PRESS RELEASE ON THE 161ST 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 **161st Report** on the Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the **Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances and Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare** (Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions) to Rajya Sabha on 16th March, 2026 and laid on Table of the Lok Sabha on 16th March, 2026.

While examining the Demands for Grants, the Committee has also made an appraisal of performance, programmes, and policies of the Departments of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances and Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare along with that of National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), vis-à-vis expenditure made out of Consolidated Fund of India in the current financial year during the meeting held on 18th February, 2026.

The Committee scrutinised the Demands for Grants thoroughly in its meeting with the Secretary, Departments of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances and Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare. 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.**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

of

161st Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the

Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances and

Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS & PUBLIC GRIEVANCES (DARPG)

<u>Budget Analysis of DARPG</u>

1. In order to improve budget utilisation and enhance the credibility of projections, the Committee recommends that the Department should undertake a rigorous internal review of its past three years' schemes and activities, identifying specific heads and projects where slippages occurred and preparing realistic activity-wise timelines so that future BEs are based on clearly phased implementation plans rather than broad aggregate estimates.

(Para 2.11)

2. The Committee further recommends that the Department may strengthen its quarterly monitoring mechanism, with clearly defined physical and financial milestones and periodic mid-year reviews, so that emerging underspending is identified early and corrective measures such as re-appropriation within heads, timely re-allocation, or expediting pending approvals can be taken to minimise the gap between BE, RE and actual expenditure.

(Para 2.12)

3. The Committee also recommends that, while formulating projections for submission to the Ministry of Finance, the Department should base its proposals on demonstrable past utilisation, realistic assessment of implementation capacity and firmed-up project pipelines, so that the difference between projections and finally approved BEs, as well as subsequent revisions, is narrowed and the credibility of the Department's budgetary demand is enhanced.

(Para 2.13)

4. In Committee's view, persistent high under-utilisation across 28 heads despite the cash-management provisions issued by Ministry of Finance (Annexure-I) indicates that the Department's initial MEP/QEP and budget projections were not adequately aligned with realistic implementation capacity, and that mid-year adjustments and re-appropriation were not effectively undertaken.

(Para 2.17)

5. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should undertake a detailed head-wise review, identify specific administrative, procedural or implementation bottlenecks and furnish a factual note explaining the reasons for

non-utilisation in each case, together with corrective steps proposed, to the Committee. (Para 2.18)

6. The Committee further recommends that from the subsequent years the Department should prepare its Budget Estimates and Monthly/Quarterly Expenditure Plans on the basis of a detailed assessment of each scheme, including the stage of preparation, tendering schedule and actual spending pattern in previous years, so that expenditure is spread more evenly across the quarters, rush of spending at the end of the year can be avoided, and the Department's budget proposals and cash-flow projections become more realistic and reliable within the existing cash-management system.

(Para 2.19)

7. The Committee recommends that the Department may strengthen its internal project planning and procurement processes, particularly for components under the Comprehensive System for Redressal of Public Grievances, so that budgetary provisions translate into timely implementation and avoid recurring downward revisions at the Revised Estimates stage.

(Para 2.23)

<u>Policies, Programmes and Schemes of DARPG</u>

8. The Committee appreciates the initiatives of the Department in conceptualizing and conducting the National Good Governance Webinar Series on diverse and relevant themes covering sectors such as Health, Education, Environment, Water Management, Sports, Public Grievances, Service Delivery and Innovation, among others. The Committee observes that these webinars have served as an effective platform for cross-learning and dissemination of best practices among various levels of administration. While commending the Department for this constructive endeavour, the Committee feels that certain emerging areas of governance, particularly those involving the application of advanced technologies, may also be included as recurring themes in order to enhance the scope and contemporary relevance of the Webinar Series.

(Para 2.38)

9. The Committee, therefore, recommends that while selecting themes for the National Good Governance Webinar Series, the Department should also include "Use of Artificial Intelligence for Improving Governance and Service Delivery" as a recurring theme, so that States and districts can learn how AI-based tools are being practically

applied by award winning initiatives and can replicate these solutions to make governance simpler, faster and more citizen friendly.

(Para 2.39)

10. The Committee further wishes that a consolidated statement indicating how many of the best practices showcased in these events have been replicated by other States or Ministries, and what outcomes have been achieved thereby, may be furnished.

(Para 2.40)

11. The Committee proposes that the Department institute an award to Ministries and Departments/Institutions, under their purview, that demonstrate exemplary budget planning, measured inter alia by the minimum variance between Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure, so as to promote healthy competition and strengthen fiscal discipline across the Government.

