PRESS RELEASE ON THE 162nd REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE

Posted On: 16 MAR 2026 6:03PM by PIB Delhi

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice chaired by Shri Brij Lal, MP, Rajya Sabha, presented its **162nd Report** on the Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the **Department of Justice** (Ministry of Law & Justice) on 16th March, 2026 to both the Houses of Parliament.

While examining the Demands for Grants, the Committee has also made an appraisal of performance, programmes, and policies of the Department of Justice along with that of National Legal Services Autority (NALSA), National Judicial Academy (NJA) and Supreme Court of India 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 Secretary, Department of Justice. 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 is mentioned at the end of each recommendation/observation. The entire Report is available on **https://sansad.in/rs > Committees > All Committees > Department Related Standing Committees > Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice**

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

in

162nd Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Department of Justice

Department of Justice

<u>Assessment of Budget allocated to the Department of Justice</u>

1. The Committee observes that while the Budget allocation to the Department for BE 2026–27 shows a marginal increase over the Revised Estimates of 2025–26, it remains significantly lower than the projections made by the Department. The Committee further notes that as on 09 February 2026, the expenditure incurred during 2025–26 amounts to ₹2,027.87 crore, which is about 71 per cent of the Revised Estimates of ₹2,847.03 crore. In view of the gap between projections, allocations and the pace of expenditure, the Committee opines that there is a need for closer alignment between budget projections and actual expenditure trends. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department undertake a realistic assessment of its requirements and

implementation capacity while formulating future budget proposals so as to ensure optimal utilisation of funds and effective implementation of programmes.

(Para 1.12)

SCHEMES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

2. The Committee notes that the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary has played a significant role in augmenting judicial infrastructure across the States and Union Territories, as reflected in the cumulative release of Central assistance and the creation of Court halls and residential units. However, the Committee expresses concern over the slow pace of expenditure and utilisation of funds in several States during 2025–26, despite substantial releases made under the Scheme. (Para 1.20)

3. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department in coordination with the State Governments and High Court Level Monitoring Committees, strengthen monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure timely utilisation of funds and completion of projects. The Committee also recommends that the Department take proactive measures to address procedural and system-related bottlenecks, including capacity building for effective implementation of the SNA-SPARSH framework, so that the objectives of the Scheme are achieved. (Para 1.21)

4. The Committee further recommends that the Department, in coordination with the judicial authorities and State Governments, take time-bound measures to upgrade court infrastructure across the country. The Committee emphasises the need for gender-sensitive court design, including provision of separate and adequate facilities for women lawyers, litigants and staff, as well as dedicated child-care and crèche facilities within court complexes. The Committee further recommends that deficiencies in digital infrastructure and the non-availability of proper network connectivity in courts be urgently addressed. The Committee also stress that such facilities should be uniformly extended to High Courts and subordinate courts, and not remain confined only to the Supreme Court of India.
(Para 1.22)

5. The Committee is of the opinion that Gram Nyayalayas were intended to improve access to justice at the grassroots level. By establishing it, it will be able to provide speedy, affordable and decentralised justice, especially in rural and remote areas. Moreover, the success of Gram Nyayalayas depends on their regular functioning, availability of basic infrastructure, presence of trained judicial officers and adequate support from the State Governments. (Para 1.27)

6. The Committee observes that since establishment of Gram Nyayalayas is not mandatory for States and that, in many States where such Courts exist, they function only for two days a week, it restrict the effectiveness in disposal of cases. (Para 1.28)

7. The Committee in its 147th Report had recommended that Gram Nyayalayas should function on all working days instead of one or two days a week, the Department stated that although the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the State Governments, the Department has issued a letter dated 30.04.2025 to the States regarding it. The Committee, however, reiterates its recommendation made in 147th Report that Gram Nyayalayas must function on all working days in order to effectively reduce the backlog of cases at the local level. The Committee believe that early creation of posts and timely filling up of vacancies of Nyayadhikaris would ensure uninterrupted functioning of Gram Nyayalayas.
(Para 1.29)

8. The Committee appreciates the significant progress made under the e-Courts Mission Mode Project by the Department under the guidance of the e-Committee, Supreme Court of India in strengthening digital infrastructure and enhancing access to justice. The Committee recommends that the remaining Court complexes under the WAN project be connected expeditiously and adequate cyber-security and system redundancy measures may be ensured for uninterrupted services.

(Para 1.34)

9. The Committee notes that against the release of ₹931.08 crore under the Revised Estimates for FY 2025–26, expenditure of only ₹407.40 crore had been incurred as on 20.01.2026. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department take time-bound corrective measures, including close monitoring of fund utilisation, streamlining of implementation processes, and enhanced coordination with implementing agencies and State Governments, so as to ensure optimal and timely utilisation of funds.

(Para 1.35)

10. The Committee appreciates the comprehensive and integrated approach adopted under the DISHA Scheme in consolidating Tele-Law, Nyaya Bandhu, Nyaya Mitra, and Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness programmes for strengthening access to justice to the disadvantaged and legally vulnerable sections across the country.

