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1. UP has the highest number of colleges in the country: AISHE 2020-21 report (Feb. 1, 2023)

The **Union Ministry of Education** has released the **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-2021**.

According to the report **Uttar Pradesh** has the highest number of colleges in the country, followed by **Maharashtra and Karnataka**.

Highlight of the report

- The top **10 states** in terms of number of colleges in India - **Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana and Kerala**, each having at **least 29** or more colleges per lakh population.
- There are 8,114 colleges in **Uttar Pradesh** and 32 colleges per one lakh population.
- Similarly, **Maharashtra** is at number two with 4,532 colleges and 34 colleges per lakh population.
- **Karnataka** ranks third with 4,233 colleges and 62 colleges per lakh population, while Rajasthan ranks fourth with 3,694 colleges and 40 colleges per lakh population.
- **Tamil Nadu** ranks fifth with 2,667 colleges and a college density of 40.
- **Madhya Pradesh** ranks sixth with 2,610 colleges and 29 colleges per lakh population, while Andhra Pradesh ranks seventh with 2,601 colleges and 49 colleges per lakh population.
- At the eighth position is Gujarat with 2,267 colleges and 31 colleges per one lakh population.
- Most of the colleges offer undergraduate level programs only.
- Only 2.9 percent colleges offer PhD level programs and 55.2 percent offer postgraduate level programmes.
- The report shows a nationwide increase of 7.5% in student enrollment in 2020-21 as compared to 2019-20.

Gender Parity Index (GPI)

- The **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)** for the age group 18-23 years has increased from **25.6% in 2019-20 to 27.3% in 2020-21**.
- **Gender Parity Index (GPI)**, the ratio of female GER to male GER, has increased from **1 in 2017-18 to 1.05 in 2020-21**.
- The female enrollment in North East states in 2020-21 is 6.14 lakh, which is higher than the male enrollment of 5.92 lakh, for every 100 male students, there are 104 female students in the North East region.

About AISHE Survey

- The Ministry of Education has been conducting this survey **since 2011**, it includes **higher educational institutions** located in India.
- The survey collects information on various parameters such as student **enrolment, teacher data, infrastructural, financial etc.**
- In AISHE 2020-21, for the first time data collection has been done using a completely online data collection platform developed by the **Department of Higher Education through National Informatics Center (NIC).**

2. Reliance Jio among the top 25 strongest brands in the world (Jan. 21, 2023)

Reliance Jio, India's leading private sector telecom service provider, has been included in the world's top 25 strong brands.

An overview of the news

- According to the latest 'Global 500-2023' report released by Brand Finance, Jio has emerged as the strongest brand in India and is ranked 9th among the 25 strongest brands in the world.
- Jio has been given a score of 90.2 in the Strong Brand Index.
- Brands like EY, Coca Cola, Accenture, Porsche and Google precede Jio in the list. Whereas giants like Apple, Amazon, Alibaba and Pepsi have been left behind by Reliance Jio.
- The index is prepared on the basis of certain parameters such as marketing spend, awareness, consideration, trust and market share.

Reliance Jio India's largest network

- With over 400 million subscribers, Reliance Jio is the largest mobile operator in India and the third largest in the world.
- Jio formally launched its 4G services on 5 September 2016.
- Chairman - Akash Ambani
- Headquarters - Mumbai

3. Brand Guardianship Index 2023 : Mukesh Ambani is No1 among Indians, 2nd globally (Jan. 20, 2023)

India's Billionaire **Mukesh Ambani** has overtaken the likes of **Satya Nadella** of Microsoft and Google's **Sundar Pichai** to be ranked **No.1** among Indians and **second globally** on the **Brand Guardianship Index 2023**.

An overview of the news

- Nvidia CEO **Jensen Huang** and Reliance Industries Ltd's **Mukesh Ambani** are ranked **first and second** respectively in the Index (BGI).
- Microsoft's **Satya Nadella**, who topped last year, is at **number three**.
- Most of the top 10 in the index are from India or Indian-origin CEOs.
- Adobe's **Shantanu Narayen** and **Pichai** are ranked **fourth and fifth**.
- Deloitte's **Punit Rejen** is at **No.6** and Tata group chairman **Natarajan Chandrasekaran** at the **eighth spot**.
- **Piyush Gupta** of DBS is at **No 9**.
- Mukesh Ambani, Managing Director and Chairman of Reliance is the longest serving CEO in the ranking at 40 years.

About Brand Guardianship Index

- The Brand Guardianship Index consists of an '**equity**' factor, which reflects current beliefs, a '**performance**' factor, which reflects the concrete results of these beliefs, and an '**investment**' factor, which supports future performance.
- It is based on a survey of **1,000 market analysts and journalists**.
- Only **50%** of the respondents to the survey conducted in November-December 2022 live in India.

4. Global Fire Power Index 2023 (Jan. 19, 2023)

The Global Firepower Report 2023 has ranked **India as the 4th most powerful army in the world**.

