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### **1. India Ranks 159th in World Press Freedom Index 2024; Norway Maintains Top Position ( May 9, 2024 )**

The World Press Freedom Index 2024, published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), ranks India 159th out of 180 countries, with a score of 31.28.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- Norway maintains its top position for the 8th consecutive year, with Denmark and Sweden following closely in 2nd and 3rd place, respectively.
- The lowest three rankings are held by Eritrea (180th), Syria (179th), and Afghanistan (178th).
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) marked World Press Freedom Day 2024 on May 3rd by releasing a report titled "Press and Planet in Danger: Safety of Environmental Journalists; Trends, Challenges, and Recommendations."

#### **About the UNESCO**

- Director-General : Audrey Azoulay
- Headquarters: Paris, France
- Establishment: 1945
- Membership: Consists of 194 Members and 12 Associate Members

### **2. Delhi's IGIA ranked 10th among world's busiest airports in ACI's 2023 rankings ( April 17, 2024 )**

Airports Council International (ACI) World published its 2023 report on the busiest airports globally, in which Delhi Airport (Indira Gandhi International Airport – IGIA) secured the 10th position.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- IGIA handled more than 72.2 million passengers in 2023, experiencing a slight decline from its 9th position in 2022, overtaken by Chicago O'Hare Airport.
- Despite the change in rankings, IGIA displayed a steady year-on-year (Y-o-Y) growth of 20.36% from 2022, highlighting the strong recovery of the Indian aviation sector.
- Its ranking history includes being 9th busiest in 2022, 13th in 2021, and 17th in 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic.
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) in the United States regained the title of the world's busiest airport, accommodating 104.65 million passengers in 2023.

#### **About ACI**

- It is a global trade association formed in 1991 to promote cooperation between member airports and aviation bodies such as IATA, ICAO and CANSO.
- Luis Felipe de Oliveira serves as Director General of ACI.
- As of January 2024, ACI has 757 members representing 2109 airports in 191 countries.
- Its headquarters is located in Montreal, Canada.

### **3. India to rank third in Global Unicorn Index 2024 ( April 10, 2024 )**

Hurun Research Institute publishes the "Global Unicorn Index", which ranks countries based on the number of unicorn companies.

#### **An Overview of the News**

- In the 2024 edition, India stands third with 67 unicorns, 1 less than last year.
- Notably, Indian giants Byju's and PharmEasy are no longer included in the index.
- India's unicorn roster includes Swiggy, Dream11 and Razorpay, valued at US\$8 billion, US\$8 billion and US\$7.5 billion, respectively.

#### **Top 5 Nations with Highest Unicorn Number:**

- The United States maintains its top position with 703 unicorns, accounting for 48% of the global total.
- China continues to hold the second position in the index with 340 unicorns.
- India is at third position with 67 unicorns.
- The United Kingdom (U.K.) is in fourth place with 53 unicorns.
- Germany is among the top five countries with 36 unicorns.

#### **Global Unicorn Index:**

- The index includes companies established since the 2000s, valued at more than US\$1 billion, and not yet publicly listed.
- The data compared to last year spans from January 2023 to January 2024.
- Hurun Research Institute has tracked unicorn companies since 2017.

### **4. Finland tops the happiness ranking for the seventh year, Afghanistan in last place ( March 21, 2024 )**

The World Happiness Report, conducted annually by the United Nations, rates countries based on a variety of factors including life satisfaction, GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, and corruption.

**An Overview of the News**

- Finland retained its title as the happiest country in 2024 for the seventh consecutive year, with other Nordic countries such as Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden also ranked in the top 10.

**Situation in Afghanistan:**

- Afghanistan remains the unhappiest country facing ongoing humanitarian crises since the resurgence of the Taliban in 2020.

**Ranking changes:**

- The United States and Germany fall out of the top 20 happiest countries, ranking 23rd and 24th, respectively, while Costa Rica and Kuwait enter the top 20.

**India's ranking**

- India has maintained its ranking at 126th in the happiness index.

