The Tribunals Reforms Act, 2026

Act 17 of 2026. 24 sections. Bare Act with the official footnotes.

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[As on the 25th August, 2026]

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[13th August, 2026.]

An Act to improve the efficiency, ensure independence, transparency, and uniformity in the qualifications, appointment, terms and conditions of service of Chairpersons and Members of various Tribunals, the administration and functioning of the Tribunals, to establish a National Tribunals Commission and to make consequential amendments in related enactments and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

CHAPTER I PRELIMINARY

Section 1. Short title and commencement

(1) This Act may be called the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2026.

(2) It shall come into force on such date[1] as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint; and different dates may be appointed for different provisions of this Act and any reference in any such provision to the commencement of this Act shall be construed as a reference to the coming into force of that provision.

[1] 25th day of August, 2026, vide Notifn. No. S.O. 4713 (E), dated 25th August, 2026, see Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, s. 3 (ii).

Section 2. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

(a) "Chairperson" includes Chairperson, Chairman, President and Presiding Officer of a Tribunal, but does not include the Chairperson of the Commission;

(b) "Chairperson of the Commission" means the Chairperson of the National Tribunals Commission;

(c) "Commission" means the National Tribunals Commission established under section 3;

(d) "Member" includes Vice-Chairman, Vice-Chairperson, Vice-President, Accountant Member, Administrative Member, Judicial Member, Expert Member, Law Member and Technical Member of a Tribunal;

(e) "Member of the Commission" means a Judicial Member or a Technical Member of the National Tribunals Commission;

(f) "National Tribunals Data Grid" means a portal containing the repository of all case related information pertaining to Tribunals specified in the First Schedule;

(g) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(h) "regulations" means the regulations made by the Commission under section 19;

(i) "Schedule" means a Schedule appended to this Act;

(j) "Search-cum-Selection Committee" means a Search-cum-Selection Committee constituted under section 13;

(k) "Secretariat" means the Secretariat of the Commission referred to in section 8; and

(l) "Tribunal" means a Tribunal, Appellate Tribunal or Authority as specified in column (2) of the First Schedule.

CHAPTER II NATIONAL TRIBUNALS COMMISSION

Section 3. National Tribunals Commission

(1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint, there shall be established a Commission to be called the National Tribunals Commission to exercise the powers conferred upon it and to perform the functions assigned to it under this Act.

(2) The headquarters of the National Tribunals Commission shall be at New Delhi.

(3) The Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and four Members, of whom, two shall be Judicial Members and two shall be Technical Members.

(4) A person shall be qualified for appointment-

(a) as the Chairperson, if he has been a Judge of the Supreme Court or a Chief Justice of a High Court;

(b) as a Judicial Member, if he has been a Chief Justice of a High Court or a Judge of a High Court; and

(c) as a Technical Member, if he is a person of ability, integrity and standing, who has special knowledge and experience of not less than twenty-five years in the fields of public administration, finance, law, accountancy, banking, management or technology.

Section 4. Powers and functions of Commission

The Commission shall--

(a) conduct the selection process for filling up the vacancies of Chairpersons and Members of the Tribunals specified in the First Schedule, through the Search-cum-Selection Committees constituted under section 13;

(b) review the performance of the Tribunals, and cause an annual report to be prepared and submitted to the Central Government;

(c) oversee the conduct of inquiry into complaints against the Chairpersons and Members of the Tribunals; and

(d) develop and maintain the National Tribunals Data Grid.

Section 5. Appointment, term of office, etc., of Chairperson of Commission and Members of Commission

(1) The Chairperson of the Commission and the Members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Central Government:

Provided that the Central Government shall consult the Chief Justice of India before making an appointment to the post of Chairperson of the Commission and Judicial Members of the Commission.

(2) The Chairperson of the Commission or a Member of the Commission shall hold office for a term of five years or till he attains the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.

(3) The salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of holding office of the Chairperson of the Commission and the Members of the Commission shall be such, as may be prescribed.

(4) Where a vacancy in the office of the Chairperson of the Commission arises for any reason, the senior-most Judicial Member of the Commission shall act as the Chairperson of the Commission until the date on which a new Chairperson enters upon his office.

