

The Hindu

Fill Armed Forces Tribunal posts: Bar

In a replay of the tussle between the judiciary and the Union government on vacant posts of judges, members of the Armed Forces Tribunal (Principal Bench) Bar Association have decided to hold “a symbolic protest” on September 22 against the “complete breakdown of the system of administration of justice for defence personnel, ex-servicemen, disabled soldiers and their families”.

The reasons for the protest have been spelt out in two letters written by the association to Chief Justice of India T.S. Thakur, with copies marked to the Defence and Law Ministers, and to presidents of all AFT Bar associations.

The ATF members are peeved at the “non-appointment of judicial members” in the tribunal, leading to a “complete breakdown of the system of administration of justice for defence personnel, ex-servicemen, disabled soldiers and their families”.

The letters say only five Benches out of 17 tribunals are functional as the vacancies remain unfilled.

Questioning the very purpose for which the AFT was created — “quicker dispensation of justice” — the association criticised the government for not amending the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007, which would have enabled lawyers eligible for appointment as judges of constitutional courts to be appointed as members of the tribunal.