WJP Rule of Law Index 2026: India 88th of 143 countries (score 0.48; 86th in 2025); Denmark first, Venezuela last

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News

In the 'Rule of Law Index 2026' released on 21 October 2026 by the US-based World Justice Project (WJP), India ranked 88th of 143 countries with a score of 0.48 (86th in 2025 – down two places); it is 3rd in South Asia after Nepal and Sri Lanka. Denmark is first, Norway 2nd and Finland 3rd. Venezuela is last at 143rd; Afghanistan is 142nd and Haiti 141st. Rule of law declined globally for the 9th year in a row – scores fell in 62% of countries.

Key facts

Publisher	World Justice Project (WJP), Washington, D.C.; 21 Oct 2026; 143 countries and jurisdictions
India	88th; score 0.48 (0–1 scale); 86th in 2025; 3rd in South Asia (after Nepal, Sri Lanka)
Top three	Denmark (1), Norway (2), Finland (3)
Bottom three	Venezuela (143), Afghanistan (142), Haiti (141)
Neighbour	China – 92nd

8 factors	Constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order & security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, criminal justice

Background

- About WJP: started in 2006 by William H. Neukom as an American Bar Association (ABA) presidential initiative; independent non-profit since 2009; HQ Washington, D.C. The index is built from surveys of the general public and experts. This year freedom of expression fell in 64% of countries and freedom of assembly in 67%.
- Constitution: the 'rule of law' was explained by British jurist A.V. Dicey ('Law of the Constitution', 1885) – supremacy of law, equality before law and predominance of legal spirit. Article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees 'equality before the law' (British idea) and 'equal protection of the laws' (American idea). The Supreme Court has held the rule of law to be part of the basic structure.
- Justice system: free legal aid – Article 39A; Legal Services Authorities Act 1987. Case backlogs and a high share of undertrial prisoners are seen as factors dragging down India's criminal- and civil-justice scores.

Tamil Nadu link: on the index's 'absence of corruption' factor – Tamil Nadu's main agency for investigating corruption by public servants is the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC), Chennai, which registers cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988. The State Lokayukta was set up under the Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Act 2018.

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