

REPORT NO.

164



PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTY FOURTH REPORT
ON
DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2026-27)
OF
DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS
(Ministry of Law & Justice)

(Presented to the Rajya Sabha on 16th March, 2026)

(Laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 16th March, 2026)



Rajya Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi
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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

(Constituted w.e.f. 26th September, 2025)

Names of Members of the Committee

1. Shri Brij Lal — *Chairman*

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri N.R. Elango
3. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
4. Shri Naveen Jain
5. Shri Manan Kumar Mishra
6. Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray
7. Shri C. Ve Shanmugam
8. Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla
9. Shri Vivek K. Tankha
10. Shri Kapil Sibal

LOK SABHA

11. Shri M. Mallesh Babu
12. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
13. Shri Arup Chakraborty
14. Shri Gaddigoudar Parvatagouda Chandanagouda
15. Shri P. P. Chaudhary
16. Shri Varun Chaudhry
17. Dr. Faggan Singh Kulaste
18. Shri Dineshbhai Makwana
19. Shri Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi
20. Adv. Gowaal Kagada Padavi
21. Shri Gyaneshwar Patil
22. Shri Radhakrishna
23. Shri A. Raja
24. Shri Madhavaneni Raghunandan Rao
25. Shri Saleng A. Sangma
26. Shri Pushpendra Saroj

27. Shrimati Manju Sharma
28. Shri Abdul Rashid Sheikh
29. Shri Mahendra Singh Solanky
30. Shri K. Sudhakaran
31. Shri Lalji Verma

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.Narayanan, Joint Secretary
2. Smt Indira Chaturvedi Vaidya, Director
3. Shri Kuldip Singh, Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on its behalf, do hereby present this One Hundred Sixty Fourth Report on Demands for Grants 2026-27 pertaining to the Department of Legal Affairs.

2. In accordance with the constitutional requirement under Article 113, the estimated expenditure of Ministries/Departments of Government of India projected under various Demands for Grants for the upcoming financial year need to be voted by Parliament. As a sequel thereto, Demands for Grants of the relevant Ministries/Departments stand referred to concerned Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee to make a close scrutiny thereof under Rule 270 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States. While making scrutiny of Demands for Grants, the Committee has made an appraisal of performance, programmes, and policies of the Department of Legal Affairs *vis-à-vis* expenditure made out of Consolidated Fund of India in the current Financial Year.

3. In the Report, scrutiny of Demand No. 65 pertaining to the Department of Legal Affairs for the Financial Year 2026-27 has been made by the Committee.

4. During the course of examination of the above Demands, the Committee heard the views of the Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs, Representatives of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal; Director, Indian Law Institute; Joint Secretary & Law Officer, Law Commission of India,; Registrar, India International Arbitration in its sitting held on 19th February, 2026.

5. The Committee, while making its observations/recommendations, has mainly relied upon the following:

- (i) Presentations made by the Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs;
- (ii) Presentations made by the representatives of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and Indian Law Institute;
- (iii) Detailed Demands for Grants of the Department for the Financial Year 2026-27;
- (iv) Detailed Explanatory Notes on the Demands for Grants 2026-27 received from the Department;
- (v) Annual Report of the Ministry for the Year 2025-26 and the latest available Annual Reports of the attached Offices/Institutions/Organisations of the Department;

- (vi) Written replies furnished by the Department to the Questionnaires sent by the Committee Secretariat;
- (vii) Written clarifications to the points/issues raised by Members in the meeting of the Committee.

6. The Report is based on the facts, figures and submissions (both oral and written) tendered by the Department/Institutions/Organisations to the Committee.

7. The Committee considered and adopted the Report in its sitting held on the 12th March, 2026 and presented to both the Houses of Parliament on 16th March, 2026.

8. For facility of reference and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the body of the Report.

**New Delhi,
16th March, 2026**

Brij Lal
Chairman,
Department-related Parliamentary Standing
Committee on Personnel Public Grievances
Law and Justice

ACRONYMS

ACI	Arbitration Council of India
BCI	Bar Council of India
BE	Budget Estimate
CAT	Central Administrative Tribunal
DoPT	Department of Personnel & Training
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IIAC	Indian International Arbitration Centre
ILI	Indian Law Institute
ILS	Indian Legal Service
ITAT	Income Tax Appellate Tribunal
LCI	Law Commission of India
LIMBS	Legal Information Management & Briefing System
RE	Revised Estimate
SC	Supreme Court
UT	Union Territory

REPORT

CHAPTER – I

OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT

Ministry of Law & Justice

1.0 The Ministry of Law & Justice owes its origin to the Charter Act, 1833 enacted by the British Parliament. The Ministry comprises the following three Departments under the overall charge of the Law and Justice Minister assisted by a Minister of State. Each of the three departments is administratively headed by an independent Secretary.



1.1 The key mandate of the Ministry includes providing policy support in administration of justice; furnishing legal advice to the Government of India and defending Government of India in various Courts and Tribunals; drafting Supreme and Subordinate legislations for Government of India; appointment, resignation and removal of Judges of the Supreme Court of India and High Courts in States; Legal aid to poor; access to Justice; Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms, etc.

1.2 In this report, the demands allocated to Department of Legal Affairs (Demand No. 65) have been analysed and recommendations of the committee have been made at the end of each headings/sub-headings.

DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Functions of the Department

1.3 As per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, the Department of Legal Affairs has been allocated the following matters:

- (i) Advice to Ministries on legal matters including interpretation of the Constitution and the Laws, conveyancing and engagement of counsel to appear on behalf of the Union of India in the High Courts and Subordinate Courts, where the Union of India is a party.
- (ii) Attorney General of India, Solicitor General of India, and other Central Government Law Officers of the States, whose services are shared by the Ministries of the Government of India.
- (iii) Conduct of cases in the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts on behalf of the Central Government and on behalf of the Governments of States participating in the Central Agency Scheme.
- (iv) Reciprocal arrangements with foreign countries for the service of summons in civil suits for the execution of decrees of Civil Courts, for the enforcement of maintenance orders, and for the administration of the estates of foreigners dying in India intestate.
- (v) Authorization of officers to execute contracts and assurances and of property on behalf of the President under Article 299 (1) of the Constitution, and authorization of officers to sign and verify complaints or written statements in suits by or against the Central Government.
- (vi) Indian Legal Service.
- (vii) Treaties and agreements with foreign countries in matters of civil law.
- (viii) Law Commission of India.
- (ix) Legal Profession including the Advocates Act, 1961 (25 of 1961) and persons entitled to practice before High Courts.
- (x) Enlargement of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India and the conferring thereon of further powers; persons entitled to practise before the Supreme Court, references to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution of India.
- (xi) Administration of the Notaries Act, 1952 (53 of 1952).

(xii) Income Tax Appellate Tribunal.

1.4 Besides the above, the Department also administers the following acts:

- (a) The Advocates Act, 1961
- (b) The Notaries Act, 1952
- (c) The Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 2001
- (d) The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996
- (e) The Commercial Courts Act, 2015
- (f) The India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019
- (g) The Mediation Act, 2023

1.5 The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) and the Law Commission of India also fall under the administrative purview of the Department. The Department is the cadre controlling authority for Indian Legal Service (ILS). Further, in order to promote studies and research in law and for improvement in ADR Ecosystem in the country the department sanctions grant – in- aid to institutions engaged in these fields such as Indian Law Institute and Indian Arbitration Centre.

Structure of the Department

1.6 Department of Legal Affairs has two tier set up namely, the Main Secretariat of the Department which is located in New Delhi, and Branch Secretariats located at Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai. The nature of duties discharged by the Department is broadly classified into two areas- Advice work and Litigation work. The Main Secretariat is headed by the Law Secretary, assisted by Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Legal Advisers.