(Para 2.41)

12. The Committee observes that the number of public grievances registered has increases over the years. While this indicates a growing public awareness and confidence in the grievance redressal mechanism, the Committee is of the view that it is equally important to undertake root cause analysis of these complaints and assess the tangible outcomes arising therefrom.

(Para 2.47)

13. In view of this, the Committee recommends that the Department institutionalise comprehensive root cause analysis of recurring and high-impact grievances, and use the findings to drive systemic reforms aimed at reducing the incidence of complaints rather than merely improving disposal figures. The Committee further emphasises that grievance redressal should not be treated as a statistical exercise and that particular attention should be paid to unresolved and repeatedly reopened cases, with a focus on ensuring actual citizen satisfaction and meaningful resolution rather than mere formal closure.

(Para 2.48)

14. The Committee observes that the National e-Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) 2025 has been initiated and is expected to be completed by June/July 2026. In the written submission made by the Department, the Committee notes that delays and submission of incomplete data by certain Single Points of Contact (SPoCs) from States and Union Territories have been affecting the efficiency and accuracy of the assessment process. The Committee further notes that the Department has been

organizing review meetings with the SPoCs and plans to hold workshops to sensitize and support them in ensuring timely and accurate submission of data and information, which is a welcome step. (Para 2.53)

15. The Committee recommends that, as the National Conference on e-Governance already brings together senior State IT and administrative officers, DARPG and MeitY, and focuses on digital governance and given repeated issues of weak data submission by State SPOCs for NeSDA. A sideline meeting with all State/UT on NeSDA and CPGRAMS SPOCs be made a compulsory fixture of National Conference on e-Governance to address data gaps, handhold low-capacity States, and agree on time-bound data-quality improvements.

(Para 2.54)

16. The Committee appreciates the efforts of the Department in conceptualizing and implementing the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) as a progressive initiative towards benchmarking governance performance at the district level. The Committee notes that this innovative measure has introduced a spirit of healthy competition among districts and has provided a valuable framework for identifying gaps and promoting citizen-centric governance. The Committee, therefore, recommends that DGGI be expanded to more States, with particular attention to aspirational districts and those with high grievance loads, so that district-level competition and data-driven governance are strengthened where they are needed most.

(Para 2.60)

17. The Committee observes, upon examination of the written submission by the Department, that the implementation of SCI Projects faces significant challenges, such as delays in submission of Utilization Certificates, project reports, and other mandatory documents and frequent transfers of District Collectors and project implementing staff, which lead to loss of continuity and institutional memory. The Committee, therefore, recommends that future State Collaboration Initiatives MoUs shall include phased release of funds linked to milestones and timely Utilization Certificates submission; and mandatory handover notes upon transfer of key officials, so that institutional memory is preserved and financial discipline is ensured.

(Para 2.62)

18. The Committee recommends that, while promoting the use of Hindi, the Department may ensure that all guidelines, key parts of CSMOP and e-Office usage are made available in simple and easily understandable Hindi, avoiding overly technical or complex administrative use of Hindi.

(Para 2.66)

19. The Committee desires that suitable technical improvements and plug-ins be developed to enable seamless migration and interoperability between e-Office and widely used office productivity suites so that files and documents can be created, edited and shared without format issues or loss of functionality.

(Para 2.75)

20. The Committee recommends that, while continuing the record weeding out drives under Special Campaigns, the Department may issue detailed instructions to all Ministries/Departments that:

i. historically significant or rare documents identified during weeding out (including records relating to major national movements, landmark administrative decisions and important institutional milestones) shall be segregated and not destroyed;
ii. such records shall be reviewed by designated officers in consultation, where necessary, with professional archivists; and
iii. after review, these documents shall either be preserved in-house with appropriate cataloguing or transferred to the National Archives or other authorised archival repositories for permanent preservation.

(Para 2.82)

21. The Committee notes with pride appreciates India's prestigious assumption of the Presidency of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) for the next four years, marking a significant milestone in showcasing the country's leadership in global public administration, and particularly commends the Department for successfully hosting the Annual IIAS-DARPG India Conference 2025 in New Delhi from 10-14 February 2025.

(Para 2.87)

22. The Committee notes with satisfaction the launch of the 710-page publication Viksit Bharat during the Conference and appreciates the Department for this landmark international event that has elevated India's stature in the international governance discourse.

(Para 2.89)

23. The Committee appreciates the efforts of the Department for producing two short-duration films in Hindi and English on the CPGRAMS portal through the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) to enhance public awareness about the grievance redressal mechanism. However, the Committee observes that there appears to be a lack of awareness among the masses regarding the availability and utility of these films.

