

# Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), Scheme, Procedure, Latest News

July 23, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



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## FAST TRACK Special Courts



**Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)** are dedicated courts created to ensure the speedy trial of rape and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act cases. They were introduced to reduce delays in the criminal justice system and provide faster justice to survivors.

These courts function under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme and receive financial support through the Nirbhaya Fund. Over the years, FTSCs have significantly improved the disposal of sensitive criminal cases and strengthened access to timely justice across India.

### Why are Fast Track Special Courts in News?

**Fast Track Special Courts** have returned to public discussion after Nationwide Protests in 2026 demanding stronger action against examination paper leaks and education reforms. During the protests led by the **Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)** and **Students**, **Prime Minister** of India **Narendra Modi** announced that **fast track courts** would be established to ensure speedy prosecution of those involved in paper leak cases.

However, protest groups and opposition parties argued that faster trials alone cannot solve the root causes of recurring paper leaks and continued demanding broader reforms, including accountability in the **education system**.

## What are Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)?

Fast Track Special Courts are specialized judicial courts for the faster disposal of pending cases. It was primarily established for disposal of serious criminal cases involving rape and offences under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act**. They operate under the centrally sponsored **Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) Scheme** implemented by the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.

## Fast Track Court Scheme 2019

The major highlighting features of the Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) Scheme has been listed below:

- **Purpose:** FTSCs conduct time bound trials of rape and POCSO Act cases to reduce pendency and ensure quicker delivery of justice for victims.
- **Legal Basis:** The scheme was introduced in October 2019 following the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2018** and the Supreme Court's directions in *Suo Motu Writ (Criminal)* of 2019.
- **Exclusive POCSO Courts:** The scheme includes exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts, which hear only offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012.
- **Implementing Authority:** The Department of Justice under the Ministry of Law and Justice implements the scheme in coordination with State Governments and High Courts.
- **Funding Source:** The scheme is financed through the **Nirbhaya Fund** under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme pattern, with Central and State Governments sharing expenditure according to prescribed funding ratios.
- **Current Coverage:** The scheme has been extended up to 31 March 2026 with approval for establishing 790 Fast Track Special Courts across eligible States and Union Territories.
- **Functional Courts:** As on 30 June 2025, 725 FTSCs, including 392 exclusive POCSO Courts, were operational across 29 States and Union Territories.
- **Case Disposal:** Since the scheme began, these courts have disposed of 3,34,213 cases, including 1,19,392 rape cases and 2,14,821 POCSO cases.
- **State Wise Performance:** Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of operational FTSCs with 218 courts, disposing of 91,459 cases, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 67 courts disposing of 32,113 cases and Kerala with 55 courts disposing of 26,202 cases.

## Fast Track Special Courts Procedure

Fast Track Special Courts follow a structured judicial process designed to reduce delays while ensuring fair trial principles are maintained throughout criminal proceedings.

- Eligible cases are transferred from regular courts to FTSCs for dedicated and priority hearing under the approved judicial framework.

- Exclusive POCSO Courts hear only offences under the POCSO Act, while other FTSCs may handle both rape cases and POCSO related offences.
- Every FTSC is supported by one Judicial Officer appointed according to applicable judicial service rules and supervised by the respective **High Court**.
- Each court receives financial support for seven staff members responsible for administration, record management, courtroom operations and daily functioning.
- Cases proceed through filing of charges, examination of witnesses, presentation of evidence, cross examination, final arguments and judgment while prioritising continuous hearings.
- These courts are intended to complete trials quickly. Ideally, sexual offence cases should conclude within one year, while recent criminal procedure reforms recommend even shorter timelines for specific offences wherever feasible.
- Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, every FTSC is expected to dispose of around 41 to 42 cases every quarter, equivalent to nearly 165 cases annually.
- High Courts regularly monitor disposal rates and functioning, while the Department of Justice reviews implementation based on reports received from **States** and **Union Territories**.

## Fast Track Special Courts Challenges

Despite faster disposal rates, Fast Track Special Courts continue to face several operational, legal and administrative challenges that affect their long term effectiveness.

- **Infrastructure Constraints:** Many FTSCs function within existing court buildings instead of separate facilities, limiting courtroom space, technology, staff support and overall efficiency.
- **Large Pending Caseload:** Despite disposing of thousands of cases, more than 2.4 lakh POCSO cases remained pending, indicating that new cases continue to exceed disposal capacity.
- **Judicial Vacancies:** Vacant judicial positions reduce the number of available judges, increasing workload and slowing the pace of hearings despite dedicated court structures.
- **Shared Judicial Responsibilities:** Judges are often assigned additional responsibilities from regular courts, reducing the exclusive attention required for time bound disposal of FTSC cases.
- **Low Conviction Rate:** A significant gap remains between pending trials and convictions, raising concerns about investigation quality, evidence collection and overall prosecution effectiveness.
- **Complex Investigations:** Delays frequently arise because of complicated evidence, forensic examination, witness availability, legal representation and prolonged investigation processes.
- **Limited Jurisdiction:** FTSCs are restricted to specified categories of offences, preventing them from addressing related criminal matters that may arise from the same incident.

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