1.7 There is a Central Agency Section in the Department, which is currently led by the Law Secretary and supported by Officers from the Government Advocates cadre of the ILS and other supporting staff for handling litigations at the Supreme Court on behalf of all Ministries/Department of the Government of India as well as administration of the Union Territories. The Judicial section of the Department defends Government of India in all courts and Tribunals where Government of India is a party. The litigation work in High Courts and CAT (Principal Bench) is handled by the Litigation (High Court) Section and in Lower Courts by the Litigation (Lower Court) Section.

1.8 The Department has a separate cell called the 'Implementation Cell' to handle the implementation of the recommendations of the Law commission of India and the administration of the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Advocates Welfare Fund Act, 2001. This

Cell also administers the subject of 'Legal Education' as provided under Entry 26 of List III to the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India.

1.9 The Department tenders legal advice to all Ministries and Departments of the Government of India. The legal advice team of the Department is generally headed by an Additional Secretary or a Joint Secretary & Legal Adviser, who, in turn, is assisted by other officers at different levels.

1.10 Under the Digital India initiative, the Department has created a web based application namely, Legal Information Management & Briefing System (LIMBS) for monitoring all court cases where Union of India is a party. It is an innovative and easy to access online tool which is available 24x7 to all the stakeholders, viz., Senior Government Officials, Nodal Officers and users of Ministries/Departments.

1.11 Further, the following Institutions/organizations are under the overall supervision of the Department of Legal Affairs:

(i) Law Commission of India (LCI): - The Law Commission of India is a non-statutory body, constituted by the Government once in three years. The present 23rd Law Commission was constituted on 01.09.2024 and will run up to 31.08.2027. The Commission is assisted by Law Officers of Indian Legal Service and a few consultants having experiences in legal research. A small group of secretarial staff looks after the administration. The Law Commission works on projects based on (a) Reference received from the Central Government and/or from Supreme Court of India and High Courts; and (b) Suo motu Cognizance - keeping in view the importance of the subject matter, the Commission may initiate study on specific subjects.

(ii) Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT): - ITAT is one of the oldest Tribunals, set up under Section 252 of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to hear second appeals in all matters of direct taxes and appeals against the revision orders of Administrative Commissioners as well as orders denying registration under Section 12A or under Section 80G of the Income-tax Act 1961. It functions as the final fact finding authority in the matters concerning Income-tax, wealth-tax, gift-tax, etc. The orders passed by the ITAT are final; an appeal lies to the High Court only if a substantial question of law arises for determination.

(iii) Bar Council of India (BCI): - The Bar Council of India is a statutory body constituted under Section 4 of the Advocates Act, 1961, and it has been empowered, among other things, to lay down standards for professional conduct and etiquette for lawyers, and to maintain and improve standards of legal education in the country.

(iv) Indian Law Institute (ILI):- The Indian Law Institute is a premier legal research institute founded on 27th December, 1956. The prime objective of the Institute is to promote advanced studies and research in law and to contribute substantially in reforming the administration of justice, so as to meet the socio-economic aspirations of the people through law and its instrumentalities. The Institute has been granted Deemed University status in the year 2004.

(v) The India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC):- The IIAC was established in December, 2022 with a view to provide cost effective and timely services for the conduct of arbitration and conciliation at national and international level, facilitate conduct of international and domestic arbitration and conciliation and impart training in alternative dispute resolution and related matters in field of arbitration, conciliation and mediation. Its purpose is to bring reforms in the field of arbitration and conciliation and to develop it as a flagship institution for domestic and international arbitration. It will facilitate and provide administrative assistance for conduct of arbitration and conciliation proceedings in a professional and time-bound manner and in the most cost-effective way. It will also set up an arbitration chamber to empanel professional arbitrators at national and international level and set up an Arbitration Academy to train arbitrators in India, so as to empower them to compete on par with reputed arbitral institutions in the world. A dedicated online dashboard at the IIAC website has been made which enables applicants to fill, submit and track applications in respect of empanelment (for both domestic and international arbitration) on the IIAC Panel of Arbitrators, as per IIAC (Criteria for Admission to the Panel of Arbitrators) Regulations, 2023. This phase of the software was made live in May 2023, and since then IIAC has been receiving applications for empanelment through the online mode/dashboard.

CHAPTER – II

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

2.0 The Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Law and Justice for the financial year 2026–27 were presented to Parliament under Demand No. 65. The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice examined the Demands for Grants of the Ministry at its meeting held on 19th February, 2026. The Budgetary allocations made to the Ministry during the financial years 2024–25 to 2026–27 are indicated in Table below:

Table No. 2.0
Total Budgetary Allocations under Demand No. 65
Ministry of Law and Justice*

(Figures in ₹ crore)

2024-2025			2025-26			Projection to MoF for BE 2026-27	2026-27	Variations in		Variation	
BE	RE	Actuals	BE	RE	Expenditure upto 28.01. 2026		BE	Rs.	%	Rs.	%
							BE 2026-27 over		between		
							RE 2025-26		Projections and		
									BE 2026-27		
6140.950	6853.560	7411.972	5198.240	5389.870	3701.562	7026.527	4709.060	-680.810	-12.63	2317.467	-32.98

* including funds allocated under Nirbhaya Fund.

2.1 It is observed from the above table that against the Revised Estimates of ₹5389.87 crore for the financial year 2025–26, an amount of ₹4709.06 crore has been allocated at the Budget Estimates stage for the financial year 2026–27, indicating a decrease of ₹680.81 crore. Further, against the projection of ₹7026.527 crore made by the Ministry for BE 2026–27, the allocation at BE stage stands lower by ₹2317.467 crore.

2.2 The above Demand comprises allocations in respect of the three Departments under the Ministry, namely: (i) Department of Legal Affairs; (ii) Legislative Department; and (iii) Department of Justice.

2.3 The allocations also include funds earmarked under the National Mission for Safety for Women (Nirbhaya Fund), which are placed with the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

2.4 The details of Department-wise funds allocations for the years 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27 are presented in the table below:

Table No. 2.1

**Department wise Allocation
Ministry of Law and Justice***

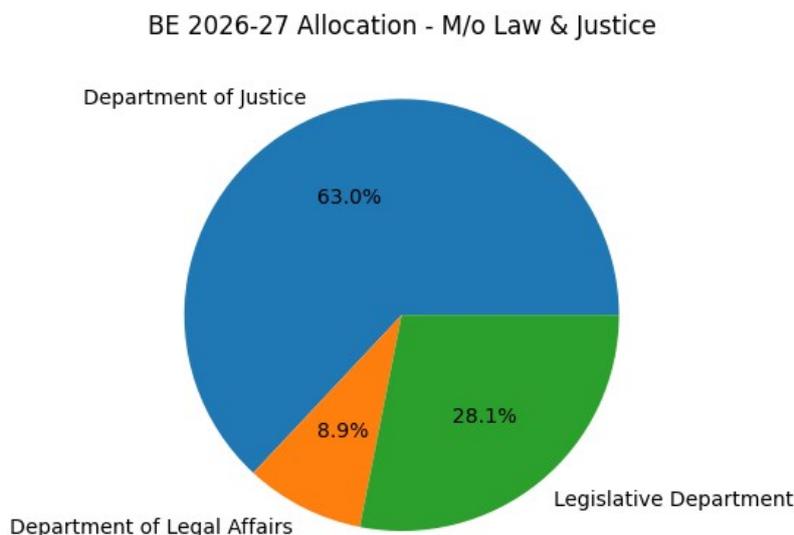
(Figures in ₹ crore)

Sr. No.	Department	2024-2025			2025-26			2026-27
		BE	RE	Actuals	BE	RE	Expenditure up-to 31.01.2026	BE
1	Department of Legal Affairs	351.909	367.679	390.861	384.530	410.310	313.389	417.760
2	Legislative Department	2503.010	3468.408	4229.014	1485.060	2132.538	1396.908	1322.460
3	Department of Justice*	3286.031	3017.473	2792.098	3328.650	2847.022	1991.264	2968.840
Total	M/o Law & Justice*	6140.950	6853.560	7411.973	5198.240	5389.870	3701.561	4709.060

* including funds allocated under Nirbhaya Fund.

