

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**INDIA'S POSITION ON THE WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX**

India's ranking in the 2022 World Press Freedom Index has fallen to 150 out of 180 countries, according to the latest report released by the global media watchdog, Reporters Without Borders (RSF). In last year's report, India was ranked 142. The top three positions for countries with the highest press freedom were taken by the Nordic trio of Norway (a score of 92.65), Denmark (90.27) and Sweden (88.84).

What is RSF and what's the objective of this Index?

- RSF is an international NGO whose self-proclaimed aim is to defend and promote media freedom. Headquartered in Paris, it has consultative status with the United Nations.
- The objective of the World Press Freedom Index, which it releases every year, "is to compare the level of press freedom enjoyed by journalists and media in 180 countries and territories" in the previous calendar year.
- The RSF defines press freedom as "the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety."

What is the methodology used by RSF to assess and rank countries?

- Countries are ranked after being assigned a score ranging from 0 to 100, with 100 representing the highest possible level of press freedom and 0 the worst. The scoring has two components: a quantitative one, that tallies abuses against journalists and media outlets, and a qualitative analysis based on the responses of press freedom specialists (journalists, researchers, human rights defenders) to an RSF questionnaire.
- Countries are evaluated on five contextual indicators: political context, legal framework, economic context, socio-cultural context, and safety. For instance, the political context indicator considers, among other things, "the degree of support for the media in their role of holding politicians and government to account in the public interest".
- A 'subsidiary score' ranging from 0 to 100 is calculated for each indicator, and all the subsidiary scores together contribute to the 'global score'. India, which had a global score of 53.44 in the 2021 Index, could muster only 41 this time.

What are the findings with regard to world press freedom?

- In terms of global trends, the report flags a "two-fold increase in polarisation amplified by information chaos — that is, media polarisation fuelling divisions within countries, as well as polarisation between countries at the international level." It notes that "within democratic societies, divisions are growing" due to the spread of "opinion media" modelled on Fox News, and the rise of "disinformation circuits" amplified by how social media functions.
- While singling out Moldova (40th) and Bulgaria (91st) for drastic improvements in press freedom "thanks to a government change", it has classified the situation in 28 countries including Russia (155) and Belarus (153), as "very bad". The world's 10 worst countries for press freedom include Myanmar (176th), China (175), Turkmenistan (177th), Iran (178th), Eritrea (179th) and North Korea (180th).

What does the Index say about India?

- The report states that in India, "the violence against journalists, the politically partisan media and the concentration of media ownership all demonstrate that press freedom is in crisis".
- Describing India as "one of the world's most dangerous countries for the media", the report notes that "journalists are exposed to all kinds of physical violence including police violence, ambushes by political activists, and deadly reprisals by criminal groups or corrupt local officials."
- It highlights that "supporters of Hindutva, the ideology that spawned the Hindu far-right, wage all-out online attacks on any views that conflict with their thinking."
- What are the report's observations on India under various indicators?
- Under 'political context', it states: "Originally a product of the anti-colonial movement, the Indian press used to be seen as fairly progressive but things changed radically in the mid-2010s, when Narendra Modi became prime minister and engineered a spectacular rapprochement between his party, the BJP, and the big families dominating the media." It highlights that "very early on, Modi took a critical stance vis-à-vis journalists, seeing them as 'intermediaries' polluting the direct relationship between himself and his supporters."
- With regard to 'legal framework', the report notes that "Indian law is protective in theory but charges of defamation, sedition, contempt of court and endangering national security are increasingly used against journalists critical of the government".
- Under 'economic context', the report, describing Indian media as a "colossus with a feet of clay", points out that "media outlets largely depend on advertising contracts with local and regional

governments” and “at the national level, the central government has seen that it can exploit this to impose its own narrative, and is now spending more than ₹130 billion (5 billion euros) a year on ads in the print and online media alone.

- “Finally, on the socio-cultural indicators of press freedom, the report, noting that “the enormous diversity of Indian society is barely reflected in the mainstream media,” states that “for the most part, only Hindu men from upper castes hold senior positions in journalism or are media executives — a bias that is reflected in media content.” but Solomon Islands pijin is the lingua franca. There are over 80 different local languages plus dialects.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

1. Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA)

Recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced the end of operations of its observatory Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) mission.

