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SC Urges Removal of 'Creamy Layer' from Reservation Benefits

- ◆ The Supreme Court has reiterated that the Central and State Governments should decide on removing the "creamy layer" among Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) from enjoying reservation benefits.
 - ◆ In a 2004 ruling, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court had stated that SCs cannot be further divided into sub-categories for reservations.
 - ◆ However, in a landmark 2022 ruling, a seven-judge Constitution Bench overturned this decision, stating that states have the authority to categorize the most socially and educationally backward groups within SC/STs to ensure equitable distribution of reservation benefits.
 - ◆ Justice B.R. Gavai, in a separate ruling, stated that states must identify those in the "creamy layer" within SC/STs and exclude them from reservation benefits.
- Despite this ruling being issued six months ago, no action has been taken by the governments. A petition has been filed urging the Supreme Court to push the government to frame policies for identifying and excluding the creamy layer.

Singapore Tops Passport Rankings; India at 85th

- ◆ According to the Henley Passport Index, which ranks the world's most powerful passports annually, Singapore holds the top position for 2025. India, which ranked 71st in 2006, fell to 90th in 2021, climbed to 80th in 2024, and has now dropped to 85th.

How AI Manipulates You

- ◆ Artificial Intelligence (AI), used in most applications today, has evolved to influence decisions by steering users toward outcomes that benefit large corporations.
- ◆ Researchers have highlighted the concept of "Intention Economy," where AI-powered systems analyze users' digital behavior to predict their intentions. This data is sold to companies for profit.

Key Points on AI Manipulation:

- ◆ AI tracks every online interaction, collects personal preferences, and predicts future intentions.
 - ◆ Companies profit significantly by selling AI predictions.
- Governments and political parties may misuse this data for propaganda, fake news, and targeted manipulation.

What Needs to Be Done?

- ◆ Governments must regulate AI systems and prevent misuse by corporations and political entities.
- ◆ Citizens should be educated on how AI works and its potential risks to privacy and freedom.
- ◆ Election commissions should ensure that AI-driven political strategies do not harm public trust or democratic processes.
- ◆ The rise of "Intention Economy" poses a serious threat to personal freedom and decision-making, calling for stricter regulations and public awareness.

RTI Queries: OTP via E-Mail?

- ◆ The Right to Information (RTI) Act was introduced to ensure transparency in various government departments, promote corruption-free governance, and hold officials accountable.
- ◆ Operating under the Department of Personnel and Training, this Act is directly controlled by Prime Minister Modi. Individuals seeking information from the government can apply online by paying Rs.10.
- ◆ Queries sent to the relevant departmental heads must be answered within 30 days. Using the online platform, applicants can input their registration number and mobile number to track the status of their questions and view responses.
- ◆ From this year, a new system has been introduced where OTP (One-Time Password) will be sent via e-mail.
- ◆ Unlike OTPs received on mobile phones that are immediate and can be regenerated in seconds, e-mail OTPs lack clarity regarding when they will be sent or how long they will take.
- ◆ For individuals relying on e-mail, the delay in OTPs and the inability to track query status without it render the system ineffective. This has led to demands to revert to the previous system.