An overview of the news

- 145 countries are ranked this year in the Global Firepower Report.
- Global Firepower ranks countries based on troop strength, national resources, financial status, logistics and geographic scale.
- The **most powerful country in the world is the United States of America**, followed by Russia, China, India.
- **Most powerful country in the Middle East and North African region**
- According to the Global Firepower Military Index 2023, Turkey has once again emerged as the most powerful country in the Middle East and North African region. Turkey has been placed at the 11th position in the global ranking.

- Egypt and Iran are ranked second and third respectively in this index, while Egypt is ranked 14th and Iran is ranked 17th in the global ranking.
- Egypt is ranked as the most powerful Arab country in terms of its military power.
- Saudi Arabia emerged as the most powerful country among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Saudi Arabia has the second most powerful military among the Arab countries. It is placed at the 22nd position in the global ranking.
- Algeria is the most powerful of the North African countries, ranking 26th on the global index.
- In this index, Lebanon has been described as the weakest country in the Middle East.

- **Top 10 Countries on Global Power Index 2023**

- 1. America
- 2. Russia
- 3. China
- 4. India
- 5. United Kingdom
- 6. South Korea
- 7. Pakistan
- 8. Japan
- 9. France
- 10. Italy

5. Henley Passport Index 2023 : Japan retained its top position (Jan. 11, 2023)

Japan has retained its position as the most favourable passport in the world, according to the latest Henley Passport Index, which allows visa-free entry to 193 global destinations.

An overview of the news

- Japan is at the top for the **fifth year in a row.**
- **Singapore and South Korea** are **joint second** in the ranking, followed by **Germany and Spain and then several other European nations.**
- The US was among the top 22 with visa-free access to 186 destinations, matching the likes of Switzerland, New Zealand and Norway.
- Compared to last year India's position has improved by two points. **India is at 85th position in the ranking.**

- An Indian passport holder can travel visa-free to **59 countries**, although in 2022 the number was 60.
- Mauritius and Uzbekistan passports are as powerful as India's passports.

Top 10 countries in Henley Passport Index 2023

1. Japan - 193 destination
 2. Singapore, South Korea 192 destination
 3. Germany, Spain 190 destination
 4. Finland, Italy, Luxembourg 189 destination
 5. Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden 188 destination
 6. France, Ireland, Portugal, United Kingdom 187 destination
 7. Belgium, Czech Republic, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, United States 186 destination
 8. Australia, Canada, Greece, Malta 185 destination
 9. Hungary, Poland 184 destination
 10. Lithuania, Slovakia 183 destination
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85. India, Mauritania, Uzbekistan 59 destination

6. India's Cuisine Ranked Fifth in the list of best Cuisines of the World (Dec. 26, 2022)

Taste Atlas, India ranks fifth in the global list of best cuisines for 2022.

According to **Taste Atlas**, **India ranks fifth** in the **global list of best cuisines for 2022**.

Important facts

- The ranking is based on audience votes for ingredients, dishes and beverages.
- **Italy's** cuisine topped the ranking, followed by **Greece and Spain**.
- India received **4.54 points** and the best rated foods of the country include "garam masala, malai, ghee, butter garlic naan, keema".
- There are a total of 460 items in this list. Also, the list has the best restaurants for Indian cuisine like Shree Thakar Bhojnalaya (Mumbai), Karavalli (Bengaluru), Bukhara (New Delhi), Dum Pukht (New Delhi), Comorin (Gurugram) and 450 others.

- Chinese cuisine, which is the world's most popular, however, ranked **11th** on the list.

Top 10 Cuisines in the world

1. Italy
2. Greece
3. Spain
4. Japan
5. India
6. Mexico
7. Turkiye
8. United States
9. France
10. Peru

Top 5 "Best Traditional Dishes" in the world

1. Kare (Japan),
2. Picanha (Brazil),
3. Ameijoas a Bulhao Pato (Portugal),
4. Tangbao (China),
5. Guotie (China),

7. Puducherry and Aizawl (Mizoram) adjudged best performing State and District in Social Progress Index (Dec. 20, 2022)

State and District in Social Progress Index

The Prime Minister Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) on 20 December 2022 released the Social Progress Index (SPI) for States and Districts prepared by the Institute for Competitiveness and Social Progress Imperative.

The index assesses states and districts based on 12 components across three critical dimensions of social progress - **Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity**. The index uses an extensive framework comprising 89 indicators at the state level and 49 at the district level.

- **Basic Human Needs** assess the performance of states and districts in terms of Nutrition and Basic Medical Care, Water and Sanitation, Personal Safety and Shelter.
- **Foundations of Wellbeing** evaluates the progress made by the country across the components of Access to Basic Knowledge, Access to Information and Communication, Health and Wellness, and Environmental Quality.
- **Opportunity** focuses on Personal Rights, Personal Freedom and Choice, Inclusiveness, and Access to Advanced Education.