2.5 A pie-chart showing relative distribution of budget allocation under BE (2026-27) amongst the Department is given as under:

Chart No. 2.1



2.6 A perusal of the above table reveals that out of the total allocation of ₹4709.06 crore at BE 2026–27 made to the Ministry of Law and justice, the Department of Legal Affairs has been allocated ₹417.76 crore (8.87%), the Legislative Department ₹1322.46 crore (28.08%) and the Department of Justice ₹2968.84 crore (63%).

Table No. 2.2

**Projections, Allocations, Utilization and variations
Department of Legal Affairs**

(Figures in ₹ crore)

2024-25			2025-26			Projections to MoF for BE 2026-27	2026-27	Variations in BE 2026-27 over RE 2025-256		Variation between Projections and BE 2026-27	
BE	RE	Actuals	BE	RE	Expenditure up-to 31.01.2025		BE	Rs.	%	Rs.	%
351.909	367.679	390.861	384.530	410.310	313.389	505.145	417.760	7.450	1.82%	87.385	17.29%

2.7 As indicated above, the Department had projected an amount of ₹505.145 crore for BE 2026–27. However, the allocation at BE stage has been fixed at ₹417.76 crore, which is lower than the projection by ₹87.385 crore (17.29%).

2.8 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.

2.9 The Budgetary allocation of Department of Legal Affairs is utilized in the Main Secretariat at New Delhi, Central Agency Section at Supreme Court, Branch Secretariat at Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai. The professional fee to Law Officers and Govt. empanelled Counsels in connection with litigation work of Union of India are also provided from the budgetary allocation of this Department.

2.10 The following table indicates the item-wise budget allocation of the Department of Legal Affairs for the years 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27, including Actuals for 2024–25, the projections made to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for BE 2026–27, as well as the variations in BE 2026–27 over RE 2025–26 and the differences between the projected estimates and the Budget Estimates for 2026–27:

Table No. 2.3
Item-wise Allocation
Department of Legal Affairs

MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
TOTAL BUDGET A GLANCE

(Figures in ₹ crore)

S. No.	Name of Unit/Scheme	2024-25	2025-26			Projections made to MoF for 2026-27	2026-27	Variations in BE 2026-27 over RE 2025-26		Variations between Projections and BE 2026-27	
		Actuals	BE	RE	Expenditure as on 31.01.2026		BE	In Rs.	%	In Rs.	%
1	Main	56.307	54.360	61.710	46.985	77.570	63.980	2.270	3.68%	13.590	21.24%

	Secretariat										
2	Central Agency Section in SC	11.416	13.870	12.840	8.797	17.055	13.905	1.065	8.29%	3.150	22.65%
3	Branch Secretariat Mumbai	5.634	4.770	5.190	4.179	5.450	5.500	0.310	5.97%	-0.050	-0.91%
4	Branch Secretariat Bengaluru	2.575	3.020	3.165	2.511	3.970	3.580	0.415	13.11%	0.390	10.89%
5	Branch Secretariat Kolkata	5.695	6.670	6.565	4.684	7.345	6.765	0.200	3.05%	0.580	8.57%
6	Branch Secretariat Chennai	3.147	3.450	4.560	3.682	4.568	3.870	-0.690	-15.13%	0.698	18.02%
7	Law Officers & Govt. empanelled Counsels fee	94.883	92.560	95.560	82.665	100.260	95.540	-0.020	-0.02%	4.720	4.94%

2.11 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.

2.12 The Budget allocated to the Department of Legal Affairs also includes provisions for its attached office, namely the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), as well as statutory and advisory bodies such as the India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC) and the Law Commission of India (LCI). The Department further provides funds for the creation of capital infrastructure for the ITAT, including construction and acquisition of premises for its various Benches. In addition, budgetary provisions have been made for extending financial support to the Arbitration Council of India (ACI) and the Mediation Council of India (MCI), which are to be constituted as statutory bodies under their respective legislations, as and when required.

2.13 The following table presents the institution/organization-wise budget allocation under the

Department of Legal Affairs for the years 2024–25, 2025–26 and 2026–27, including Actuals for 2024–25, the projections made to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for BE 2026–27, as well as the variations in BE 2026–27 over RE 2025–26 and the differences between the projected estimates and the Budget Estimates for 2026–27:

Table No. 2.4
Institution/organization-wise Allocation
Department of Legal Affairs

(Figures in ₹ crore)

S. No.	Name of Unit/Scheme	2024-25	2025-26			Projections made to MoF for 2026-27	2026-27	Variations in BE 2026-27 over RE 2025-26		Variations between Projections and BE 2026-27	
		Actuals	BE	RE	Expenditure as on 31.01.2026		BE	In Rs.	%	In Rs.	%
1	Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)	185.565	180.120	189.700	142.214	230.625	190.160	0.460	0.24%	40.465	21.28%
2	Law Commission of India	10.942	13.190	13.610	9.517	20.030	15.880	2.270	16.68%	4.150	26.13%
3	Indian Law Institute	7.500	4.260	6.430	4.260	11.500	7.120	0.690	10.73%	4.380	61.52%
4	India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC)	4.074	3.560	7.340	1.503	20.722	7.330	-0.010	-0.14%	13.392	182.70%
5	Arbitration Council of India (ACI)	0.000	0.510	0.110	0.000	1.000	0.210	0.100	90.91%	0.790	376.19%
6	Mediation Council of India	0.000	0.510	0.110	0.000	1.000	0.210	0.100	90.91%	0.790	376.19%

2.14 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.

2.15 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.

INCOME TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (ITAT)

2.16 In relation to the information asked regarding the funds allocated to the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) for the creation of capital infrastructure during the financial years 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025–26, along with the corresponding utilisation figures and details of assets created, the Department has informed that during the last three years, ITAT has undertaken various infrastructure development projects, including the construction of office buildings for its Benches.

2.17 The Committee notes from the written submission made by the Department that during the last three financial years, capital allocations and utilisation in respect of infrastructure projects of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) have shown variations. In 2023–24, against Budget Estimates of ₹70.00 crore and Revised Estimates of ₹112.73 crore, funds amounting to ₹111.73 crore were allocated, out of which ₹85.17 crore was utilised for projects at Delhi (₹65.00 crore), Lucknow (₹7.23 crore), Kolkata (₹7.00 crore) and Ahmedabad (₹5.94 crore). In 2024–25, against Budget Estimates of ₹46.90 crore and Revised Estimates of ₹29.75 crore, the entire allocation of ₹29.75 crore was utilised, with expenditure of ₹35.46 crore incurred for Delhi (₹15.24 crore), Kolkata (₹10.00 crore) and Ahmedabad (₹10.22 crore).

2.18 The Committee also notes that in 2025–26, against Budget and Revised Estimates of ₹39.70 crore, the allocation of ₹39.70 crore has resulted in utilisation of ₹35.45 crore (till

January 2026), primarily for projects at Kolkata (₹14.70 crore) and Ahmedabad (₹20.75 crore). The Committee also notes that substantial capital expenditure has been incurred for acquisition of premises at New Delhi and construction of buildings at other Bench locations, and that several of these projects are at advanced stages of completion.

2.19 The Committee is of the view that, in the light of 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.

CHAPTER - III

ASSESSMENT OF FUNCTIONING OF THE DEPARTMENT

3.0 A brief overview of the mandate and functioning of the Department of Legal Affairs and various organizations under its jurisdiction is given in Chapter-I of this report. In this Chapter some issues about the functioning of the Department and its organizations are being dealt in succeeding paras.