(5) When the Chairperson of the Commission is unable to discharge his functions owing to absence, illness or any other cause, the senior-most Judicial Member of the Commission shall discharge the functions of the Chairperson of the Commission until the date on which he resumes charge of his office.

Section 6. Resignation and removal of Chairperson of Commission and Members of Commission

(1) The Chairperson of the Commission or any Member of the Commission may, by notice in writing under his hand addressed to the Central Government, resign his office:

Provided that the Chairperson of the Commission or a Member of the Commission shall, unless permitted by the Central Government to relinquish his office sooner, continue to hold office until the expiry of three months from the date of receipt of such notice, or until a Chairperson or Member appointed as his successor enters upon his office, or until the expiry of his term of office, whichever is earlier.

(2) The Central Government may, by order, remove from office the Chairperson of the Commission or a Member of the Commission, who-

(a) is, or at any time has been, adjudged as an insolvent; or

(b) has been convicted of an offence which involves moral turpitude; or

(c) has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as such Chairperson of the Commission or a Member of the Commission; or

(d) has acquired such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially his functions as such Chairperson of the Commission or a Member of the Commission; or

(e) has so abused his position as to render his continuance in office prejudicial to the public interest.

(3) The Chairperson of the Commission or a Member of the Commission shall not be removed from his office on the ground specified in clause (d) or clause (e) of sub-section (2) unless he has been informed of the charges against him and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in an inquiry held by a Committee constituted for the purpose in such manner as may be prescribed.

(4) The Committee referred to in sub-section (3) shall be headed by a person who is a Judge of the Supreme Court to be nominated by the Chief Justice of India.

Section 7. Vacancy, etc., not to invalidate actions

No act or proceeding of the Commission shall be invalid merely by reason of-

(a) any vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of, the Commission; or

(b) any defect in the appointment of the Chairperson of the Commission or a person acting as such Chairperson, or of a Member of the Commission.

Section 8. Secretariat of Commission

(1) The Central Government shall appoint an officer of the rank of Secretary to the Government of India as the Secretary of the Commission.

(2) The Secretary of the Commission shall head the Secretariat and exercise such administrative and financial powers of the Commission, as may be prescribed.

(3) The number of officers and employees of the Secretariat and their appointment, terms and conditions of service shall be such, as may be prescribed.

(4) The Secretariat shall, subject to the general and administrative oversight of the Chairperson of the Commission under sub-section (5), discharge such functions as may be prescribed.

(5) The Chairperson of the Commission may issue such instructions and directions of general nature to the Secretariat as he may deem fit in the interest of efficient administration of the Commission.

Section 9. Meetings of Commission

(1) The Commission shall observe such procedure in regard to the holding and transaction of business at its meetings in such manner as may be specified by regulations.

(2) The Chairperson of the Commission shall preside over the meetings of the Commission.

(3) When the Chairperson of the Commission is unable to attend a meeting of the Commission for any reason, the senior-most Judicial Member of the Commission present at the meeting shall preside over it.

(4) All matters which are brought before the Commission, shall be decided by a majority of the Members of the Commission, including the Chairperson of the Commission, present and voting.

(5) The Chairperson of the Commission shall have a casting vote.

Section 10. Grants by Central Government

The Central Government may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, make to the Commission grants of such sums of money as it may deem appropriate for being utilised for the purposes of this Act.

Section 11. Accounts and audit

(1) The Commission shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(2) The accounts of the Commission shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at such intervals as may be specified by him, and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Commission to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(3) The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and any other person appointed by him in connection with the audit of the accounts of the Commission shall have the same rights, privileges and authority in connection with such audit as the Comptroller and Auditor-General generally has in connection with the audit of Government accounts and, in particular, shall have the right to demand the production of books, accounts, connected vouchers and other documents and papers, and to inspect any of the offices of the Commission.

(4) The accounts of the Commission as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, together with the audit report thereon, shall be forwarded annually to the Central Government, and that Government shall cause the same to be laid before each House of Parliament.

Section 12. Furnishing of annual report to Central Government

(1) The Secretariat shall prepare, once in every year, an annual report giving a true and full account of the activities of the Commission during the previous year, and forward copies of such report, through the Commission, to the Central Government.