(Para 1.44)

11. The Committee recommends that the Department by proper planning and coordination with implementing agencies on Tele-Law can timely execute MoAs and optimally utilise the allocated funds. The Committee also recommends greater use of social media and digital outreach tools by the Department for promoting legal literacy and legal awareness among citizens under the DISHA Scheme.

(Para 1.45)

12. The Committee notes that while the physical achievement in terms of functional Fast Track Special Courts has shown improvement during FY 2025–26, the release of funds has remained significantly lower than the allocation as on 28.01.2026. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department ensure timely and adequate release of funds to the States/UTs, coupled with close monitoring, so as to sustain the functioning of existing FTSCs and achieve the targeted establishment of Courts for expeditious disposal of rape and POCSO Act cases. (Para 1.51)

13. The Committee notes that against a sanctioned strength of 102 posts, only 63 are presently in position in the Department, resulting in vacancies of about 39 per cent, which adversely affects its overall functioning. The Committee, in its earlier Reports, had expressed concern over the continued dependence of the Department on the Ministry of Home Affairs for meeting all its manpower requirements and had recommended the establishment of a separate cadre unit for the Department. The Committee reiterates the same.

(Para 1.53)

14. The Committee is of the view that shortage of staff strength hampers the smooth functioning of the Department. While appreciating the steps taken by the Department to bridge this gap, the Committee recommends that the Department should pursue the matter of filling up vacancy with DoPT expeditiously and pursue the matter at the highest level to ensure early approval and implementation of an independent cadre, with clearly defined timelines, so as to address persistent manpower shortages and ensure smooth functioning of the Department.

(Para 1.55)

VACANCY OF JUDGES IN HIGHER JUDICIARY

15. The Committee notes that as on 31.12.2025, total pendency of cases in the High Courts continues to remain at a substantially high level, with 44.67 lakh cases pending across 25 High Courts, as per data from the National Judicial Data Grid. Of these, one High Court has a pendency exceeding 10 lakh cases, while 16 High Courts have pendency of more than 1 lakh cases, reflecting persistent systemic stress on the higher judiciary. (Para 1.60)

16. The Committee observes that the Allahabad High Court accounts for the highest pendency, with over 12.07 lakh cases, followed by the Rajasthan High Court (6.88 lakh cases) and the Bombay High Court (6.65 lakh cases). Several other High Courts, including Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana, also record pendency well above the national average, indicating region-specific capacity and caseload challenges. (Para 1.61)

17. The Committee notes that civil cases account for the bulk of pendency in most High Courts, while criminal case pendency has also been rising. To address this issue Alternate Dispute Redressal (ADR) may be promoted and these case may diverted to Arbitration, Mediation, Conciliations and Lok Adalats. Making pre-litigation Mediation mandatory in Civil disputes also helps in reducing pendency.

(Para 1.62)

18. The Committee is of the view that incremental improvements in disposal alone are not sufficient to address the problem of pendency. Urgent measures such as timely filling up of judicial vacancies, strengthening of infrastructure, better case management, and increased use of technology and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are required.

(Para 1.63)

19. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department, in coordination with the High Courts and State Governments, prepare Courts-specific, time-bound action plans to reduce pendency and filling of vacant post immediately. The Committee also recommends phased expansion of live-streaming of Court proceedings to all Courts, including High Courts and Subordinate Courts, and suggest exploring the use of AI-based tools to support judicial work and improve efficiency. (Para 1.64)

NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

ASSESSMENT OF BUDGET ALLOCATED TO NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (NALSA)

20. The Committee is concerned that shortfall in the projected budgetary allocation may adversely affect the effective implementation of schemes and programmes of the National Legal Services Authority, including the Legal Aid Defence Counsel System (LADCS). The Committee, therefore, recommends that NALSA, through the Department, approach the Ministry of Finance for suitable enhancement of the Budget Estimates for 2026–27, so as to ensure that shortfall of funds does not impede the effective implementation of its statutory mandate. (Para 2.4)

SCHEMES/PROGRAMMES OF NALSA

21. The Committee recommends that National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) may focus on improving the quality and reach of its existing legal aid services by giving special attention to districts with high pendency and large numbers of under-trial prisoners, so that legal assistance reaches those who need it the most.

(Para 2.27)

22. The Committee also recommends that NALSA strengthen coordination with State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities, and local institutions to ensure better implementation of legal aid programmes, particularly in rural, tribal, and remote areas where access to justice remains limited. During the examination of the Demands for Grants (DFG) for the year 2026-27, the Committee note that the theme song developed by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has not gained adequate visibility and is not widely known among the general public. The Committee, therefore, recommends that effective steps may be taken to ensure that the accessibility and outreach of the theme song are significantly enhanced, particularly at the grassroots level, so as to improve public awareness about legal services and related initiatives.

(Para 2.28)

23. The Committee emphasises that NALSA make greater use of simple digital tools and field-based outreach, along with regular monitoring, to ensure that legal aid schemes, including legal awareness programmes and Mobile Legal Aid initiatives, are effectively implemented and deliver visible results on the ground.