(Para 2.101)

24. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department undertake comprehensive advertising campaigns especially using digital media and social media to widely disseminate these films and ensure that the benefits of the CPGRAMS portal reach the common citizen, as the purpose of creating such films would otherwise remain largely unfulfilled.

(Para 2.102)

25. The Committee hopes that the Department will take all necessary measures to adhere to the revised implementation timeline for NextGen CPGRAMS, and closely monitor the progress as per the revised timeline devised by it.

(Para 2.110)

26. The Committee recommends that, in view of the growing role of Common Service Centres (CSCs) in grievance filing, the Department should institute mandatory and periodic training programmes for all CSC operators on CPGRAMS processes, citizen interface and grievance categories, and ensure that government-approved CSCs are clearly and uniformly identifiable to citizens through prominently displayed signage distinct from private centres.

(Para 2.115)

27. The Committee further recommends that every complainant filing a grievance through a CSC be provided with a complete copy of the grievance as actually lodged on the system, and not merely an acknowledgement receipt, and that the Department put in plakhe clear accountability mechanisms backed by appropriate standard operating procedures and monitoring to ensure that errors, omissions or wrongful actions by CSC operators do not prejudice the rights or interests of complainants.

(Para 2.116)

28. The Committee is of the view that the Department should provide citizens with an option to seek reopening of grievances that have been wrongly closed, rather than compelling them to register fresh complaints for the same matter. The Committee further desires that the existing binary feedback mechanism be refined to include graded options such as "completely satisfactory", "satisfactory", "dissatisfactory", "poor" and "bad", so as to capture citizen experience more accurately and enable nuanced analysis of grievance redressal quality.

(Para 2.117)

29. The Committee recommends that the Department prepare a time-bound implementation plan covering development, security audit, pilot testing in select Ministries/Departments and States/UTs, and full-scale deployment, along with clear

service level benchmarks for response time, accuracy of grievance categorisation, and uptime. It will help in timely implementation of this feature.

(Para 2.123)

30. The Committee is of the view that, in designing the AI-powered Multimodal Multilingual Assistant and NextGen CPGRAMS, the Department provide comprehensive accessibility features, including voice-based interaction, simplified interfaces for low-literacy users, Divyangjan-friendly design, and the capability to upload photographs, videos and documents, while ensuring robust data security and privacy safeguards.

(Para 2.124)

31. The Committee recommends that the Department, in consultation with State Governments and Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs), prepare a time-bound Capacity Building Action Plan with quantified annual targets for training officers at State, district and sub district levels, ensuring coverage of all major service-delivery Departments and mandatory orientation on NextGen CPGRAMS features.

(Para 2.136)

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Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare

Budget Analysis of DPPW

32. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare, in coordination with the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and the other concerned Ministry, take expeditious steps to relocate its offices to suitable Government-owned premises, wherever feasible, instead of continuing in rented accommodation. Such relocation would result in substantial savings to the public exchequer by eliminating recurring rental expenditure.

(Para 3.6)

33. Under Object Head 05.03.28 – Professional Services, the Committee observes a sharp and disproportionate increase in allocation during the financial year 2025–26. The Budget Estimate remained at ₹12 lakh during the financial years 2023–24 and 2024–25, whereas it increased sharply to ₹3.00 crore during 2025–26. However, actual expenditure as on 13 January 2026 stood at only ₹1.03 crore. The Committee notes that this significant gap between allocation and actual utilization (34.33 percent only) indicates overestimation of requirements and inadequate expenditure planning.

(Para 3.7)

34. Under Object Head 05.03.31 – Grants-in-Aid, the Committee notes that the Budget Estimate for the financial year 2025–26 was ₹3.00 crore, which was reduced to ₹1.00 crore at the Revised Estimates stage, while actual expenditure was only ₹10.50 lakh as on 13 January 2026. The Committee is concerned that such low utilization of funds (3.5 per cent only) allocated for welfare-related activities adversely affects implementation of pensioners' welfare programmes.

(Para 3.8)

35. The Committee, in view of the above observations, recommends that the Department strengthen its budget estimation and financial planning processes to ensure realistic projections and avoiding large variations between Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure, particularly under Object Heads 05.03.27 (Minor Works), 05.03.28 (Professional Services), and 05.03.31 (Grants-in-Aid).

(Para 3.9)

36. The Committee also recommends strengthening internal financial monitoring systems to ensure timely and optimal utilization of allocated funds and to prevent avoidable under-utilisation of resources.