**Factors Contributing to Finland's Happiness:**

- Finland's happiness is attributed to factors such as a strong connection to nature, a healthy work-life balance, an attainable sense of success, a strong welfare society, trust in state officials, low corruption levels, and accessible healthcare and education.

**Top 10 happiest countries of 2024:**

Rank	Country
1.	Finland
2.	Denmark
3.	Iceland
4.	Sweden
5.	Israel
6.	Netherlands
7.	Norway
8.	Luxemburg
9.	Switzerland

10.	Australia
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## **5. India remains at 40th position in Global Innovation Index 2023 ( Sept. 28, 2023 )**

India has retained its 40th position among 132 economies in the Global Innovation Index 2023.

### **An Overview of the News**

- The ranking reflects India's continued progress in the GII, improving from 81st in 2015 to 40th in 2023.
- India's improved GII ranking can be attributed to factors such as its rich knowledge capital, vibrant startup ecosystem and notable contributions from both public and private research organizations.
- Various government departments including the Department of Science and Technology, Biotechnology, Space and Atomic Energy have played an important role in enhancing the national innovation ecosystem.
- Initiatives like Atal Innovation Mission have been helpful in expanding this ecosystem.

### **Efforts of NITI Aayog:**

- NITI Aayog has been actively involved in promoting policy-driven innovation in areas such as electric vehicles, biotechnology, nanotechnology, space technology and alternative energy sources.
- It has also worked to promote innovation at the state and district level.
- NITI Aayog has continuously monitored and evaluated India's global rankings, including the GII.

### **Importance of GII:**

- The Global Innovation Index (GII) serves as a valuable tool for governments around the world to assess the impact of innovation on social and economic changes in their respective countries.
- Over time, the GII has become an essential policy tool for governments, helping them assess their current position in terms of innovation.

### **Collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII):**

- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has been supportive of India's journey towards becoming an innovation-driven economy.

- In 2023, NITI Aayog, in partnership with CII and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), is hosting the Virtual India Launch of GII 2023 on 29 September.

## **6. Singapore on top and India at 80th position in Henley Passport Index 2023 ( July 19, 2023 )**

Singapore-on-top-and-India-at-80th-position-in-Henley-Passport-Index-2023

Singapore has topped the Henley Passport Index 2023, becoming the most powerful passport in the world.

### **An Overview of the News**

- **Singapore** passport holders are **granted visa-free access** to an impressive **192 out of 227 global travel destinations**.
- Three European countries, namely **Germany, Italy and Spain, now rank second in the index. Their passports provide visa-free access to 190 destinations**.
- **Japan, which held the top position for the last five years, is now ranked third in the index.** Apart from this, **Austria, Finland, France, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, and Sweden** are also in third place, their passport holders can travel to **189 destinations without visa**.

### **India's rank in Henley Passport Index**

- India has shown remarkable progress on the Henley Passport Index, improving its ranking by 5 places as compared to the previous year.
- India is currently **ranked 80th along with Togo and Senegal**.
- Indian passport holders now enjoy **visa-free access to 57 countries, reflecting the country's enhanced global travel privileges**.

**Pakistan ranks 100th on the Henley Passport Index and its passport gives holders visa-free access to 33 destinations.**

### **About Henley Passport Index**

- Introduced by **Dr. Christian H. Kaelin, President of Henley & Partners, almost 20 years ago**.
- It calculates passport rankings based on **exclusive and official data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- The index considers the number of destinations that passport holders can travel to without prior visas.
- The methodology used by the Henley Passport Index differs from other passport rankings, such as those published by **financial advisors Arton Capital**.
- The index relies entirely on data from the **International Air Transport Association to determine its rankings**.

## **7. NITI Aayog released 'Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022' report ( July 19, 2023 )**

The ITI Commission released the 3rd edition of 'Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022' for the States/UTs of India.

### **An Overview of the News**

- The report was released by Vice President Suman Berry and other officials.
- It aims to promote India as a global export player by leveraging regional competitiveness and diversity.
- The focus is on export performance both at the state and district levels.