STAFF STRENGTH IN THE DEPARTMENT

Indian Legal Service

3.1 Indian Legal Service (ILS) renders dedicated service to the nation by giving legal advice in matters to various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and drafting bills and ordinances which are introduced in Parliament. They, being the Principal Legal advisers to the Government, respond to the demands made by the various organs of the Government and play an advisory role as well as in drafting work.

3.2 There are four cadres within the ILS:

- (i) Legal Advisor Cadre
- (ii) Law Officer Cadre
- (iii) Government Advocate Cadre
- (iv) Legislative Counsel Cadre

3.3 The current post-wise sanctioned, in-position and vacancies in Legal Advisers service cadre of Indian Legal Service is as under:

Legal Advisers Cadre

Name of Post	Sanctioned	In-position	Vacancy
Additional Secretary	03	02	01
Joint Secretary & Legal Adviser	18	13	05
Additional Legal Adviser	21	12	09
Deputy Legal Adviser	35	11	24
Assistant Legal Adviser	48	17	31
Total	125	55	70

3.4 The Committee notes that the Indian Legal Service (ILS), which constitutes the core legal manpower of the Department, presently has only 55 officers in position against a sanctioned strength of 125, leaving 70 posts vacant, which may adversely affect the Department's capacity to effectively discharge its legal advisory, legislative and litigation functions. The Committee emphasises the need for carefully framed recruitment criteria and service rules to attract competent and experienced legal professionals, with appropriate flexibility for lateral or specialised induction, wherever necessary, so as to strengthen institutional capacity and ensure effective handling of Government litigation and related matters.

3.5 The Committee further notes from the presentation made by the Department that 38 vacancies in the Indian Legal Service (ILS) cadre have been reported to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for Direct Recruitment and that the recruitment process is presently at an advanced stage. It is also noted that 21 officers have been promoted across various grades, including Additional Legal Adviser, Deputy Legal Adviser, Assistant Legal Adviser, Deputy Government Advocate and Assistant Government Advocate. The Department has informed that the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) for filling up 02 anticipated vacancies in the grade of Senior Government Advocate have been forwarded to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) for approval. In addition, the process has been initiated to fill 03 promotional vacancies in the grade of Deputy Legal Adviser (DLA), and action to fill up vacant posts in other categories is under progress at different stages in consultation with UPSC/SSC.

3.6 The Committee expresses concern over the acute shortage of Indian Legal Service (ILS) officers available to the Law Commission of India, noting that only 2 officers are presently in position against the sanctioned strength of 11. The Committee observes that in the absence of notified Recruitment Rules for the ILS, the process of selection through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is constrained due to lack of clarity regarding eligibility criteria, age limits and other selection parameters. Also, the engagement of Consultants on a contractual basis, in the absence of a defined recruitment framework, raises issues relating to qualification standards and accountability. The Committee emphasises that the availability of adequately qualified and experienced ILS officers is essential for the effective functioning of the Law Commission and underscores the need to examine and address the matter on priority.

3.7 As regards cadre review of the Indian Legal Service, it is stated by the Department that the Cadre Review Committee considered the proposal of the Department in its meeting held on 5th October 2023. The recommendations made by the Cadre Review Committee have been approved by the Department of Personnel & Training and Department of Expenditure and further action for obtaining approval of Competent Authority is under consideration.

3.8 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

3.9 With regard to the present status of vacancies in the Central quota of Public Notaries in States/UTs and the determination of notary strength on the basis of population, pendency of litigation and other relevant parameters, the Department has submitted that, based on rational criteria such as population of the State, Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), State-wise GST collection, pendency of cases, geographical landscape and area of the State, the maximum number of Notaries to be appointed by the Central Government in various States and UTs has been enhanced from 52,950 to 1,04,925 vide the Notaries (Amendment) Rules, 2024, notified on 24th February, 2024.

3.10 It has further been stated that prior to 1.1.2024, approximately, 22,740 Notaries had been appointed by the Central Government. During the years 2024 and 2025, 40,436 legal practitioners were provisionally selected by the Central Government for appointment as Notaries. Out of these, as on 27.1.2026, digitally signed Certificates of Practice have been issued to 36,052 Notaries through the Notary Portal.

3.11 The Committee has also been informed that the Central Government, after due consideration of factors such as population, changes in the number of districts/tehsils/talukas, etc., approved proposals received from the State Governments of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Nagaland for enhancement in the number of Notaries to be appointed by these States. For this purpose, the *Notaries Rules, 1956* were amended vide the *Notaries (Amendment) Rules, 2025*, notified on 17th October, 2025.

3.12 With regard to the fee structure of Notaries, the Department has informed that the recommendation made by the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice in its 140th Report to appropriately revise the

fees payable to a Notary for performing notarial acts has been accepted in principle by the Government. Accordingly, Rule 10 of the Notaries Rules, 1956 is being suitably amended to rationalize and enhance the fees chargeable for notarial services.

3.13 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.

3.14 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.

3.15 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.

LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA

3.16 The Law Commission of India is a statutory body constituted from time to time for the purpose to review/repeal of obsolete laws and makes its recommendations to Government for repeal of obsolete laws and for appropriate amendments in others as may be found necessary.

3.17 The Committee notes that the Law Commission of India functions under the administrative control of the Department of Legal Affairs. The tenure of the 22nd Law Commission concluded on 31st August, 2024 and the 23rd Law Commission was constituted with effect from 1st September, 2024 for a period of three years up to 31st August, 2027. The Chairperson and Members were appointed in April 2025, following which the Commission has become functional; at present, it has a Chairperson and one full-time Member. The Committee further notes that the previous Law Commission had submitted 11 reports and that, since its inception, the Law Commission has submitted a total of 288 reports, all of which have been laid before both Houses of Parliament.

3.18 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.

ENGAGEMENT OF LAW OFFICERS AND ADVOCATES

3.19 The Department of Legal Affairs appoints Law Officers for the Supreme Court of India, comprising one Attorney General for India, one Solicitor General of India and fourteen Additional Solicitors General of India. In addition, Law Officers are also appointed for various High Courts, including 13 Additional Solicitors General and 33 Deputy Solicitors General. Besides the Law Officers, the Government engages Panel Counsels to conduct litigation on behalf of the Union of India before various Courts and Tribunals across the country. Panel Counsels for different High Courts are engaged by the Department for a specified tenure to represent the Union of India. At present, more than 8,454 Advocates are empanelled under various categories of Panel Counsels for different judicial fora. Out of a total of 39 sanctioned posts of Additional Solicitors General of India, 14 posts pertain to the Supreme Court of India and are presently filled. Of the remaining 25 sanctioned posts of Additional Solicitors General for various High Courts, 13 posts are currently in position, while 12 posts are vacant.

3.20 With regard to the engagement of Panel Counsels, the selection criteria adopted, determination and revision of fees, and the steps taken to ensure transparency in the engagement process, the Department has informed that Advocates are empanelled/engaged under various categories for conducting Central Government litigation before different Courts/Tribunals in the country with the final approval of Hon'ble Minister for Law & Justice. The empanelment is made on the basis of the Advocate's area of interest, qualifications, experience, reputation, expertise, professional competence and standing at the Bar. Such empanelment/engagement is issued in the name of the President in the form of executive orders and is uploaded on the website of the Department of Legal Affairs. The fees payable to Panel Counsels are determined on a market basis and are revised from time to time.

3.21 The Department of Legal Affairs has proposed to develop a framework for evaluating the performance of empanelled counsel. The evaluation exercise is intended to involve comprehensive and objective assessment of the performance of Standing/Panel Counsels and

Advocates, taking into account the feedback received from the concerned Ministries/Departments. Feedback on the performance of empanelled Advocates and Standing/Panel Counsels for the Union of India may be submitted annually by the Ministries/Departments. Based on such performance assessment, Government Counsel at the lower levels may be considered for upgradation to higher positions, extension of tenure, or removal from the panel, as the case may be.

