

SC seeks Centre's reply on vacancies in tribunals

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Friday told the Centre to come clean on long list of vacancies in tribunals across the country, and asked if it wanted to continue or close them down.

A bench of Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justice Surya Kant said the delay in filling up vacancies in various tribunals was effectively crippling their functioning and leaving people without legal remedies.

The bench read out the long list of vacancies across the tribunals and added that 19

presiding officers, 110 judicial members, and 111 technical numbers are pending in all the tribunals.

"This is the scenario of the tribunal. We do not know, what is the stand of the government," the bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre.

"Whether you want to continue these tribunals or want them to close.... something needs to be done," the bench told him further.

Mehta sought 10 days time to respond to the query made dur-

ing the hearing on a PIL filed by advocate Amit Sahni for setting up national and regional GST Tribunals.

"The impression we are gathering that it appears the bureaucracy does not want the tribunals. You cannot make the tribunals defunct. If you don't want the tribunals, we will restore jurisdiction of the HC. We cannot keep people without remedy," the bench told Mehta.

The court cautioned the Centre that it would seek presence of top-level officers, if urgent action is not taken in the matter.