

Standing Committee Report Summary

Review of Functioning of Tribunal System in the Country

- The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chair: Mr Brij Lal) submitted its report on “Review of Functioning of Tribunal System in the Country” on August 7, 2026. Tribunals are bodies established for discharging judicial or quasi-judicial duties. The objective is to reduce case load of the judiciary, or to bring in subject expertise for technical matters. The Committee examined the functioning and capacities of five Tribunals: (i) Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), (ii) Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT), (iii) Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), (iv) National Green Tribunal (NGT), and (v) National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). Key observations and recommendations include:
 - **Vacancies in Tribunals:** The Committee observed member shortages in almost all examined Tribunals. In ITAT, 27 out of 126 sanctioned member posts were vacant as of May 2026. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has a requirement of 10 judicial and expert members each, against which five judicial members and six expert members are in position. The Committee recommended that appointment processes should be initiated in advance of anticipated vacancies, so that outgoing members can be replaced immediately. It further recommended that the National Company Law Tribunal’s (NCLT) requirement of additional benches and members should be periodically reviewed, considering its increasing case load.
 - The Committee further noted that reliance on temporary, contractual or outsourced non-judicial staff impacts administrative efficiency and case scheduling. The Committee recommended: (i) establishing waitlists and reserve panels, (ii) conducting regular manpower audits, and (iii) revising the NCLT Recruitment Rules, 2020 to expand avenues for direct recruitment.
 - **Digital adjudication and cyber security:** The Committee noted that ITAT has implemented electronic filing of appeals and applications through its e-Dwar portal. In this regard, the Committee recommended regular cyber-security audits to prevent misuse of taxpayer information.
 - The Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT) has undertaken digitisation initiatives through implementation of the e-RCT project. The Committee recommended expanding this initiative to introduce a fully digital e-filing system, along with real-time case tracking. It also recommended (i) allowing RCT claims to be filed from any location, (ii) introducing pre-litigation mediation, and (iii) standardising compensation.
 - The Committee noted that there was an absence of a dedicated computer or IT Section within the NGT. The Committee recommended establishing a structured IT division, with specialised technical posts across all benches. This would support e-filing and virtual hearings.
 - **Addressing case pendency:** The Committee noted that systemic delays remain a primary bottleneck across Tribunals. It recommended: (i) reducing RCT timelines to 45 days for written statements and 60 days for Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) reports, (ii) prioritising long-pending corporate insolvency resolution process cases in NCLT, and (iii) stage-wise tracking of long-pending NGT cases to identify and address avoidable delays. For NCLT, it recommended examining the feasibility of creating dedicated insolvency benches. This will reduce the workload of benches handling both company law and insolvency matters.
 - **Infrastructure gaps:** The Committee highlighted infrastructural deficiencies in Tribunals, such as: (i) ageing buildings, (ii) rented premises, and (iii) NCLT benches operating from unsuitable government and corporate buildings. The Committee recommended adequate budgetary support to upgrade infrastructure. It further recommended: (i) completing ongoing construction projects, (ii) conducting site assessments, and (iii) developing permanent facilities in line with National Court Management System (NCMS) standards to strengthen institutional capacity and ensure adequate space for future expansion.
 - **Jurisdiction of TDSAT:** For the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal, it recommended: (i) expanding its role in telecom consumer disputes, (ii) creating an independent Telecom Ombudsman and (iii) spreading public awareness on Aadhaar-related appeal procedures.

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