3.22 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.

PENDENCY OF GOVERNMENT CASES

3.23 There are large number of cases (approx 7,14,441 cases) pending in various Courts and Tribunals in the country. The Department has furnished a detailed information on pendency of various cases.

3.24 The Committee was informed that total number of pending cases Ministry/Department-wise and State-wise as on 31.12.2025 is as under:-

Serial No.	Ministry/Department	Live Cases
1.	Agriculture and farmers welfare	3912
2.	Ayush	1662
3.	Chemicals and fertilizers	1034
4.	Civil aviation	817
5.	Coal	4288
6.	Commerce and industry	6958
7.	Communications	32011
8.	Comptroller and auditor general of india	26439

9.	Consumer affairs food and public distribution	7162
10.	Cooperation	1
11.	Corporate affairs	36233
12.	Culture	2645
13.	Defence	94104
14.	Department of atomic energy	981
15.	Department of space	591
16.	Development of north eastern region	16
17.	Earth sciences	300
18.	Education	14944
19.	Electronics and information technology	1304
20.	Environment forest and climate change	3114
21.	External affairs	4203
22.	Finance	194603
23.	Fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying	624
24.	Food processing industries	70
25.	Health and family welfare	12333
26.	Heavy industries	386
27.	Home affairs	29382
28.	Housing and urban affairs	4250
29.	Indian railways	111962
30.	Information and broadcasting	2218
31.	Jal shakti	1426
32.	Labour and employment	77034
33.	Law and justice	737
34.	Micro, small and medium enterprises	814
35.	Mines	1801
36.	Minority affairs	346
37.	New and renewable energy	74
38.	Panchayati raj	15
39.	Parliamentary affairs	3
40.	Personnel, public grievances and pensions	4284
41.	Petroleum and natural gas	142
42.	Ports shipping and waterways	3745
43.	Power	932

44.	Road transport and highways	14986
45.	Rural development	1033
46.	Science and technology	872
47.	Skill development and entrepreneurship	668
48.	Social justice and empowerment	1843
49.	Statistics and programme implementation	299
50.	Steel	724
51.	Textiles	1349
52.	Tourism	431
53.	Tribal affairs	379
54.	Women and child development	1006
55.	Youth affairs and sports	921
Total		7,14,411

3.25 Total number of pending cases court wise for calendar year 2025 (upto 31.12.25) is as under:-

COURT	CIVIL CASES	CRIMINAL CASES
Supreme Court	72606	19492

HIGH COURT CASES*			
Serial No.	STATE	CIVIL CASES	CRIMINAL CASES
1.	Allahabad High Court	624259	582981
2.	Bombay High Court	548688	116291
3.	Calcutta High Court	168266	30602
4.	Gauhati High Court	47268	16599
5.	High Court for the State of Telangana	202400	31466
6.	High Court of Andhra Pradesh	206575	42441
7.	High Court of Chhattisgarh	53374	23060
8.	High Court of Delhi	92861	32117
9.	High Court of Gujarat	117266	58220
10.	High Court of Himachal Pradesh	89276	13227
11.	High Court of Jammu and Kashmir	33663	9301
12.	High Court of Jharkhand	31652	40518
13.	High Court of Karnataka	270403	57750

14.	High Court of Kerala	202608	48250
15.	High Court of Madhya Pradesh	277576	193607
16.	High Court of Manipur	4965	827
17.	High Court of Meghalaya	1309	430
18.	High Court of Punjab and Haryana	256659	165453
19.	High Court of Rajasthan	495922	191673
20.	High Court of Sikkim	189	83
21.	High Court of Tripura	1119	310
22.	High Court of Uttarakhand	33132	26526
23.	Madras High Court	474398	71989
24.	Orissa High Court	119495	39370
25.	Patna High Court	113743	105866
Total		4467066	1898957

DISTRICT COURTS CASES			
Serial No.	STATE	CIVIL	CRIMINAL
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	3973	4356
2.	Andhra Pradesh	433329	482069
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	2413	8252
4.	Assam	111768	453177
5.	Bihar	539210	3160802
6.	Chandigarh	22494	78004
7.	Chhattisgarh	83728	368321
8.	Delhi	218231	1369262
9.	Goa	27888	33397
10.	Gujarat	323755	1267089
11.	Haryana	428289	1093174
12.	Himachal Pradesh	177042	413946
13.	Jammu and Kashmir	117910	227875
14.	Jharkhand	95332	469078
15.	Karnataka	1038346	1199045
16.	Kerala	543839	1244841
17.	Ladakh	773	810
18.	Lakshadweep	150	389
19.	Madhya Pradesh	415811	1682585

20.	Maharashtra	1763022	4163977
21.	Manipur	9066	4865
22.	Meghalaya	4917	11426
23.	Mizoram	3713	3162
24.	Nagaland	1033	2823
25.	Odisha	269204	1524684
26.	Puducherry	11966	24529
27.	Punjab	359602	555109
28.	Rajasthan	507820	2034433
29.	Sikkim	825	1137
30.	Tamil Nadu	706488	1028679
31.	Telangana	341215	635184
32.	The Dadra And Nagar Haveli And Daman And Diu	3623	4723
33.	Tripura	13460	44835
34.	Uttar Pradesh	1834639	9510689
35.	Uttarakhand	47891	252723
36.	West Bengal	638141	3196972
	Total	11100906	36556422

3.26 With regard to, the Annual Litigation expenses of the Government the department has informed that Annual Litigation expenditure for the last 10 years (as on 31.12.2025) is as under:-

Sl. No.	Financial Year	Total Expenditure (Rs.)
1.	2016-2017	48,12,92,060
2.	2017-2018	65,83,50,532
3.	2018-2019	51,85,65,364
4.	2019-2020	61,08,76,154
5.	2020-2021	58,43,62,137
6.	2021-2022	48,56,53,683
7.	2022-2023	57,45,33,707

8.	2023-2024	66,57,83,403
9.	2024-2025	87,65,27,770
10.	2025-2026 (till 31.12.2025) (Tentative)	74,05,56,347
	Total	6,19,65,01,157/-

3.27 The Committee notes that a total of 7,14,411 cases involving various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are pending before different Courts and Tribunals across the country as on 31.12.2025. The Ministry-wise break-up of live cases indicates that certain Ministries/Departments account for a substantially higher share of litigation. The Committee has also been furnished with court-wise data, including pendency before the Supreme Court, various High Courts and District Courts. The figures reflect significant pendency at all levels of the judicial system, particularly in certain High Courts and District Courts where civil and criminal cases are pending in large numbers. The Committee is of the view that such high pendency of Government cases has serious implications for administrative efficiency, public service delivery and judicial resources.

3.28 The Committee further notes that the Annual Litigation Expenditure of the Government over the last ten financial years, up to 31.12.2025, amounts to ₹6,19,65,01,157/-. The year-wise data indicates fluctuations in expenditure, with a noticeable increase in recent years. The Committee observes that rising litigation expenditure, coupled with substantial pendency, underscores the need for effective litigation management and reduction strategies.

3.29 In relation to the significant legal reforms or policy in the past years and the status of the cadre review of the Indian Legal Services, the department has submitted that to prevent, regulate, and reduce litigation involving the Union of India, the Department of Legal Affairs (DLA), Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, has issued the “Directive for the Efficient and Effective Management of Litigation by the Government of India” on 4th April, 2025. This Directive has been developed pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS), chaired by the Cabinet Secretary. It shall be applicable to all Ministries and Departments of the Central Government, including their attached and subordinate offices, autonomous bodies, as well as Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in matters pertaining to arbitration.