### **Objectives of EPI 2022**

- Empowering state governments with sector-specific insights for decision making.
- Identify strengths and address weaknesses to promote comprehensive development.
- To promote competitive federalism among the States/UTs.

### **Four Pillars of EPI 2022**

1. **Policy pillar:** Evaluates the adoption of the export-related policy ecosystem and institutional framework at the state and district levels.
2. **Business Ecosystem:** Assesses the business environment, supporting infrastructure and transport connectivity in the States/UTs.
3. **Export ecosystem:** Focuses on export-related infrastructure, business support and research and development (R&D) to foster innovation.
4. **Export Performance:** Measures the growth, concentration and global market footprint of a state's exports.

**Ten sub-pillars** - Export Promotion Policy, Institutional Framework, Business Environment, Infrastructure, Transport, Connectivity, Export Infrastructure, Trade Support, R&D Infrastructure, Export Diversification, and Growth Orientation

### **Top Performing States/UTs**

Coastal states including Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat performed well in all categories.

### **EPI 2022 Rankings**

Rank	State	Category	Score
1	Tamil Nadu	Coastal	80.89

2	Maharashtra	Coastal	78.20
3	Karnataka	Coastal	76.36
4	Gujarat	Coastal	73.22
5	Haryana	Landlocked	63.65
6	Telangana	Landlocked	61.36
7	Uttar Pradesh	Landlocked	61.23
8	Andhra Pradesh	Coastal	59.27
9	Uttarakhand	Himalayan	59.13
10	Punjab	Landlocked	58.95

## **8. Union Ministry of Education releases Performance Grading Index for States ( July 10, 2023 )**

Performance-Grading-Index-for-States

The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education released the **Performance Grading Index (PGI)** report for States/UTs, an index for evidence based comprehensive analysis of school education system in State/UTs.

### **An Overview of the news:**

- According to PGI, even though the states have been successful to a great extent in recent years in connecting most of the children to schools, they are still far behind in the standards of teaching-learning and quality.

### **PGI 2.0:**

- This year's report released by the Ministry of Education has been named **PGI 2.0**.

### **Punjab and Chandigarh on top in overall ranking:**

- No state has been found in the top-5 category of PGI. Punjab and Chandigarh have been placed at the top position with the highest number of points in the overall ranking of PGI.
- While on the parameters of learning outcome and quality, **Rajasthan** has also topped with **Punjab and Chandigarh** with the highest marks.

### **Six Standards and Ten Categories:**

- The Ministry has set **six standards and ten categories** in place of the earlier **five standards and eight categories** to determine the performance of the states in school education, in which the subject of teacher education has been added anew.

- In these indexes, the weightage (marks) given on the basis of government work has been reduced.

**Six Standards of PGI 2.0:**

- Among the six parameters on the basis of which this grade of states has been prepared,
- Learning Outcome and Quality,
- Access to School
- Infrastructure and Facilities,
- Equality,
- Governance Management and
- Includes teacher education and training.
- States have been given marks on the basis of 73 different parameters of all these.

**Ten categories of PGI:**

- The ten categories that have been created under PGI, which is based on 1000 marks, include:
- Daksha (941-1000)
- Utkarsh (881-940)
- Ati Uttam(821-880)
- Uttam (761-820)
- Pracheshta-1(701-760)
- Prachesta-2 (641-700)
- Pracheshta-3 (581-640)
- Aspirant-1 (521-580)
- Aspirant- 2 (461-520) and
- Akankshi-3 (401-460).

**No state in top five:**

- In the PGI-2.0 report for the year 2021-22, there is no state in the top-5 categories in the overall ranking, while **Punjab and Chandigarh** have found place in the sixth category i.e. **Prachesta-2**.
- Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu were in the seventh category i.e. **Prachesta-3**.
- Thirteen states have made it to the eighth category of overall ranking i.e. **Aspirational-1**, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Sikkim, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Daman and Dadar Nagar Haveli is included.
- 12 states including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand have made it to the ninth category i.e. **Akankshi-2**.

