

Judicial Transparency Index Report

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Polity

Why in News?

Recently, the Justice Access and Lowering Delays in India (JALDI) Initiative released the Judicial Transparency Index, a first-of-its-kind assessment of the Supreme Court (SC) and 25 High Courts (HC).

Key Findings

- **Collegium Decisions -**
 - SC resolutions provide only generic reasons (merit, integrity, competence), lacking substantive detail.
 - No reasons given in last five transfer resolutions.
- **RTI Implementation -**
 - 15 High Courts prescribe additional exemptions beyond Section 8 of RTI Act.
 - Exemptions are often vague, overbroad, contradictory.
- **Financial Transparency -**
 - 8 High Courts have not published budgets.
 - None publish audit reports.
- **Judicial Processes**
 - **Live Streaming** - 13 HCs adopted rules; only 4 (Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Telangana, Guwahati) streamed >75% proceedings.
 - **Case Allocation** - No court publishes criteria for bench constitution.
 - **Recusals & Discipline** - No clear policies; transparency gaps persist.
- **Personnel and Asset Disclosures**
 - **Supreme Court** - 90% judges disclosed assets (post-2025 resolution).
 - **High Courts** - Wide variation; Kerala (90%), Madras (11%), Delhi (13.6%).
 - **Voluntary Nature** - Leads to inconsistency over time.
- **Sanctioned and Working Strength**

- **Judges** - 19 HCs provide updated sanctioned/working strength.
- **Staff** - Only 5 HCs provide updated staff strength; 16 lack data.
- **Best Practice** - Allahabad, Calcutta, Manipur, Patna, Tripura publish both judges & staff data.
- **Registry and Appointments**
 - **Registry** - All HCs publish list of officials; 23 provide contacts; 20 specify roles.
 - **Recruitment** - 24 HCs publish shortlisted names for district judges; only 14 has disclosed marks.
 - **Transfers** - All 25 publish orders; 18 provide reasons. Only 14 HCs have formal transfer policy. SC publishes resolutions but no transfer policy.
- **Code of Conduct**
 - **High Courts** - None publish code of conduct for judges.
 - **Supreme Court** - Publishes **Restatement of Values of Judicial Life** but lacks complaint procedure or sanction orders.
 - **Sanctions** - Only J&K and Tripura publish information on disciplinary actions against district judges.
- **Rankings**
 - **Leaders** - Himachal Pradesh HC (institutional governance), Tripura HC (judicial personnel disclosures).
 - **Lagging** - Meghalaya and Bombay HCs (budgetary disclosures, public access).
 - **Supreme Court** - Strong in institutional governance, moderate in judicial processes/personnel transparency.

Reference

[The Print | Judicial Transparency Index Report](#)