved the Supreme Court challenging a high court ruling that backward category students competing for the civil services examinations on merit cannot be given the benefit of reservation and better and higher services.

Appearing before the bench of Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, Additional Solicitor General Vikas Singh sought urgent hearing on the government's petition and pleaded for suspension of the March 2008 ruling of the Madras High Court.

Singh told the bench that the Madras High Court had quashed the Union Public Services Commission rule on allocation of services to successful candidates, and asked it to draw a fresh list of candidates without giving the meritorious backward category aspirants the benefits of reservation.

Singh said this has left the UPSC in a quandary, leading to an unprecedented delay in the declaration of final results for the examination held last year.

Singh said the UPSC generally declares the Civil Services Examination results weeks before holding the preliminary test for the next year.

He said though the preliminary test for 2008 is to be held Sunday, the UPSC has not been able to declare its final result for the Civil Services Examination 2007 and this has left aspirants in a quandary over the issue of taking the test.

The bench, which also included Justice H.K. Sema and Justice P.P. Naolekar, however, refused to suspend the Madras High Court order, saying if the matter was so urgent the government should have come to it soon after the March ruling by the high court.

The bench said that it would hear the matter Monday.

The high court held that if a meritorious backward category student is given the benefit of reservation in allocation of services and cadre, it would impinge upon the rights of the general category students.

It would also block the seats for backward category students who have qualified after availing the benefit of reservation and the relaxed norms of competition.

The government, however, contended that if a backward category student, qualifying on his own merit, is not given the benefit of reservation it would result in an anomaly leading to the non-meritorious backward category aspirants getting better and higher services.

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