**Sikkim retains 1st rank among small states; Only Small State to Reach 33% Benchmark among High Court Women Judges reveals IJR 2025**

***Some encouraging improvements:***

* All small states register 1 in every 3 district court judges; Goa (70%) and Meghalaya (61%) record the highest shares. Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura meet the MHA suggested benchmark of 10 women constables in every police station
* All small states record 80% and above share of police stations with at least one CCTV
* Sikkim recorded a 100% vacancy among DLSA secretaries. It has reported this since 2019

***Persistent lacunae:***

* Over 60% vacancies among correctional staff in Himachal Pradesh, rest of the cluster records nil staff
* Tripura (6%), Arunachal Pradesh (7%), Himachal Pradesh (6%) and Sikkim (6%) record low share of women among police officers
* Meghalaya records only 59% police stations with women helpdesks
* Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Goa record 1 in 3 undertrial prisoners detained for 1-3 years

**15 April, New Delhi:** The 2025 India Justice Report (IJR), India’s only ranking of states on delivery of justice in the country, released today, ranks Himachal Pradesh 2nd in Prisons and 4th in Judiciary, while overall it was ranked 2nd (2022: 6th) among the 7 Small states (with population of less than one crore each). It ranks Meghalaya 3rd in Judiciary and 5th in Police while overall it was ranked 5th (2022: 4th) among the 7 Small states.

The top position was retained by Sikkim (2022: 1st), and Goa came in seventh (2022: 7th). Karnataka (2022: 1st) topped the list of 18 Large and Mid-Sized states (populations over one crore each) followed by Andhra Pradesh (2022: 5th), and Telangana (2022: 3rd).

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*.”

**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**

In the judiciaryfor 2022-23**,** all states register a per capita spend above the national average (Rs. 182). Sikkim with an already high per capita spend at Rs. 496 in 2017-18, doubled it to Rs. 966 in 2022-23. Meghalaya at Rs. 246 recorded the lowest per capita spend.

In the **police**, in 2022-23,all states recorded a per capita on police more than the national average (Rs.1,275). Arunachal Pradesh that spends the highest on police per person (Rs. 8,615) also recorded the highest increase over 2020-21. Himachal Pradesh (Rs. 2,168) that spends the least in the cluster still recorded a higher per capita spend than most large states.

In 2022-23, Sikkim (Rs. 109), Tripura (Rs. 59), Mizoram (Rs. 36), Goa (Rs. 32) and Himachal Pradesh (Rs. 20) spent the highest per capita on legal aid surpassing the national average of Rs. 6. Tripura only 59%. All small states contributed over 60% towards their total legal aid budget. Meghalaya at 52% contributed the least.

**Gender Representation**

Sikkim is the only state in the cluster and in the country other than Telangana to meet the 33% benchmark of women judges at the High Court. Meghalaya and Tripura recorded none since 2018. At the district courts, however, 1 in every 3 judges is a woman, with Goa (70%), Meghalaya (61%) and Mizoram (51%) registering the largest shares. Women have consistently accounted for over 20% in the subordinate courts in this cluster since 2017.

In the police, at 15%, Himachal Pradesh records the highest share of women followed by Arunachal Pradesh and Goa at 11%. Tripura had one of the lowest shares among constables (6%) as well as officers (6%) in the cluster.

**Vacancies across justice system**

In the police, Sikkim was the only state to have more constables and officers than sanctioned and Himachal Pradesh reported lowest overall police vacancies (4.2%) and constable vacancies (2%) in cluster. Among officers, all states except Himachal Pradesh (15%) and Meghalaya (12%) had over 25% vacancies. Tripura reported the highest at 45%, followed by Arunachal Pradesh with 37%.

In the judiciary, the High Courts of Meghalaya, Sikkim and Tripura reported no vacancies. Sikkim has functioned with a full bench at the High Court since 2022. At the district judiciary level, Meghalaya. Mizoram and Sikkim had more than 1 in 3 missing while Himachal Pradesh reported a 11% shortfall - lowest in the cluster.

**Prisons**

The 7 small states together had inmate populations ranging from 260 in Sikkim, 333 in Arunachal Pradesh, 1364 in Mizoram and 2528 in Himachal Pradesh. There are a total of 50 jails. All states in the cluster, except Tripura, reported overcrowding. 40% of Meghalaya 5 jails had occupancy rates between 150-250% and 20% reported over 250%. Goa’s single jail is over 9% capacity.

Only Arunachal Pradesh reported an overall vacancy of 8% among prison staff - the lowest in the cluster - while Sikkim (56%) and Tripura (54%) reported the highest. Tripura reported over half of its prison officers and guarding staff missing. Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim had not sanctioned any correctional staff and Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura had 100% vacancies. Among doctors, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa reported no vacancies but in Himachal Pradesh (61%) and Goa (85%) more than half were missing.

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:**

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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** |
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| Sikkim | 1 | 1 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 2 | 6 |
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| 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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