

What is a full court meeting?

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In news– Within hours of taking over, the 49th Chief Justice of India U U Lalit called a meeting of the ‘full court’ meeting where the judges discussed how to deal with issues relating to listing and backlog of cases.

About ‘full court’ meeting-

- **A full court meeting literally means one which is attended by all the judges of the court.**
- **There are no written rules dealing with this.**
- **The roots of the custom lie in the ‘en banc session’,** which is a meeting in which a case is heard before all judges of the court.
- The term ‘en banc’ review was often used for complex cases with far-reaching ramifications.
- In some countries, en banc hearing is common and not an exception. The Supreme Court of the United States, and the highest courts of most countries, do not sit in panels, but judges hear the cases ‘en banc’, unless a judge opts out due to ill health or recusal.
- As per convention, a full court meeting is convened at the discretion of the Chief Justice of India, it does **not follow any particular calendar.**
- It is called to discuss issues of importance to the judiciary.
- The senior designations of practising advocates in the Supreme Court and high courts are also decided during the full court meetings.
- **The basic idea is to take everyone along.** Full court meetings are an **ideal occasion to arrive at common solutions to deal with problems that beset the country’s legal system** and to make any amends, if necessary, in the administrative practices of the court.

- Full court meetings have been held many times in the past. In March 2020, it was convened to discuss demands by associations of lawyers to close the court till further notice following the Covid-10 outbreak and its subsequent spread among court staff, and to decide the further steps to be taken.
- **Also, a full court meeting held on May 7, 1997** decided that “every Judge should make a declaration of all his/her assets in the form of real estate or investment”.

Chief Justice of India-

- The Chief Justice of India and the other judges of the Supreme Court are **appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Indian Constitution.**
- It is mentioned in **Article 124 that appointment by the President is to be done “after consultation” with judges of the Supreme Court, as the President may “deem necessary”.**
- Further, the **tenure of a CJI is until they attain the age of 65 years,** while High Court judges retire at 62 years.
- The more than two decades-old **collegium system is followed in the appointment of judges,** consisting of five seniormost judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

The Chief Justices of India who had tenures less than 100 days-

Six heads of the Indian judiciary including the 49th CJI had a tenure of less than 100 days, they are:

1. **49th CJI, U.U Lalit** will demit office on November 8 with a tenure of 74 days.
2. **Justice Kamal Narain Singh,** who was the CJI between November 25, 1991 and December 12, 1991, had a tenure of

18 days.

3. **Justice S Rajendra Babu** had a tenure of 30 days as the chief justice of India between May 2, 2004 and May 31, 2004.
4. **Justice J C Shah** had a tenure of 36 days when he was the CJI between December 17, 1970 and January 21, 1971.
5. **Justice G B Patnaik** had a 41-day tenure as the head of the Indian judiciary when he held the office of the CJI from November 8, 2002 to December 18, 2002.

Justice L M Sharma had a tenure of 86 days as the CJI when he was in office between November 18, 1992 and February 11, 1993.