**Highest per capita spend on police; 40% vacancy among High Court judges**

**Punjab ranks 9th reveals India Justice Report 2025**

***Some encouraging improvements:***

* Punjab improves ranks significantly in legal aid and police
* With 1 civil police personnel deployed for every 504 people, it has the best population per civil police ratio in the country
* It has 52% female judges in the district judiciary and 25% in the High Court

***Persistent lacunae:***

* HC Judge vacancy increased from 22% (in 2022) to 40% (in 2025), HC staff vacancy too increased from 23 % to 35%
* Spends the second lowest per inmate among all large states (Rs. 17,821 annually)

**15 April, Chandigarh:** The 2025 India Justice Report (IJR), India’s only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country, released today, ranks Punjab 9th overall (2022:10th) among the 18 Large and Mid-sized states (with populations of over one crore each). The state ranked 2nd in Legal Aid (2022: 9th) and 7th in Police (2022:13th).

The top overall position was retained by Karnataka, followed by Andhra Pradesh, climbing from fifth in 2022 to second, Telangana (2022 ranking: 3rd), and Kerala (2022 ranking: 6th). Among the seven small states (with populations less than one crore each), Sikkim (2022: 1st) ranked first, followed by Himachal Pradesh (2022: 6th) and Arunachal Pradesh (2022: 2nd).

The India Justice Report (IJR) was first initiated by Tata Trusts, with the first ever ranking published in 2019. This is the fourth edition of the report, in collaboration with partners including the Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, and How India Lives, IJR’s data partner.

Through a rigorous 24-month quantitative research, the IJR 2025, similar to the previous three, has tracked the performance of states in **capacitating their Justice delivery structures** to effectively deliver mandated services. Based on the latest official statistics from authoritative government sources, it brings together otherwise siloed data on the **four pillars of Justice delivery – Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid**. Each pillar was analysed through the prism of budgets, human resources, workload, diversity, infrastructure, and trends (intention to improve over a five-year period), against the state’s own declared standards and benchmarks. This edition also separately assesses the capacity of the 25 State Human Rights Commissions (*see SHRC brief for more*) and consists of essays on mediation and access to justice for persons with disabilities.

Discussing the India Justice Report, **Justice (Retd.) Madan B. Lokur** commented, “*The punishing process of accessing justice begins with the very first encounter an individual has with the system. With our failure to properly equip and train frontline justice providers—police stations, legal aid actors including paralegal volunteers and district courts—we fracture public trust. These institutions are intended to embody our commitment to equal justice. The strength of our entire justice framework rests on these critical first points of contact. The fourth edition of the India Justice Report points out that improvements remain few and far between in the absence of adequate attention given to resources. Alas, the burden continues to remain on the individual seeking justice, and not the state to provide it*.”

**Ms. Maja Daruwala, Chief Editor, India Justice Report**, highlighted, “*As India moves forward into a hundred years of being a democratic, rule of law nation, the promise of rule of law and equal rights will remain hollow unless underwritten by a reformed justice system. Reform is not optional. It is urgent. A well-resourced responsive justice system is a constitutional imperative that must be experienced as an everyday reality available to every citizen*.”

**Punjab’s Ranks: Pillar Wise**

|  | **IJR 4** | **IJR 3** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **OVERALL** | **9** | 10 |
| **POLICE** | **7** | 13 |
| **PRISONS** | **15** | 12 |
| **JUDICIARY** | **7** | 3 |
| **LEGAL AID** | **2** | 9 |

**Police: Improvement in Performance**

Punjab Police jumped up the ranks from the 13th to the 7th position this year. The state has the highest per capita spend on police (Rs. 2604) among all large states. With one civil police available for 504 people, it has the best population per civil police ratio.

All Police stations in the state now have women helpdesks. It has also improved on the services provided by the state’s citizen portal.

**Legal Aid: Rises to the Second Rank**

With a cumulative effect of improvement in the majority of the indicators, the State moved up to the second position in Legal Aid this year. It has a prominent share of women among panel lawyers (24%), paralegal volunteers (39%) as well as secretaries of the District Legal Services Authorities (64%). The state also has the highest utilisation of the NALSA funds received.

**Judiciary: Worrying increase in vacancies among High Court judges**

The vacancy among HC judges nearly doubled from 22% (in 2022) to 40% (in 2025) while the HC staff vacancy too increased from 23 % to 35%. It is pertinent to note that 67% of cases are pending for more than 3 years before the High Court of Punjab and Haryana. The shortfall in courthalls at the district level too has risen from 15% to 24%.

The representation of women among judges however has improved, with 25% women judges at the High Court and 52% in the district courts.

**Prisons: Data records presence of no correctional staff in Punjab’s prisons**

While Punjab’s prisons recorded slight improvement in vacancies among cadre and medical staff, there continues to be absolute vacancy among the correctional staff. Showing no overcrowding since the past 6 years, Punjab’s prisons now are back to being overcrowded (116% occupancy rate). 23% of the state’s prisons have occupancy rates between 150-250%. At just Rs. 17,821 annually, the state spends the second lowest per inmate after Maharashtra.

The IJR 2025 has reiterated both immediate and foundational corrections. It has flagged urgent filling of vacancies and increased representation. To effect irreversible change, it has exhorted that Justice delivery be designated as an essential service.

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**Sources:**

1. Police: *Data on Police Organisation 2023,* Bureau of Police Research and Development
2. *Prisons: Prison Statistics India 2022,* National Crime Records Bureau
3. Judiciary: 2024 & 2025- National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), Court News, Supreme Court of India; eCourts Services; Websites and annual reports of High Courts, Department of Justice
4. Legal aid: 2024, Statistics from National Legal Services Authority

**ANNEXURE I:**

**OVERALL NATIONAL FINDINGS: AT A GLANCE**

**The ranking of the 18 large-and mid-sized states is:**

| **State** | **Rank 2025** | **Rank 2022** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Karnataka | 1 | 1 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2 | 5 |
| Telangana | 3 | 3 |
| Kerala | 4 | 6 |
| Tamil Nadu | 5 | 2 |
| Chhattisgarh | 6 | 9 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 7 | 8 |
| Odisha | 8 | 11 |
| Punjab | 9 | 10 |
| Maharashtra | 10 | 12 |
| Gujarat | 11 | 4 |
| Haryana | 12 | 13 |
| Bihar | 13 | 16 |
| Rajasthan | 14 | 15 |
| Jharkhand | 15 | 7 |
| Uttarakhand | 16 | 14 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 17 | 18 |
| West Bengal | 18 | 17 |

**The ranking of the seven small states is:**

| **State** | **Rank 2025** | **Rank 2022** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sikkim | 1 | 1 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 2 | 6 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 3 | 2 |
| Tripura | 4 | 3 |
| Meghalaya | 5 | 4 |
| Mizoram | 6 | 5 |
| Goa | 7 | 7 |











| ***BUDGETS FOR JUSTICE AT A GLANCE***   * **Legal Aid:** The national per capita spend on legal aid, is a meagre **Rs 6** per annum * **Prisons:** The national per capita spend on prisons is **Rs. 57**. In 2022-23, the national average spend per prisoner has increased to Rs 44,110 from Rs 38,028 in 2021-22 Andhra Pradesh records the highest annual spend on a prisoner at Rs.2,67,673. * **Judiciary:** The national per capita spend on judiciary stands at **Rs. 182.** No state spends more than one per cent of its total annual expenditure on the Judiciary.      * **Police:** The national per capita spend on police is at **Rs. 1,275** which is the highest among the four pillars. |
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