(Para 3.10)

Policies, Programmes and Schemes of DPPW

37. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department undertake targeted and inclusive awareness campaigns specifically aimed at vulnerable and special categories of pensioners, including retired artisans, elderly pensioners, and pensioners residing in remote and rural areas. These awareness initiatives should focus on educating pensioners about the mandatory requirement of submitting Digital Life Certificates, the timelines involved, and the various available methods for submitting DLC, including face authentication, mobile-based submission, and assisted modes.

(Para 3.14)

38. The Committee further suggests that such awareness campaigns be conducted through multiple outreach channels, including pensioner welfare associations, Common Service Centres (CSCs), banks, post offices, local administrative offices and field-level functionaries. Special assistance mechanisms may also be established to facilitate submission of DLC for pensioners with limited digital access or mobility constraints.

(Para 3.15)

39. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department undertake a detailed analysis of the nature and categories of the annual pension-related complaints received through CPENGRAMS, with a view to identifying recurring issues, procedural bottlenecks, and systemic deficiencies contributing to grievance generation. The Committee further recommends that the Department implement appropriate systemic reforms, including process simplification, strengthening of digital pension processing systems, capacity building of dealing officials, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms, in order to reduce grievance generation at source.

(Para 3.19)

40. The Committee notes that Pension Adalats serve as an important institutional mechanism for expeditious and on-the-spot resolution of pension-related grievances. However, the effectiveness of such Adalats depends significantly on the extent to which pensioners are made aware of these opportunities in advance. The Committee is of the view that lack of timely and adequate dissemination of information may prevent many eligible pensioners, particularly those residing in remote areas or those with limited digital access, from availing themselves of this grievance redressal mechanism.

(Para 3.22)

41. The Committee emphasises the need for the Department to undertake widespread and well-coordinated awareness campaigns sufficiently in advance of organising Pension Adalats, so as to ensure that all pensioners with pending grievances are informed and able to participate. Information regarding Pension Adalats should be disseminated through multiple channels, including pensioner welfare associations, pension disbursing banks, post offices, and relevant Government offices, in addition to digital platforms such as official websites, pension portals, SMS alerts, and social media.

(Para 3.23)

42. The Committee recommends that the Department strengthen the Anubhav Awards scheme by giving it wider publicity across all Ministries/Departments and their attached/subordinate offices and by examining the feasibility of providing appropriate monetary incentives or enhanced cash awards to Anubhav awardees and selected contributors.

(Para 3.26)

43. The Committee recommends that the Department develop and implement a centralised digital clearance mechanism through a dedicated online portal, integrated with existing pension processing systems, to enable retiring employees to obtain all required No Objection Certificates (NOCs) electronically. The portal should automatically route clearance requests to all concerned offices, provide real-time status tracking, and ensure electronic issuance of NOCs in a time-bound manner.

(Para 3.31)

44. The Committee is of the view that such a digital and entralized system would enhance transparency, improve administrative efficiency, prevent delays in settlement of retirement benefits, and significantly reduce hardship faced by retiring employees, while aligning with the Government's objective of strengthening digital governance.

(Para 3.32)

45. The Committee recommends that the Department expedite efforts to achieve 100 per cent integration by onboarding the remaining banks at the earliest, ensuring comprehensive digital access to pension services for all beneficiaries.

(Para 3.34)

46. The Committee recommend that, in view of the alarming increase in cyber frauds and online financial scams, the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare should design and implement targeted cyber-security and fraud-prevention awareness campaigns for Government pensioners and family pensioners, in coordination with banks, India Post Payments Bank, Common Service Centres and Pensioners' Welfare Associations, so as to sensitise them against sharing OTPs/passwords, how to identify and respond to fake "pension verification" calls or links, and to apprise them of available mechanisms for reporting such incidents.

(Para 3.37)

47. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department consider introducing a Welfare Inspector system, on the lines of the model implemented in the Railway Department, to provide dedicated assistance and facilitation to retiring employees and pensioners. The Committee is of the view that Welfare Inspectors may be designated to function as nodal facilitators to guide retiring employees through all stages of retirement and pension processing.

(Para 3.41)

48. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department undertake a comprehensive study and detailed assessment to ascertain the reasons for the limited response to migration from NPS to UPS. The study should identify key barriers, procedural constraints, lack of awareness, or any perceived disadvantages or disincentives associated with the scheme.

(Para 3.46)

49. The Committee welcomes these initiatives and appreciates the efforts made by the Department in this regard.

(Para 3.56)

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