3.30 The Directive adopts a comprehensive approach in reinforcing the goal of good governance, ensuring public welfare, and facilitating the timely dispensation of justice. It aims to introduce measures to simplify legal procedures, prevent unnecessary litigation, address

inconsistencies in notifications and orders, minimise unwarranted appeals, streamline inter-departmental coordination in litigation, ensure greater public accountability in arbitration matters, and establish a robust Knowledge Management System (KMS) to improve and enhance the efficiency of legal processes.

3.31 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.

LEGAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & BRIEFING SYSTEM (LIMBS)

3.32 Legal Information Management & Briefing System (LIMBS) is a web-based litigation monitoring system developed by the Department of Legal Affairs. LIMBS provides a single, real-time platform to track court cases involving the Union of India before the Supreme Court, High Courts, District Courts and Tribunals. It enables round-the-clock access to case status, hearing dates and related details, and supports proactive litigation management through automated updates. As on 04.02.2026, 13,22,362 court cases (including archived cases) have been entered in LIMBS by 53 Ministries/Departments. The system serves as a unified database capturing details of cases across judicial fora.

3.33 The Committee has further been informed that LIMBS will continue to serve as the backbone for monitoring Government litigation in a more proactive and coordinated manner. Emphasis is being placed on ensuring entry of all Government cases in the system. An intelligent API is under development to enable real-time integration with the e-Courts platform. The future-ready model of LIMBS is expected to automate several litigation-related processes, including processing of Advocate Bills. The Department also proposes to leverage Artificial Intelligence within LIMBS to reduce avoidable litigation and utilise data visualisation tools to facilitate informed, data-driven decision-making by Ministries/Departments.

3.34 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.

FAST TRACK COURTS

3.35 With regard to the progress made in expanding and modernising Lok Adalats, establishment of Fast Track Courts for small claims and integration of AI-based Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) mechanisms supported by the Mediation Council of India for ensuring timely and efficient justice delivery, the Committee was informed that the 14th Finance Commission had recommended setting up of 1800 Fast Track Courts (FTCs) during 2015–2020 for speedy trial of specific categories of cases of heinous nature, civil cases relating to women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, persons infected with terminal ailments and property related disputes pending for more than five years. Setting up of subordinate courts including Fast Track Courts and their functioning falls within the domain of the State/UT Governments in consultation with their respective High Courts and allocation of funds for such courts is required to be done by the State/UT Governments as per their needs and resources.

3.36 The Union Government has urged the State/UT Governments since 2015–16 onwards to allocate adequate funds from the enhanced fiscal space available through tax devolution for setting up of Fast Track Courts. As on 31.12.2025, the State/UT Governments have set up 879 FTCs and have been requested from time to time to establish additional courts to achieve the recommended target.

3.37 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.

LOK ADALATS

3.38 Lok Adalats, including National Lok Adalats, State Lok Adalats and Permanent Lok Adalats, continue to play a pivotal role in providing speedy, cost-effective and amicable resolution of disputes relating to motor accident claims, bank recovery, dishonour of cheques, matrimonial disputes, labour and service matters, consumer disputes, utility services, revenue matters and other civil disputes legally amenable to settlement. During the period 2023–2025, a total of 12 National Lok Adalats were conducted resulting in disposal of over 33.82 crore cases.

National Lok Adalats, State Lok Adalats and Permanent Lok Adalats

3.39 At the State level, State Lok Adalats disposed of nearly 31.41 lakh cases during the period from 2023–24 to 2025–26 (up to November 2025), while Permanent Lok Adalats disposed of over 6.39 lakh cases during the same period.

Statistical information of National Lok Adalats (NLAs)

Year	No of National Lok Adalat Held	Pre-litigation Cases	Pending Cases	Total Cases
2023	4	7,10,32,980	1,43,09,237	8,53,42,217
2024	4	8,70,19,059	1,75,07,060	10,45,26,119
2025	4	12,65,89,535	2,18,35,515	14,84,25,050

Statistical information of State Lok Adalats (SLAs)

Years	Pre-litigation	Pending Cases	Total Cases
2023-24	2,19,230	9,87,873	12,07,103

2024-25	8,05,731	5,39,083	13,44,814
2025-26 (upto November, 2025)	3,47,069	2,42,617	5,89,686

Statistical information of Permanent Lok Adalats (PLAs)

PLAs functioning as on Nov, 2025 = 383	
Years	Disposal of PLAs
2023-24	2,32,763
2024-25	2,37,980
2025-26 (upto November, 2025)	1,68,808

Disposal of E-Lok Adalats organized from June, 2020 to November, 2025

3.40 Each year, a large number of litigants approach Lok Adalats to settle their cases that are either pending before courts or at a pre-litigation stage. During the pandemic period, when protocols of public health and social distancing were being followed, it was difficult to conduct face-to-face settlement of disputes. In order to address these challenges, Legal Services Authorities leveraged technology and introduced E-Lok Adalats to improve accessibility to this Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism and reduce the burden on courts by settling pending as well as pre-litigation cases.

3.41 Pre-Lok Adalat sessions are held to identify cases fit for settlement and facilitate amicable resolution between the parties. The first E-Lok Adalat was organised in Madhya Pradesh on 27.06.2020 and since then E-Lok Adalats have been organised in 28 States/UTs. Upto November 2025, 10.52 crore cases were taken up through E-Lok Adalats out of which 1.34 crore cases were disposed of, demonstrating the growing reach and effectiveness of digital Lok Adalat mechanisms.

Pre-Litigation Cases		Pending Cases in Courts		Total	
Taken Up	Disposal	Taken Up	Disposal	Taken Up	Disposal
9,51,56,275	1,15,68,512	1,00,68,922	18,90,859	10,52,25,197	1,34,59,371

3.42 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.

INCOME TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

3.43 The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) is a quasi-judicial body headed by a President and assisted by Zonal Vice-Presidents. At present, there are 51 Judicial Members and 48 Accountant Members. The Tribunal functions through 63 Benches spread across 27 cities. The powers and functions of ITAT are exercised and discharged by the Benches constituted by the President of the Tribunal from amongst its Members, generally consisting of one Judicial Member and one Accountant Member. The orders passed by the ITAT are final; an appeal lies before the High Court only where a substantial question of law arises for determination.

3.44 The following table indicates the status of appeals before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) during the last five financial years, showing the number of appeals instituted, disposed of and the pendency at the end of each year:

Financial Year	Institution	Disposal	Pendency at the end of the year
2025-26	54225	46097	51681
2024-25	51164	46370	43553
2023-24	32797	30499	38759
2022-23	26189	40150	36461
2021-22	16258	32396	50422

3.45 The Committee has been apprised of the status of appeals before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) during the last five financial years. The data indicates that 54,225 appeals were instituted during 2025–26, as against 51,164 appeals in 2024–25, 32,797 appeals in 2023–24, 26,189 appeals in 2022–23, and 16,258 appeals in 2021–22, reflecting a steady rise in fresh institution of appeals over the years.

3.46 During the same period, the disposal of appeals stood at 46,097 in 2025–26, 46,370 in 2024–25, 30,499 in 2023–24, 40,150 in 2022–23, and 32,396 in 2021–22. Despite a notable improvement in disposal in certain years, the pendency of appeals continues to remain

significant. The pendency at the end of each financial year was reported as 51,681 in 2025–26, 43,553 in 2024–25, 38,759 in 2023–24, 36,461 in 2022–23, and 50,422 in 2021–22.

3.47 The Committee notes that although disposal outpaced fresh cases/filings during 2022–23 and 2021–22, the subsequent rise in fresh filings during 2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025–26 has contributed to the accumulation of pendency, which has reached over 51,000 cases at the end of 2025–26.

3.48 The Department of Legal Affairs, in its presentation, informed that the sanctioned strength of Members in the Tribunal is 126 (including 1 post of President and 10 posts of Vice-Presidents). Presently, 99 Members (48 Accountant Members and 51 Judicial Members) are in position, including 1 President and 10 Vice-Presidents. The Government has filled 37 vacancies of Judicial and Accountant Members in ITAT during 2024–2025. Recruitment for the remaining 27 posts of Members (15 Accountant Members and 12 Judicial Members) is presently under process.