(2) A copy of the report received under sub-section (1) shall be laid by the Central Government, as soon as may be after it is received, before each House of Parliament.

CHAPTER III MANNER OF SELECTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS OF TRIBUNAL

Section 13. Search-cum-Selection Committees

(1) For the purpose of the selection of the Chairpersons and Members of the Tribunals specified in the First Schedule, the Commission shall constitute Search-cum-Selection Committees as may be required.

(2) A Search-cum-Selection Committee in the case of selection of the Chairperson of a Tribunal shall consist of the following, namely:--

(a) a Chairperson, who shall be the Chairperson of the Commission;

(b) one Member, who shall be a Technical Member of the Commission;

(c) one Member, who shall be a retired Chief Justice of a High Court nominated by the Chairperson of the Commission;

(d) one Member, who is a Secretary to the Government of India nominated by the Central Government:

Provided that in case of appointment to the post of Chairperson of the State Administrative Tribunals, the Chief Secretary to the State Government concerned shall be the Member;

(e) two Members, who are experts empanelled under section 15 who carried out the assessment of the suitability of candidates; and

(f) one Member Secretary, who shall be the Secretary to the Commission.

(3) A Search-cum-Selection Committee in the case of selection of the Members of a Tribunal shall consist of the following, namely:--

(a) a Chairperson, who shall be a Judicial Member of the Commission;

(b) one Member, who shall be a Technical Member of the Commission;

(c) one Member, who shall be a retired Judge of a High Court nominated by the Chairperson of the Commission;

(d) one Member, who is a Secretary to the Government of India nominated by the Central Government:

Provided that in case of appointment to the post of Members of the State Administrative Tribunals, the Chief Secretary to the State Government concerned shall be the Member;

(e) two Members, who are experts empanelled under section 15 who carried out the assessment of the suitability of candidates; and

(f) one Member Secretary, who shall be the Secretary to the Commission.

(4) The Chairperson of the Search-cum-Selection Committee shall have the casting vote.

(5) The Member Secretary and the expert Members shall not have any vote.

(6) The Search-cum-Selection Committee, after the selection process, shall forward its recommendation to the Central Government through the Secretariat.

(7) No act or proceeding of a Search-cum-Selection Committee shall be invalid merely by reason of any vacancy in, or any defect in the constitution of, the Committee.

Section 14. Appointment of Chairperson and Members of Tribunals

(1) Notwithstanding the respective enactments relating to a Tribunal specified in the First Schedule, the qualifications, manner of selection, appointment, salaries and allowances, resignation, removal and other conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members of such Tribunal shall be such, as may be prescribed:

Provided that the Central Government shall, in making rules under this sub-section, take into consideration the experience and specialisation in the relevant field which may be required for appointment of a person as the Chairperson or a Member of a Tribunal.

(2) The Chairperson and the Members of every Tribunal specified in the First Schedule shall be appointed by the Central Government on the recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee constituted under section 13.

(3) The office of the Chairperson of a Tribunal specified in the First Schedule may be filled either through a selection process or through a search process, as may be determined by the Search-cum-Selection Committee.

(4) The Search-cum-Selection Committee shall adopt such comprehensive procedure for assessment of candidates as may be prescribed:

Provided that the manner of scrutiny of applications and weightage for assessment of candidates shall be such as may be specified by regulations.

(5) Where any person who is or has been a Chairperson or a Member of the Tribunal, applies for reappointment against an advertisement for selection in the Tribunal, the Search-cum-Selection Committee shall, while considering his candidature for selection as per sub-sections (1) and (4), consider his previous work performance in the Tribunal:

Provided that where a Member is considered for reappointment, the Search-cum-Selection Committee shall consult the president or Chairperson of the concerned Tribunal, in cases other than the reappointment of a Member of a Tribunal constituted by the Central Government under section 44 of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 (35 of 2020).

(6) The Search-cum-Selection Committee shall recommend a suitable person for appointment to the post of Chairperson or Member, as the case may be, and shall recommend one additional name for each vacancy to be included in the waiting list.

(7) The Secretariat shall communicate the recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee, within a period of three days from the date of such recommendation, to the Central Government.

