



PRESS RELEASE ON THE 164TH REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING

COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE

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The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice chaired by Shri Brij Lal, MP, Rajya Sabha, presented its **164th Report** on the Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the **Department of Legal Affairs** (Ministry of Law and Justice) on 16th March, 2026 to both the Houses of Parliament.

While examining the Demands for Grants, the Committee has made an appraisal of performance, programmes, and policies of the Department of Legal Affairs along with that of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) and Indian Law institute (ILI) *vis-à-vis* expenditure made out of Consolidated Fund of India in the current financial year during the meeting held on 19th February, 2026.

The Committee scrutinised the Demands for Grants thoroughly in its meeting with the Law Secretary. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 12th March, 2026. The Recommendations/Observations made by the Committee in this Report are enclosed. For reference purpose para Nos. of the Report are also mentioned at the end of each recommendation/observation. The entire Report is available on <http://sansad.in/rs>.

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

IN

164TH REPORT ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2026-27) OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

BUDGET

1. The Committee notes that against the projected requirement of ₹505.145 crore for BE 2026–27, the allocation at the BE stage has been fixed at ₹417.76 crore, resulting in a shortfall of ₹87.385 crore (17.29%). The Committee recommends that the Ministry furnish detailed reasons for this variation and undertake a realistic assessment of its financial requirements in consultation with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that adequate funds are made available to meet its operational and institutional commitments.

2. The Committee notes that while allocations under certain Heads such as Main Secretariat, Central Agency Section in the Supreme Court and Branch Secretariats at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata have registered an increase at BE 2026–27 over RE 2025–26, there has been a reduction in allocation under the Branch Secretariat at Chennai. The Committee recommends that the Department may review the adequacy of allocation under the Chennai Branch Secretariat so as to ensure that its functional requirements are not adversely impacted and that the office is able to effectively discharge its responsibilities in handling litigation and related legal matters.

(Para 2.11)

3. The Committee observes from the financial data furnished by the Department that the Budget Estimates for 2026–27 in respect of various units and institutions under the Department of Legal Affairs are lower than the projections submitted by the Ministry to the Ministry of Finance. This variation between the projected requirements and the actual allocation may have implications for the smooth implementation of ongoing activities, infrastructure development projects, and the institutional functioning of bodies such as the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Law Commission of India and other associated organisations.

(Para 2.14)

4. The Committee is of the view that inadequate provisioning at the Budget stage may constrain the Department in meeting its committed liabilities relating to administrative expenditure, professional services and technological initiatives. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may undertake a realistic assessment of its financial requirements and pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance at RE stage of the budgetary process to ensure that adequate allocation of funds are made so that essential activities and committed obligations of the Department and its associated institutions may be carried out without disruption.

(Para 2.15)

INCOME TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (ITAT)

5. The Committee is of the view that, in light of the significant capital outlay and ongoing infrastructure works across various Bench locations, close financial and physical monitoring of projects is essential to ensure optimal utilisation of allocated funds and to avoid delays or cost escalation. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department may closely monitor the progress of ongoing projects and take necessary measures for their timely completion so as to facilitate the shifting of ITAT Benches to permanent premises and strengthen institutional efficiency and functioning.

(Para 2.19)

STAFF STRENGTH IN THE DEPARTMENT

Indian Legal Service

6. While noting the steps taken by the Department to fill up the existing and anticipated vacancies in the Indian Legal Service (ILS) cadre through direct recruitment as well as promotions, the Committee recommends that the Ministry take expeditious and time-bound measures, in coordination with UPSC, SSC and DoPT, to complete the ongoing recruitment and promotion processes and fill up the vacant posts across all grades at the earliest. The Committee further recommends that the Recruitment Rules for the ILS be finalised and notified on priority so as to facilitate timely selection through UPSC and ensure availability of adequately qualified legal professionals for the effective functioning of the Department, including the Law Commission of India, thereby strengthening the overall institutional legal capacity of the Government.

VACANCIES OF NOTARIES

7. The Committee notes the substantial enhancement in the sanctioned strength of Notaries and the significant number of appointments made through the digital Notary Portal. The Committee recommends that timely issuance of Certificates of Practice to all provisionally selected candidates be ensured so that the increased sanctioned capacity effectively translates into improved access to notarial services, particularly in underserved and rural areas.

(Para 3.13)

8. The Committee further recommends that the impact of the enhanced notary strength be periodically reviewed to assess whether the revised allocation adequately reflects population growth, litigation trends and regional disparities. A mechanism for regular monitoring may be institutionalised to ensure optimal distribution across States and UTs.

(Para 3.14)

9. With regard to the revision of notarial fees, the Committee desires that the amendment to Rule 10 of the *Notaries Rules, 1956* be finalized expeditiously. At the same time, the revised fee structure should strike a balance between fair remuneration to Notaries and affordability of services for citizens, especially in smaller towns and rural areas.

(Para 3.15)

LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA

10. The Committee recommends that the Law Commission of India may adopt a more structured and proactive approach in engaging with Members of Parliament, State Law Commissions and other relevant stakeholders so as to ensure wider consultation and informed deliberation on important legal issues. The Committee further recommends that the Commission strengthen its outreach and communication mechanisms, including periodic briefings, publication of updates and wider dissemination of its studies and reports, in order to enhance transparency, promote public awareness and reinforce institutional accountability in the law reform process.