3.49 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.

3.50 The Department has informed that ITAT e-Dwar (e-Filing Portal) has been launched to facilitate electronic filing of appeals and applications by the appellants and is functioning smoothly. The portal has been updated from time to time based on feedback received from stakeholders with a view to enhancing user-friendliness and improving accessibility.

3.51 Since the launch of the e-Filing Portal in June 2021, more than 75,000 appeals and applications have been filed electronically. The data relating to the trend of physical and e-filing of appeals and applications from 2021–22 to 2025–26 (upto December 2025) indicates a steady shift towards digital filing by both assesseees as well as the Department.

Fin Year	Assessee		Department		Physical Total	E-Filing Total	Total institution
	Physical	E-Filing	Physical	E-Filing			
2021-22	13630 (92.80%)	1053 (07.20%)	2496 (98.80%)	30 (01.20%)	16126 (93.70%)	1083 (06.30%)	17209

2022-23	21030 (94.80%)	1165 (05.20%)	4298 (97.80%)	97 (02.20%)	25328 (95.30%)	1262 (04.70%)	26590
2023-24	18807 (64.10%)	10540 (35.90%)	1489 (25.20%)	4427 (74.80%)	20296 (57.60%)	14967 (42.40%)	35263
2024-25	23319 (51.60%)	21849 (48.40%)	81 (01.10%)	7618 (98.90%)	23400 (44.30%)	29467 (55.70%)	52867
2025-26	20117 (48.80%)	21082 (51.20%)	77 (01.00%)	7492 (99.00%)	20194 (41.40%)	28574 (58.60%)	48768

3.52 The data highlights a significant digital transformation in tax appeal filings, with both assesseees and the Department progressively shifting towards e-Filing. The portal is now handling the majority of appeal filings. The success of ITAT e-Dwar reflects the effectiveness of digital initiatives in streamlining legal and administrative processes and reducing dependence on physical documentation.

3.53 Since January 2023, all appeals and applications by the Department are being filed exclusively through the e-Filing Portal. In the case of assessee appeals, the erstwhile requirement of physical submission of appeals after e-filing has been dispensed with since July 2023. Further, in January 2026, amendments were made to the Income Tax (Appellate Tribunal) Rules, 1963, mandating that Memorandum of Appeals, Cross-Objections and other applications be signed using digital signatures. This has made electronic filing of appeals and applications before the Tribunal necessary and has contributed to increased usage of the Portal.

3.54 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.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION CENTRE

3.55 The India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC) has been established under the India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019 with the objective of promoting institutional arbitration in India and developing the country as a preferred hub for both domestic as well as international commercial arbitration. The Chamber of Arbitration established under the IIAC is entrusted with the responsibility of empanelling Arbitrators and discharging such other functions as may be assigned to it under the provisions of the Act and the Regulations framed thereunder.

3.56 The Committee was informed that Section 5 of the India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019 provides for a seven-member Governing Body consisting of a Chairperson; two full-time or part-time Members; one part-time Member as representative of a recognised body of commerce and industry chosen on rotational basis by the Central Government; Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice or his representative not below the rank of Joint Secretary as Member (ex officio); one Financial Adviser nominated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance as Member (ex officio); and Chief Executive Officer of the IIAC as Member (ex officio), thereby ensuring representation of both administrative and financial oversight in the governance framework of the Centre.

3.57 The Committee was further informed that the term of Justice Hemant Gupta (Retd.) as Chairperson of IIAC and Sh. Anant Vijay Palli, Senior Advocate and Sh. Ganesh Chandru, Advocate as part-time Members expired on 22.12.2025 and the appointment of new Chairperson and Members of IIAC is presently under process.

3.58 As on 31.12.2025, the composition of the IIAC Governing Body comprises Dr. Rajiv Mani, Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice as Member (ex officio); Dr. Ajay Sahai as Part-time Member (representative of a recognised body of commerce and industry); Ms. Vandana Jain, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser (additional charge), Department of Legal Affairs as Member (ex officio); and Sh. Navin Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer of IIAC as Member (ex officio), who are presently discharging the institutional responsibilities of the Centre.

3.59 The Committee was further informed that the Arbitration Chamber in IIAC functions as a high-powered committee of experts to scrutinise applications received for empanelment as Arbitrators. At present, IIAC has empanelled 271 Arbitrators from diverse fields for conducting domestic arbitration and 97 Arbitrators for handling international arbitration matters.

3.60 With regard to augmentation of physical Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, the Committee was informed that with a view to providing efficient, secure and world-class facilities for arbitration, including online arbitration, and to develop IAC at par with other reputed international arbitration centres, IAC is in the process of creating state-of-the-art arbitration facilities at World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi.

3.61 The Committee was further informed that IAC has developed its official website which has been fully functional since May, 2023 and provides comprehensive information regarding IAC, its Regulations, Panels and services. Further, a dedicated online dashboard has been developed which enables applicants to fill, submit and track applications in respect of empanelment on the IAC Panel of Arbitrators for both domestic and international arbitration as per the IAC (Criteria for Admission to the Panel of Arbitrators) Regulations, 2023, and applications for empanelment are being received through this online mode.

3.62 In addition, a dedicated Online Arbitration Dashboard has been created for making requests for arbitration and for conduct of arbitration proceedings in accordance with the IAC (Conduct of Arbitration) Regulations, 2023 and IAC (Conduct of Micro and Small Enterprises Arbitration) Regulations, 2024. The dashboard facilitates submission of requests and responses, appointment of Arbitrators, filing of applications and pleadings including Statement of Claim, Statement of Defence and Counterclaims, actions by the Arbitral Tribunal including issuance of procedural orders and arbitral awards, scheduling of hearings through physical mode or video conferencing, issuance of demand letters for deposit of costs and automated reminders for compliance with prescribed procedural timelines.

3.63 Through the above ICT initiatives, IAC provides facilities for online arbitration and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), thereby ensuring accessibility, transparency and efficiency in arbitration proceedings while aligning its processes with international best practices in institutional arbitration.

3.64 The Committee was further informed that IAC endeavours to make its arbitration services cost-effective, efficient and time-bound through its Regulations and use of technology in line with international best practices. The IAC (Conduct of Arbitration) Regulations, 2023 and IAC (Conduct of Micro and Small Enterprises Arbitration) Regulations, 2024 prescribe structured procedures, defined timelines and standardized fee mechanisms, thereby reducing uncertainty, procedural delays and avoidable costs and ensuring expeditious conduct of proceedings as compared to ad hoc arbitration.

3.65 The provision for conducting hearings through video conferencing in addition to physical hearings helps in reducing travel and accommodation costs and enables faster scheduling of proceedings. The Committee was also apprised of certain challenges being faced by IAC, including the need for establishing institutional credibility as a relatively new institution, limited awareness among stakeholders regarding institutional arbitration and the requirement of sustained financial and administrative support from the Central Government for undertaking activities as per the objects and functions under the IAC Act, 2019 and for continuous upgradation and maintenance of infrastructure.

3.66 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 (IAC) 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.

3.67 The Committee further recommends that sustained efforts be made to strengthen the physical as well as ICT infrastructure of IAC, 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 IAC to effectively discharge its statutory functions and enhance accessibility, efficiency and credibility of institutional arbitration services.

3.68 The Committee also recommends that sustained efforts be made to further strengthen the institutional framework of arbitration through the India International Arbitration Centre (IAC) 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 IAC. 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 IAC to emerge as a preferred forum for commercial dispute resolution in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS-AT A GLANCE

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

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. (Para 2.8)

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. (Para 3.8)

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)

MINUTES

**DEPARTMENT RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**VIII
EIGHTH MEETING**

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice met at 11.00 A.M. on Thursday, the 19th February, 2026 in Committee Room No. 4, Parliament House Annexe Extension Building, New Delhi.