Based on the SPI scores, states and districts have been ranked under six tiers of social progress. The tiers are Tier 1: Very High Social Progress; Tier 2: High Social Progress; Tier 3: Upper Middle Social Progress; Tier 4: Lower Middle Social Progress; Tier 5: Low Social Progress; and Tier 6: Very Low Social Progress.

Top Ranked States/Union Territories

State /Union Territories	SPI	Rank
Puducherry	65.99	1
Lakshadweep	65.89	2
Goa	65.53	3
Sikkim	65.10	4
Mizoram	64.19	5

Bottom Ranked State

Jharkhand was ranked at the bottom, 36th with SPI score of 43.95 and Bihar was ranked at 35th with a score of 44.47.

Uttar Pradesh with a SPI score of 49.16 was ranked 31st and was put in the Low Social progress category.

Top performing districts

Aizawl (Mizoram), Solan (Himachal Pradesh), and Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) are the top 3 best-performing districts.

8. India ranked 87th in the world strongest passport list 2022 (Dec. 10, 2022)

India ranked 87th in the world strongest passport list 2022

India ranked 87 in the **world's strongest passport list**, while **UAE ranked first** in the rating of passports for 2022.

Important facts

- UAE was followed by **Germany, Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg, Spain and France.**
- **Afghanistan remained at the last position** while Pakistan was ranked **94th.**
- **Japan ranked 24th** because it had easy access to 171 countries.

- Earlier this year, Japan's passport was ranked as the best passport in the world in a list released by **Henley & Partners**.
- **Passport Index 2022** published by **Arton Capital** ranked the world's strongest and weakest passports.
- Travellers with UAE passports can enter **180 countries** without any hassle.
- Except European countries like Germany and Sweden, there are more than 7 such countries which are in this index.
- The Passport Index is based on the **139 members of the United Nations**. 6 different aspects have been considered to make this list.
- The data for this list has been given by the governments of different countries.
- To make this list, work is done on 3 steps, which rates on the basis of **Mobility Score (MS)**.
- This also includes the VF portion of Visa-free (VF), Visa on Arrival (VOA), eTA and eVisa (if issued within 3 days).

9. NSE Indices launches new Nifty Bharat Bond Index (Dec. 6, 2022)

NSE Indices launches new Nifty Bharat Bond Index

NSE Indices, a subsidiary of **National Stock Exchange**, has launched another index under **Nifty Bharat Bond Index series** on 2nd December.

Important facts

- The name of the new index is **Nifty Bharat Bond Index — April 2033**.
- It has been launched under the Nifty Bharat Bond Index Series.
- Bharat Bond Index Series follows a target maturity date structure.
- Each index in the series measures the performance of a portfolio of '**AAA**' **rated bonds** issued by government-owned entities maturing in a specific year.
- In December 2019, NSE Indices launched the first two indices in the Bharat Bond Index with maturities in April 2023 and April 2030, and in July 2020, further two indices with maturities in April 2025 and April 2031 were launched.
- The upcoming **Bharat Bond ETF (exchange traded fund)** which is sixth in the Bharat Bond ETF series will track the newly launched **Nifty BHARAT Bond Index maturing in 2033**.
- The Nifty Bharat Bond Index – April 2033 has a base date of November 30, 2022 and a base value of 1,000. The index will be rebalanced/reconstituted at the end of every calendar quarter.

- It will provide more investment choices to fixed income investors and will help create a structure of various maturities.

10. India Jumps to 48th Rank in Global Aviation Safety Ranking (Dec. 5, 2022)

India Jumps to 48th Rank in Global Aviation Safety Ranking

India has jumped to the **48th position** — its highest ever spot in the **global aviation safety ranking** released by the **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**.

Important facts

- Four years ago, India was at **102nd position**.
- India's score in terms of effective implementation of key safety elements has improved to 85.49%, putting it ahead of China (49), Israel (50) and Turkey (54).
- India's score in the 2018 Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme was 69.95%.
- **India and Georgia** are at the 48th position in the ranking with a score of 85.49 per cent.
- Neighbouring country **Pakistan ranks 100th** with a score of 70.39 per cent.

Assessment of ICAO

- Under the ICAO standards, the Effective Implementation (EI) of six areas were assessed. They are LEG, ORG, PEL, OPS, AIR and AGA.
- LEG is Primary Aviation Legislation and Specific Operating Regulations.
- ORG is Civil Aviation Organisation.
- PEL is Personnel Licensing and Training.
- OPS is Aircraft Operations.
- AIR is Airworthiness of Aircraft.
- AGA is Aerodrome and Ground Aid.

Global Scenario

- In the ranking, **Singapore** is at the top, followed by the **UAE** and **South Korea** at the second and third positions, respectively.
- Others in the top ten are France (4th), Iceland (5th), Australia (6th), Canada (7th), Brazil (8th), Ireland (9th) and Chile (10th).

About International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

- It is a specialised agency of the **United Nations**.
- It coordinates the principles and techniques of international air navigation.
- It fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth.
- Headquarters are located in the Quartier International of **Montreal, Quebec, Canada**.
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