BLOGS

The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026: A New Chapter in Tribunal Governance

Hanspal Bakul · 13 Aug 2026

On August 10, 2026, the Lok Sabha introduced and passed The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026, marking a significant shift in how India structures its tribunal system. The Bill seeks to repeal the **Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021**, and replace it with a framework that aligns more closely with judicial independence.

Why Was This Bill Necessary?

The 2021 Act had governed appointments and service conditions for tribunal members. *However, several of its provisions were struck down by the Supreme Court for violating the principle of separation of powers in* ***Madras Bar Association v. Union of India, (2026) 2 SCC 1.*** Executive overreach into judicial appointments had repeatedly drawn constitutional scrutiny. Therefore, the 2026 Bill attempts to codify appointment mechanisms in consonance with judicial directions rather than executive discretion.

Introducing the National Tribunals Commission

The centrepiece of this Bill is the **creation of the National Tribunals Commission (NTC)**. This body will conduct *selection processes for tribunal vacancies, review tribunal performance, and oversee complaints against chairpersons or members.* Additionally, it will *maintain the* ***National Tribunals Data Grid***, bringing much-needed transparency to the functioning of tribunals across India.

It comprises a *chairperson* who has served as a Supreme Court judge or High Court Chief Justice, *two judicial members*, and *two technical members* with at least 25 years of relevant experience. Moreover, appointments of the chairperson and judicial members require consultation with the *Chief Justice of India, a safeguard clearly rooted in prior Supreme Court rulings.*

The Selection Mechanism

Rather than leaving appointments entirely to the executive, the Bill establishes a **search-cum-selection committee for each vacancy.** This committee is headed by either the Commission chairperson or a judicial member, depending on the post being filled. It also includes a retired judge, a technical member, a government secretary, and non-voting expert members.

Furthermore, the committee must recommend *one name along with a waitlisted candidate for every vacancy.* The central government is then bound to make the appointment within **three months.** T*his timeline addresses a long-standing grievance regarding delayed tribunal appointments across the country.*

Tenure, Removal, and Accountability

Tribunal chairpersons will hold office for **five years or until age 70, whichever comes first,** while **members will serve until age 67**. *Re-appointment is possible, subject to a review of past performance.* Consequently, this creates a more structured accountability mechanism than the earlier regime.

Removal provisions are notably detailed. Grounds include *insolvency, conviction involving moral turpitude, incapacity, or abuse of position.* Tribunal members face additional grounds, such as *incompetence or engaging in unauthorised paid assignments outside their office.*

This Bill is essential reading for anyone preparing for CLAT PG 2027, particularly under Administrative Law and Constitutional Law. It builds directly on landmark tribunal jurisprudence, including Madras Bar Association cases, and tests conceptual understanding of separation of powers rather than rote memorisation.

The Tribunals Reforms Bill, 2026, represents a considered legislative response to years of judicial pushback against executive control over tribunal appointments.For now, however, it stands as a crucial case study in the evolving balance between legislative intent and constitutional mandate.