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Shri Brij Lal — *Chairman*

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Vivek K. Tankha
3. Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla

LOK SABHA

4. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
5. Shri P.P. Chaudhary
6. Shri Varun Chaudhry
7. Dr. Faggan Singh Kulaste
8. Adv. Gowaal Kagada Padavi
9. Shri Saleng A. Sangma
10. Shrimati Manju Sharma

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P. Narayanan, Joint Secretary
2. Shrimati Indira Chaturvedi Vaidya, Director
3. Shri Kuldip Singh, Deputy Secretary
4. Ms. Purva Khanna, Under Secretary

WITNESSES

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- v. Department of Legal Affairs (DoLA)**
 1. Dr. Rajiv Mani, Law Secretary
 2. Ms. Vandana Jain, AS & FA (L&J)
 3. Ms. Varsha Chandra Sinha, Joint Secretary & Law Officer
 4. Shri Sher Singh Dagar, JS & LA

5. Shri Ajay Kumar Arora, Joint Secretary
6. Mohd. Muqeem, JS & LA
7. Shri Japan Babu, JS & LA
8. Dr. RJR Kasibhatla, JS & LA
9. Shri Niraj Kumar, JS & LA
10. Shri M.C. Prusty, Sr. Government Advocate
11. Shri M.K. Maroria, Sr. Government Advocate
12. Shri Ajay Gupta, Joint Secretary
13. Shri Phool Chandra Prasad, Joint Secretary
14. Ms. Haimanti Bhattacharya, Director
15. Shri Avnit Singh Arora, Director

vi. Indian Law Institute (ILI)

1. Dr. V.K. Ahuja, Director
2. Shri Shreenibas Chandra Prusty, Registrar
3. Shri Ashish Bawa, Accounts Officer

vii. Law Commission of India (LCI)

1. Dr. Anju Rathi Rana, Member Secretary

viii. India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC)

1. Shri Navin Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer
2. Shri Vinay Kumar Sanduja, Registrar

ix. Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)

1. Shri Amitabh Shukla, Accountant Member
2. Shri Manoj Kashyap, Assistant Registrar

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2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Members of the Committee and apprised them about the agenda of the meeting, namely to hear the presentations on the Demands for Grants (2026-27) pertaining to the Ministry of Law and Justice and the Departments and organizations falling under it.

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(Witnesses then withdrew)

9. Thereafter, the Chairman welcomed the Law Secretary and Secretary, Legislative Department; representatives of ITAT, ILI, Law Commission of India, IIAC and Election

Commission of India and other officers to the meeting of the Committee. He apprised them that agenda of the meeting which was to hear the representatives of the Department of Legal Affairs, Legislative Department, their attached/associated organisations and the Election Commission of India on the Demands for Grants (2026-27), including Budget Estimates, utilisation of funds on the previous years, status of IIAC, Mediation Council of India and Arbitration Council of India and infrastructural and manpower requirements.

10. Dr. Rajiv Mani, Law Secretary, made a presentation before the Committee on the mandate and functioning of the Department of Legal Affairs. He informed that the Department acts as the principal legal adviser to the Government of India and conducts litigation on behalf of the Union in courts and tribunals. He also briefed the Committee about the organisational structure of the Department and its administrative control over the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Law Commission of India, Indian Law Institute and India International Arbitration Centre, besides its role as the cadre controlling authority for the Indian Legal Service. The Law Secretary gave an overview of the budgetary allocations of the Ministry of Law and Justice and the share of the Department of Legal Affairs under various revenue and capital heads including the Secretariat, Central Agency Section, ITAT, Indian Law Institute, India International Arbitration Centre, Law Commission and counsel fees. He also apprised the Committee about the volume of advisory work handled by the Department including examination of Cabinet Notes, conveyancing and contract vetting proposals, State Bills reserved for Presidential assent and other references.

11. The Law Secretary informed the Committee about measures taken to strengthen law officers and panel advocates including revision of the fee structure of panel counsel, rationalization of the authorized strength of Central Government Notaries and development of the Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS) for monitoring Union litigation. He further referred to developments relating to arbitration and mediation, including the role of the India International Arbitration Centre and the enactment of the Mediation Act, 2023, and apprised the Committee about the human resource position in the Indian Legal Service and other initiatives such as adoption of e-Office, digitization of records and capacity building programmes.

12. Thereafter, Dr. Rajiv Mani made a brief presentation on the working and Budget of the Legislative Department. He informed that the Department was responsible for drafting principal and amending legislations, Ordinances and regulations for UTs and for maintaining and updating the statute book and administering certain Central Acts. He briefly outlined the Budget provision of the Department, stating that it did not administer any scheme and that a major portion of the provision related to elections conducted by the Election Commission of India.

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16. After the presentations, Members of the Committee raised queries and sought clarifications on various issues relating to planning and utilisation of funds in the Legislative Department, quality and impact of drafted legislations, functioning and utilisation of India International Arbitration Centre, mutual legal assistance arrangements and strengthening of the Indian Legal Service, vacancies and infrastructure in tribunals, digital notarisation and Advocates' Welfare Fund. Members also raised points on adequacy of the Budget for the Election Commission of India, electoral processes and reforms, polling station norms in difficult areas, delimitation, electoral rolls, postal ballots and use of technology, etc.

17. The Chairman thanked all the Members and representatives of the Department of Legal Affairs, Legislative Department, their associated organizations and the Election Commission of India and directed the representation to furnish written replies to the queries raised by the Members during the meeting.

(Witnesses then withdrew)

18. The verbatim record of the meeting of the Committee was kept and the meeting adjourned at 5.58 P.M.

19th February, 2026
New Delhi

INDIRA CHATURVEDI VAIDYA
DIRECTOR

To,

The Chairman and Members of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice.

**pertains to other matters*

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

IX NINTH MEETING

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice met at 03:00 PM on 12.03.2026 in Room No. 1, PHAE, New Delhi – 110001.

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. **Shri Brij Lal - *Chairman***

Rajya Sabha

2. Shri Vivek K. Tankha
3. Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla
4. Shri Manan Kumar Mishra

Lok Sabha

5. Shri Gaddigoudar Parvatagouda Chandangouda
6. Shri Varun Chaudhry
7. Dr. Faggan Singh Kulaste
8. Smt. Manju Sharma
9. Shri Arup Chakraborty
10. Shri Gyaneshwar Patil
11. Shri P.P. Chaudhary
12. Shri Dineshbhai Makwana
13. Shri Lalji Verma
14. Shri Madhavaneni Raghunandan Rao
15. Adv. Gowaal Kagada Padavi

SECRETARIAT

- (i) Shri P. Narayanan, Joint Secretary
- (ii) Smt. Indira Chaturvedi Vaidya, Director
- (iii) Shri Kuldip Singh, Deputy Secretary
- (iv) Ms. Purva Khanna, Under Secretary

2. The Chairman, at the outset, welcomed Members of the Committee and informed them about the agenda of the meeting. The Committee, thereafter, took up for consideration and adoption of the following draft Demands for Grants 2026-27 reports of the Committee:-

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(v) 164th Report of the Department of Legal Affairs.

3. The Committee unanimously adopted all the draft Reports and decided to present those Reports to both Houses of Parliament on 16th March, 2026. Dr. Faggan Singh Kulaste, M.P. and in his absence Shri Lalji Verma , M.P., were nominated to lay the Reports in Lok Sabha, while in the absence of Chairman, Shri Vivek Tankha, M.P., was nominated to present the Reports in Rajya Sabha.

4. The meeting adjourned at 03.05 PM.

New Delhi
12th March, 2026

INDIRA CHATURVEDI VAIDYA
DIRECTOR

To,

The Chairman and Members of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice.

**pertains to other matters*