**9. Global Gender Gap Index 2023 ( June 24, 2023 )**

Global-Gender-Gap-Index-2023

India ranks 127 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023.

**An Overview of the News**

- The Global Gender Gap Index was **established in 2006** and this is **its 17th edition**.



- It is published annually by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.
- It measures gender equality in **146 countries** and enables cross-country analysis.

**Global Gender Gap Score:**

- The global gender gap score for **2023 is 68.4%**, showing an improvement of **0.3 percentage** points from **last year**.
- None of the countries included in the index have achieved full gender equality.
- The top 9 **countries including Iceland, Norway, Finland and New Zealand have reduced the gender gap by 80%**.

**Iceland: The most gender-equal country:**

- Iceland has been ranked first as the most gender-equal country in the world for the **14th consecutive year with a score of 91.2%**.
- Iceland is the only country that has reduced the gender gap by **more than 90%**.

**Progress of South Asia:**

- In South Asia, the gender gap score has increased by 1.1 percentage points since the last edition.
- Among India's neighbouring countries, **Pakistan is at 142, Bangladesh at 59, China at 107, Nepal at 116, Sri Lanka at 115 and Bhutan at 103.**

**India's ranking and progress:**

- India has moved up 8 places to rank **127 out of 146 countries in the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index.**
- India has shown an improvement of **1.4 percentage points from the 2022 figures.**
- **Education and Economic Participation:**
  - India has achieved parity in enrollment at all levels of education, reducing the overall gender gap by 64.3%.
  - However, India has reached only 36.7% equality in economic participation.
  - India was ranked 135 in the 2022 edition.
- **Representation in senior positions and technical roles:**
  - Despite increases in pay and income equality, the representation of women in senior positions and technical roles in India has decreased slightly since the last edition.

**Political Empowerment:**

- India recorded 25.3% equality in terms of political empowerment.
- Women represent 15.1% of parliamentarians, the highest figure for the country since 2006.

**• Women's representation in local government:**

- Of the 117 countries with available data from 2017, 18 have achieved more than 40% female representation in local governance, including Bolivia, India and France.

**• Improvement in sex ratio at birth:**

- The report highlights India's progress with an improvement in the sex ratio at birth by 1.9 percentage points, bringing equality after a decade of slow progress.

**Global Gender Gap Index 2023 Ranking**

1. Iceland - 0.912
2. Norway - 0.879
3. Finland - 0.863
4. New Zealand - 0.856
5. Sweden - 0.815
6. Germany - 0.815
7. Nicaragua - 0.811
8. Namibia - 0.802
9. Lithuania - 0.800
10. Belgium - 0.796

**10. NTPC climbs up 52 positions to 433rd rank in Forbes' "The Global 2000" List ( June 15, 2023 )****The-Global-2000**

**NTPC Limited**, India's largest power generation company, has made significant progress in Forbes' "**The Global 2000" List for 2023**, climbing **52 positions to reach the 433rd rank**.

**An overview of the news**

- This remarkable advancement showcases NTPC's growing influence and presence in the **global market**.
- It is a testament to the company's consistent expansion, strong financial performance, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

- "The Global 2000" List compiled by Forbes acknowledges the world's largest companies
- based on **four key metrics: sales, profits, assets, and market value.**
  - NTPC's significant climb in the rankings from the **485th position in 2022** to the **433rd position in 2023** underscores its exceptional performance across these metrics.
  - In addition to its global ranking, NTPC has also secured the **10th position among the largest Indian companies** on the list, moving up one spot compared to the previous year.

### **About NTPC**

- NTPC formerly known as **National Thermal Power Corporation of India** is owned by the **Government of India**. It was established in 1975.
- **Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station in Singrauli district** of Madhya Pradesh, with an installed capacity of **4,760 MW**, is currently the **largest thermal power plant in India.**
- It is a coal based power plant owned and operated by NTPC.
- The company had a total installed commercial capacity of **69454 MW before the JPL deal.**
- Headquarters: **New Delhi**
- Chairman and Managing Director: **Gurdeep Singh**