(8) The Central Government shall process the recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee and make the appointment thereto within a period of three months from the date of receipt of such recommendation.

(9) No appointment shall be invalid merely by reason of any vacancy or absence of a Member of the Commission or of a Search-cum-Selection Committee.

Section 15. Empanelment of experts

(1) The Secretariat shall empanel experts from the relevant fields in such manner and on such terms and conditions of engagement including conflict of interest as may be specified by regulations, for providing assistance in the assessment of the suitability of candidates for the posts of Chairpersons and Members of Tribunals.

(2) The experts who carry out the assessment of the suitability of candidates under sub-section (1) shall serve as members of the Search-cum-Selection Committee concerned as constituted under section 13.

Section 16. Removal of Chairperson and Members of Tribunals

(1) The Central Government may, by order, remove from office the Chairperson or Member of a Tribunal, who-

(a) is, or at any time has been, adjudged as an insolvent; or

(b) has been convicted of an offence which involves moral turpitude; or

(c) has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as such Chairperson or Member of the Tribunal; or

(d) has acquired such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially his functions as such Chairperson or Member of the Tribunal; or

(e) has so abused his position as to render his continuance in office prejudicial to the public interest; or

(f) has been found incompetent or inefficient; or

(g) has engaged, at any time during his term of office, in any paid assignment.

(2) Where a complaint is received against a Chairperson or Member of a Tribunal on any ground specified in clauses (d) to (g) of sub-section (1), the Ministry or Department administering the Tribunal concerned shall conduct a preliminary inquiry to find out whether the complaint discloses such a ground and is supported by material facts and documents, and refer the matter to the Chairperson of the Commission for conduct of inquiry in such manner, as may be prescribed, and the Commission shall, after such inquiry, submit its recommendation to the Central Government, for appropriate action, if any.

(3) No Chairperson or Member of a Tribunal shall be removed from his office on the grounds specified in clauses (d) to (g) of sub-section (1) unless a reference has been made in this behalf to the Commission and an inquiry has been made under sub-section (2).

(4) The Central Government shall, on receipt of the recommendation of the Commission under sub-section (2), take appropriate action as required.

Section 17. Term of office of Chairperson and Member of Tribunal

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force,-

(a) the Chairperson of a Tribunal shall hold office for a term of five years or till he attains the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier; and

(b) a Member of a Tribunal shall hold office for a term of five years or till he attains the age of sixty-seven years, whichever is earlier.

(2) The Chairperson or Member of a Tribunal shall be eligible for consideration for reappointment in accordance with

the provisions of section 14.

Section 18. Qualifications, manner of selection, etc., of Chairpersons and Members of Tribunals under certain enactments to be governed by this Act

(1) The provisions relating to qualifications, manner of selection, appointment, salaries and allowances, resignation, removal and other conditions of service and eligibility for reappointment of the Chairpersons and Members of the Tribunals under the enactments specified in column (3) of the First Schedule, shall stand amended in the manner as specified in the Second Schedule.

(2) If the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may, by notification published in the Official Gazette, amend the First Schedule and thereupon, the said Schedule shall be deemed to have been amended accordingly.

(3) A copy of every notification issued under sub-section (2) shall be laid before each House of Parliament, as soon as may be after it is issued.

CHAPTER IV MISCELLANEOUS

Section 19. Power of Commission to make regulations

(1) The Commission may, in consultation with the Central Government, for the purposes of this Act, by notification in the Official Gazette, make regulations not inconsistent with this Act and the rules made thereunder.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such regulations may provide for--

(a) the manner of holding and transaction of business of the Commission at its meetings under sub-section (1) of section 9;

(b) the manner of advertisement of vacancies and processing of applications;

(c) the manner of scrutiny of applications and weightage for assessment of candidates under the proviso to sub-section (4) of section 14; and

(d) the manner of empanelment of experts, their terms and conditions of engagement including conflict of interest under sub-section (1) of section 15.

(3) Every regulation made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the regulation or both Houses agree that the regulation should not be made, the regulation shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that regulation.

