



WHEELS OF JUSTICE

The judicial system remains bogged down in millions of cases despite a rise in the sanctioned strength of judges and increased computerisation of courts. By **RAMESH CHAKRAPANI**

Pendency of cases remains high in the Supreme Court, High Courts, and district and subordinate Courts in spite of the government's moves aimed at higher disposal of cases, a rise in the sanctioned strength of judges and greater allocation of funds for computerisation of courts.



Judge vacancies as on August 1, 2016 **top courts**

	Approved Strength	Working Strength	Vacancies
Supreme Court	31	28	3
High Courts			
Allahabad	160	78	82
Punjab & Haryana	85	44	41
Hyderabad	61	24	37
Madras	75	38	37
Karnataka	62	26	36
Calcutta	72	40	32
Bombay	94	64	30
Patna	53	27	26
Delhi	60	36	24
M.P.	53	34	19
Gujarat	52	33	19
Rajasthan	50	31	19
All India	1,079	601	478

According to an official release, the pendency of cases in the Supreme Court fell from 62,000 cases in 2014 to 58,000 in 2017. A quick look at the data shows that the number of cases pending in the Supreme Court at the end of the year has remained above 59,000 in the past four years.

In High Courts, the backlog was 41.53 lakh at end-2014 and fell to 38.70 lakh the following year, before rising again to 40.15 lakh at end-2016. The situation in district and subordinate courts is more worrisome: pendency has been on the rise, from 2.64 crore at end-2014 to 2.70 crore at end-2015 and 2.74 crore at end-2016.

The National Lok Adalat in July 2017 disposed 9.97 lakh cases with a total settlement amount of Rs.2,925 crore, according to government figures.

In 2017, five judges were appointed to the Supreme Court and 75 to High Courts, while 28 additional judges were made permanent.

The government's release of funds for the computerisation of courts has zoomed in the past three financial years, rising from Rs.9.89 crore in 2014-15 to Rs.212.23 crore in 2015-16 and Rs.357.50 crore in 2016-17. In the current financial year, Rs.231.40 crore has been released so far.

Strengthening the judiciary

Pendency of cases in Supreme Court down from **62,000** cases in 2014 to **58,000** in 2017.

Sanctioned strength of High Court judges up from **906** to **1,079**.

173 posts sanctioned between June 2014 and May 2016.

Sanctioned strength of subordinate judiciary up from **20,174** at end-2014 to 22,288 at end-2016.

National Lok Adalat in July 2017 disposed of **9.97 lakh** cases with a settlement amount of **Rs.2,925** crore.

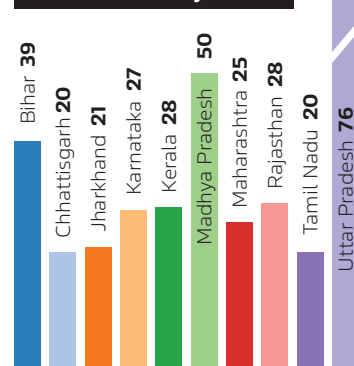
1,824 redundant Central Acts identified for repeal; **1,200** Acts have been repealed.

In 2016, **126** fresh appointments of High Court judges made; **131** additional judges made permanent; tenure of **22** extended.

In 2017, **5 judges** appointed in Supreme Court, **75** in High Courts and **28** additional judges made permanent.

Plan to engage **227 Nyaya Mitras** in States with high pendency of cases approved.

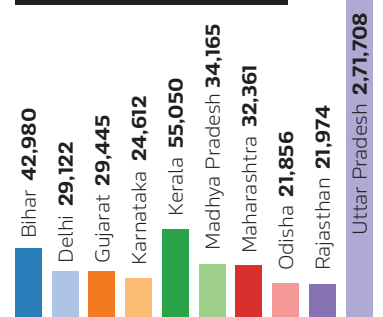
Functional family courts



Cases disposed of in family courts

TOP STATES	2013	2014	2015
U.P.	33,704	53,946	1,19,633
Kerala	43,914	53,564	51,288
Delhi	11,968	20,923	23,148
Maharashtra	23,022	22,812	21,906
Bihar	12,717	13,506	13,756
Tamil Nadu	15,142	11,991	13,754
Odisha	5,692	8,926	10,015
Haryana	8,233	9,130	9,151
Jharkhand	4,736	6,282	8,684
Chhattisgarh	7,930	8,548	8,566

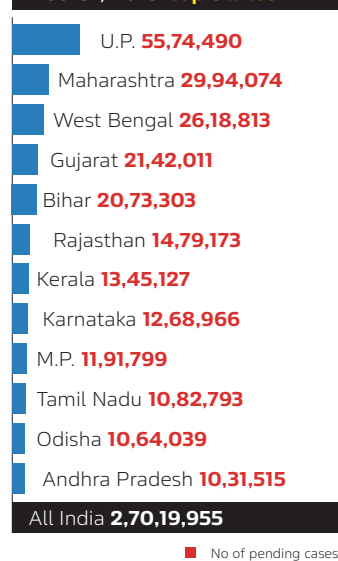
Top 10 States/UTs in pending cases in family courts as of May 2016



Computerised courts under High Courts

1,000-2,000	
Bombay	2,079
Allahabad	1,733
Jabalpur	1,203
Gujarat	1,108
Andhra Pradesh	1,078
Patna	1,025
Punjab & Haryana	1,018
500-1,000	
Madras	988
Jodhpur	978
Karnataka	897
Calcutta	772
Orissa	509
Below 500	
Kerala	486
Gauhati	442
Delhi	427
Jharkhand	351
Chattisgarh	340
Jammu & Kashmir	218
Uttarakhand	185
Himachal Pradesh	118
Tripura	62
Manipur	30
Meghalaya	27
Sikkim	15
All India	16,089

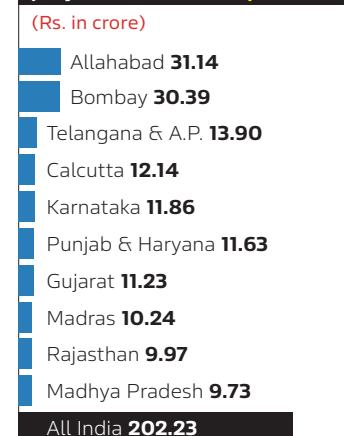
Pending cases in district/subordinate courts as on Dec. 31, 2015 **top States**



Pending cases, a quick look

In Supreme Court	
Dec. 31, 2014	62,791
Dec. 31, 2015	59,272
Dec. 31, 2016	62,537
In High Courts	
Dec. 31, 2014	41.53 lakh
Dec. 31, 2015	38.70 lakh
Dec. 31, 2016	40.15 lakh
In District/Subordinate Courts	
Dec. 31, 2014	2.64 crore
Dec. 31, 2015	2.70 crore
Dec. 31, 2016	2.74 crore

Funds released for e-courts projects (2015-16) **top States**



Pending cases (as on December 31, 2014)

In High Courts		
Civil	31,16,492	5,89,631
Criminal	10,37,465	1,87,999
in District / Subordinate courts		
Civil	82,34,281	6,11,658
Criminal	1,82,54,124	14,32,073

■ Cases pending for more than 10 years

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(Facing page) Kancheepuram District Court-II, Tamil Nadu. (Right) Bombay High Court building.