(Para 2.29)

24. The Committee recommends that the Department, in coordination with the National Legal Services Authority, take time-bound steps during 2026–27 to replace the old and non-functional Mobile Legal Aid Units with new vehicles, ensure adequate funds for the same, and put in place proper arrangements for their regular use and upkeep. The Committee also recommends that the reasons for wide variations in the working condition of these vehicles across States be examined and suitable corrective measures be taken so that Mobile Legal Aid Units function effectively in all States, particularly in remote and rural areas.

(Para 2.33)

MANPOWER REQUIREMENT AT NALSA

25. The Committee recommends that the Government expedite the creation of the remaining 35 posts sanctioned for the NALSA across various cadres, in a definite and time-bound manner, keeping in view the substantial expansion in the functions, schemes, and outreach activities entrusted to the Authority.

(Para 2.38)

26. The Committee further emphasises the need for NALSA to take immediate and concrete steps to strengthen its institutional capacity by addressing staff shortages, particularly at the lower and middle levels, so as to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of its schemes and programmes; timely maintenance of data; proper upkeep of accounts; and efficient record management.

(Para 2.39)

27. The Committee also recommends that NALSA should establish an internal audit Department or a dedicated audit cell at the earliest to strengthen financial discipline and internal controls and to effectively address the deficiencies pointed out by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India in its Audit Reports.

(Para 2.40)

NATIONAL JUDICIAL ACADEMY, BHOPAL

PROGRAMMES OF NJA

28. The Committee notes that the National Judicial Academy has adequate physical infrastructure, academic facilities, and financial support from the Government. However, the Committee observes that the number of training programmes and participant coverage has declined in recent years. Thus, the Committee recommends that the Academy review its academic planning so as to make better use of available resources and expand the reach of its training programmes.

(Para 3.16)

29. The Committee further observes that there is limited assessment of the impact of training programmes on judicial performance. The Committee recommends that the Academy develop clear and measurable indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of its training, particularly in areas such as use of technology, case management, cybercrime, and handling of specialised matters.

(Para 3.17)

30. In view of increasing public scrutiny of judicial conduct, the Committee recommends that the Academy institutionalise regular training programmes on judicial ethics, sensitivity in cases involving women and vulnerable groups, and contemporary social issues, including periodic refresher courses for serving judges.

(Para 3.18)

31. The Committee appreciates that the Academy has conducted successful training programmes for foreign judges. The Committee applauds these efforts and recommends the continuation of such programmes without diluting the Academy's primary focus on domestic judicial needs.

(Para 3.19)

32. The Committee also recommends that the National Judicial Academy design and implement structured and mandatory training programmes for judges on the newly enacted criminal laws, namely the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023; and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, and ensure their timely roll-out across all judicial levels so as to enable smooth and effective implementation of the new legal framework.

(Para 3.20)

Vacancies in NJA

33. The Committee notes that a substantial number of sanctioned posts in the Academy remain vacant, including academic positions, which may adversely affect the depth and continuity of training and research activities. The Committee, therefore, recommends that vacant posts be filled expeditiously and

that the requirement for strengthening academic faculty be assessed realistically in view of the expanding mandate of the Academy.

(Para 3.22)

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

ASSESSMENT OF BUDGET ALLOCATED TO THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA (DEMAND NO. 67)

34. The Committee recommends that, in view of the consistent and efficient utilisation of funds by the Supreme Court of India and the requirement of supplementary provisions in 2024–25, the Budget Estimates for the SCI should be formulated more realistically, keeping in view past expenditure trends, so as to minimise the need for supplementary demands and ensure uninterrupted functioning of the institution.

(Para 4.4)

35. The Committee further notes that there is a shortfall of about ₹128 crore between the projected requirement of the Supreme Court of India for 2026–27 and the Budget Estimates provided thereof. The Committee would like to know whether this shortfall is likely to adversely affect the functioning of the Supreme Court and, if so, the specific areas where such impact may be felt.

(Para 4.5)

Expansion of Supreme Court Building (Project)

36. The Committee is of the view that expansion of the Supreme Court of India building has become a necessity of the present time, in view of the acute requirement for adequate parking facilities; additional chambers for Judges; sufficient space for lawyers; security services; and offices for officers of the National Legal Services Authority.

(Para 4.11)

37. The Committee recommends that a well-defined and realistic time schedule for completion of the expansion project be strictly adhered to by the implementing agency so as to ensure timely completion of the project and to avoid any cost escalation or requirement of additional funds arising on account of delays.

(Para 4.12)

38. The Committee notes with concern the observations made by the Supreme Court of India, pointing to the continued presence of certain officials in the Supreme Court Registry for as long as 20 to 30 years. The Committee is of the view that such long tenures, if left unregulated, may adversely affect institutional discipline and administrative neutrality.

(Para 4.13)

39. The Committee, therefore, emphasises the need for regular review of staffing policies, introduction of rotational postings, and strengthening of internal accountability mechanisms in court registries to uphold the principles of transparency and efficiency in judicial functioning.

(Para 4.14)

****

RKK