Section 20. Power of Central Government to make rules

(1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:-

(a) the salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of holding office of the Chairperson of the Commission and the Members of the Commission under sub-section (3) of section 5;

(b) the manner of constitution of committee and for holding inquiry under sub-section (3) of section 6;

(c) the administrative and financial powers of the Commission to be exercised by the Secretary of the Commission under sub-section (2) of section 8;

(d) the number of officers and employees of the Secretariat and their appointment, terms and conditions of service under sub-section (3) of section 8;

(e) the functions of the Secretariat under sub-section (4) of section 8;

(f) the form for preparing annual statement of accounts under sub-section (1) of section 11;

(g) the qualifications, manner of selection, appointment, salaries and allowances, resignation, removal and other conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members of Tribunals under sub-section (1) of section 14;

(h) the comprehensive procedure for assessment of candidates under sub-section (4) of section 14;

(i) the manner of conduct of inquiry under sub-section (2) of section 16; and

(j) any other matter which is to be, or may be, prescribed for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(3) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

Section 21. Protection of action taken in good faith

No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Central Government or the Commission or any officer of the Central Government or the Chairperson of the Commission or any Member of the Commission or any other officer or employee of the Commission, for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder.

Section 22. Act to have overriding effect

The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any enactment specified in column (3) of the First Schedule.

Section 23. Power to remove difficulties

(1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by general or special order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty:

Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of a period of three years from the date of commencement of this Act.

(2) Every order made under this section shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before each House of Parliament.

Section 24. Repeal and savings

(1) The Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 (33 of 2021) is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding such repeal,-

(a) anything done or any action taken under the enactments specified in column (3) of the First Schedule, shall be as valid and as effective in law as if such thing or action was done or taken under the corresponding provisions of those enactments, as amended by the Second Schedule to this Act;

(b) the salary, allowances and the other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members of a Tribunal specified in the First Schedule, appointed on or after the commencement of this Act, shall be governed by the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder;

(c) the salary, allowances and other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members of any Tribunal specified in the First Schedule, whose appointments were made on or before the 1st October, 2021 based on the selection or recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee made in accordance with the provisions of the respective enactments or the rules made thereunder, shall continue to be governed by such enactments or the rules made thereunder;

(d) in other cases, where any person was appointed as the Chairperson or Member of a Tribunal in accordance with the provisions of Chapter II of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021(33 of 2021), on or after the 4th April, 2021 and before the commencement of this Act, and holding office as such immediately before the date of commencement of this Act, shall continue to hold office till the completion of a term of five years from the date of such appointment, or the age of seventy years, or sixty-seven years, as the case may be, whichever is earlier, and shall be eligible for reappointment; and

(e) subject to the provisions of clause (d), the salary, allowances and the other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson and Members of any Tribunal specified in the First Schedule, who were appointed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter II of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 (33 of 2021), before the commencement of this Act, and holding office as such on the date of commencement of this Act, may not be varied to their disadvantage till the completion of their respective term.

(3) Notwithstanding the repeal of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 (33 of 2021) and anything contained in any

judgment, order or decree of any Court, or in any law for the time being in force,-

(a) any Search-cum-Selection Committee constituted in respect of any Tribunal specified in the First Schedule, as per the provisions of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 (33 of 2021) or the rules made thereunder, prior to the establishment of the National Tribunals Commission under this Act, shall continue and complete the process of selection of Chairperson and Members of such Tribunal under the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 (33 of 2021), and the appointment, salary, allowances and the other terms and conditions of service of the Chairperson or Member so selected and appointed shall be governed by the provisions of this Act; and

(b) the appointment of any person as Chairperson or Chairman or President or Vice-Chairperson or Vice-Chairman or Vice-President or Presiding Officer or Member of a Tribunal, Appellate Tribunal, or as the case may be, other Authority, on the basis of selection or recommendation already made by the Search-cum-Selection Committee in accordance with the provisions of Chapter II of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021(33 of 2021), before the commencement of this Act, shall be deemed to have been made under the provisions of this Act.

(4) Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-section (2), the provisions of section 6 of the General Clauses Act, 1897 (10 of 1897) shall apply with regard to the effect of repeal.

Schedules

The Schedules are not reproduced in this PDF. Each is in the official file, at the page given:

THE FIRST SCHEDULE (official file, page 14)

THE SECOND SCHEDULE (official file, page 15)

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