(Para 3.18)

ENGAGEMENT OF LAW OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES

11. The Committee notes that out of the total 39 sanctioned posts of Additional Solicitors General of India, while all 14 posts earmarked for the Supreme Court of India are presently filled, only 13 out of 25 sanctioned posts for various High Courts are in position, leaving 12 posts vacant. The Committee is of the view that such vacancies at the level of Additional Solicitors General in High Courts may adversely affect effective representation of the Union of India, particularly in matters involving substantial questions of law and significant public interest. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department take expeditious steps to fill up the 12 vacant posts of Additional Solicitors General in High Courts in a time-bound manner, and periodically review the sanctioned strength vis-à-vis actual requirement, keeping in view the volume and complexity of litigation before different High Courts, so as to ensure effective and timely representation of the Union of India.

(Para 3.22)

PENDENCY OF GOVERNMENT CASES

12. In view of the substantial pendency of Government cases across various Courts and Tribunals and the rising litigation expenditure incurred over the years, the Committee recommends that the Department ensure effective and time-bound implementation of the “Directive for the Efficient and Effective Management of Litigation by the Government of India” across all Ministries/Departments, including their attached and subordinate offices, autonomous bodies and CPSEs. The Committee further recommends that Ministries/Departments with a high volume of litigation may undertake periodic internal reviews to identify systemic and procedural causes contributing to avoidable litigation and take appropriate administrative and policy-level corrective measures so as to minimise unwarranted appeals, streamline inter-departmental coordination and reduce both pendency and litigation-related expenditure in a sustainable manner.

(Para 3.31)

LEGAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & BRIEFING SYSTEM (LIMBS)

13. In view of the importance of the Legal Information Management & Briefing System (LIMBS) as a unified platform for monitoring Government litigation, the Committee recommends that the Department ensure complete and accurate entry of all Government cases in the system and expedite the proposed integration of LIMBS with the e-Courts platform through the development of intelligent APIs. The Committee further recommends that the planned automation of litigation-related processes, including processing of Advocate Bills, and the proposed use of Artificial Intelligence and data visualisation tools be implemented in a time-bound manner so as to facilitate proactive litigation management, early identification of repetitive and avoidable cases and informed decision-making by Ministries/Departments.

(Para 3.34)

FAST TRACK COURTS

14. The Committee recommends that the Department may pursue the State/UT Governments to expedite the establishment of Fast Track Courts so as to progressively achieve the recommended targets and ensure speedy disposal of cases relating to vulnerable sections and long-pending matters. The Committee further recommends that adequate coordination and monitoring mechanisms be strengthened to assess the performance and effectiveness of such courts in reducing pendency.

(Para 3.37)

LOK ADALATS

15. In view of the growing utilisation of E-Lok Adalats, wherein 10.52 crore cases have been taken up and 1.34 crore cases disposed of up to November 2025, the Committee recommends that appropriate measures be undertaken to further strengthen and expand the conduct of E-Lok Adalats across all States/UTs. The Committee is of the view that wider adoption and effective implementation of digital Lok Adalat mechanisms would facilitate amicable settlement of disputes at the pre-litigation as well as pending case stages, thereby contributing towards expeditious disposal of cases and reduction of pendency before regular courts.

(Para 3.42)

INCOME TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

16. The Committee notes that recruitment for the remaining 27 posts of Members (15 Accountant Members and 12 Judicial Members) in the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) is presently under process. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Department take expeditious and time-bound

steps to fill up the existing vacancies in the ITAT so as to strengthen its adjudicatory capacity and improve the disposal rate of appeals, thereby addressing the growing pendency of cases.

(Para 3.49)

17. The Committee notes that the ITAT e-Dwar (e-Filing Portal), launched to facilitate electronic filing of appeals and applications by appellants, is functioning smoothly and has been updated periodically based on stakeholder feedback. In this regard, the Committee recommends that continued efforts be made to effectively utilise and further strengthen the ITAT e-Dwar Portal for streamlining case management and facilitating electronic filing processes, with a view to achieving a better balance between institution and disposal of appeals and reducing overall pendency.

(Para 3.54)

INDIA INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION CENTRE

18. The Committee recommends that the Department of Legal Affairs may take necessary steps to expedite the process of appointment of the Chairperson and other Members of the Governing Body of the India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC) so as to ensure continuity in leadership and effective institutional governance. Timely filling up of these positions would be crucial for maintaining functional efficiency and providing policy direction for the growth of institutional arbitration in the country.

(Para 3.66)

19. The Committee further recommends that sustained efforts be made to strengthen the physical as well as ICT infrastructure of IIAC, including early operationalisation of the proposed arbitration facilities at World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi, and continued upgradation of its digital platforms for online arbitration and dispute resolution. The Committee also desires that adequate financial and administrative support be provided to enable IIAC to effectively discharge its statutory functions and enhance accessibility, efficiency and credibility of institutional arbitration services.

(Para 3.67)

20. The Committee also recommends that sustained efforts be made to further strengthen the institutional framework of arbitration through the India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC) so as to enhance its acceptability among Public Sector Undertakings and private entities. The Committee is of the view that focused measures may be undertaken to promote institutional arbitration, build stakeholder confidence and improve awareness regarding the services offered by IIAC. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the challenges faced by the Centre in establishing institutional credibility and attracting arbitration matters at the initial stage may be suitably addressed through policy support, capacity building and outreach initiatives to enable IIAC to emerge as a preferred forum for commercial dispute resolution in the country.

(Para 3.68)

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