About SOFIA

- It is a joint program between NASA and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), and is a telescope capable of making observations from onboard an aeroplane.
- It is a 2.7-meter infrared telescope sitting inside a Boeing 747SP aeroplane, flying at an altitude of 38,000-45,000 feet above the surface.
- It is globally unique and, with the start of regular operations in 2014.
 - It has been successfully used for scientific research during a total of approximately 800 flights.
- It was designed to observe cosmic objects in far-infrared wavelengths.
 - This allows researchers to watch star formation by looking through huge, cold clouds of gas.
- **Important discoveries and Achievements**
 - The project has generated 309 scientific studies.
 - In 2020, SOFIA discovered water molecules (H₂O) on the sun-facing side of the Moon.
 - In 2019, SOFIA also discovered helium hydride — the first molecule formed in the Universe almost 14 billion years ago.
 - SOFIA also identified atmospheric circulation patterns in Jupiter.
 - It also mapped the magnetic field within G47, one of the Milky Way’s spiral arms.
- **Productivity:**
 - SOFIA’s annual operating Budget is the second-most expensive operating mission in Astrophysics, yet the science productivity of the mission is not commensurate with other large science missions.

2. Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI)

India’s manufacturing sector witnessed faster growth in April, sequentially, due to quicker increases in production and factory orders, as well as renewed expansion in international sales.

- The Index (PMI) rose from 54 in March to 54.7 in April.

About Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI)

- It is an index of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors.
- It is an economic indicator, which is derived after monthly surveys of different companies.
- There are two types of PMI — Manufacturing PMI and Services PMI.
- A combined index is also made using both manufacturing PMI and services PMI.

Methodology:

- The PMI is compiled by IHS Markit from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers, based on company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP.
- Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month.
- IHS Markit is a London based global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.

Calculation of PMI:

- It is indicated by a number from 0 to 100.
- A print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.
- A reading at 50 indicates no change.
- If the previous month PMI is higher than the current month PMI, it represents that the economy is contracting.

Purpose:

- To provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision-makers, analysts, and investors.
- The index helps in determining whether the market conditions, as seen by purchasing managers, is expanding, contracting or staying the same

3. Transnistria

The Ukraine war casts shadow over Transnistria as security alerts sow fear.

- Transnistria risks being drawn into the Russia-Ukraine war because of reports of a series of explosions in its territory

Where is Transnistria?

- It lies between Moldova to its west and Ukraine towards its east.
- Often described as a “remnant of the Soviet Union”
- It declared independence like Moldova did soon after the break-up of the Soviet Union.
- When Moldovan troops attempted to take over the territory in 1990-1992, Transnistria was able to resist them because of Russian soldiers based in Transnistria.
- Since then, it has remained free of Moldovan control.
- However, most countries continue to see Transnistria as part of Moldova.

The political make-up of Transnistria

Independence:

- Transnistria is not recognised as independent even by Russia and its economy is dependent on Russia for subsidies and free gas.

Citizenship:

- Most Transnistrians have dual citizenship of Russia and Transnistria or triple citizenship of Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia.
- Language:
- Unlike the rest of Moldova, which speaks Romanian, the majority of people in Transnistria speak Russian and use the Cyrillic script like Russians.

Governance:

- It has its own government (which is pro-Russian), Parliament, armed force, constitution, flag, anthem, etc.
- In a referendum held in 2006, over 97% of Transnistrians voted for future integration with Russia and after the annexation of Crimea, the government asked if it could be absorbed into Russia. Russia, however, was not keen on this.
- But Transnistria is host to over 1,500 Russian “peacekeepers” and is home to a large Russian ammunition depot at Cobasna..

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q1. The use of natural products for the treatment of human ailments has been prevalent in societies all over the world for ages. Comment in the light of development of AYUSH system in India. (250 words).

Introduction

AYUSH is the acronym of the medical systems that are being practiced in India such as Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy. The basic approach of all these systems on health, disease and treatment are holistic. AYUSH, represent a pluralistic and integrative scheme of health services. AYUSH can play an important role in realizing the dream of ‘New India’ by providing quality healthcare and medical care for its citizens. The ‘New India’ also needs to be a ‘Healthy India’ where its own traditional systems can play a significant role.

- WHO’s Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) was recently unveiled in Jamnagar, Gujarat. It will be the first and only global outpost centre for traditional medicine across the world.

Body

Development of AYUSH system in India

- Ayurveda and Yoga started their journey more than 5000 years ago as ancient Indian sciences.
- While Sidha is one of the ancient systems of medicines popular in South India, Unani, the traditional system of medicine has its genesis in ancient Greece.
- Homoeopathy was developed in the early 1800s by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann.
- These systems have enjoyed continued patronage of people over the years.
- Most of the traditional systems of India including Ayurveda have their roots in folk medicine.
- Some important treatises on Ayurveda like the Sarangdhara Samhita and Chikitsasamgraha by Vangasena, the Yagaratbajara, and the Bhavaprakasa of Bhavamisra were compiled.
- Yoga is essentially spiritual and it is an art and science of healthy living which focuses on bringing harmony between body and mind.

- The Unani system of medicine originated in Greecethen in India during the mediieval The fusion of traditional knowledge of ancient civilizations like Egypt, Arabia, Iran, China, Syria and India. It emphasizes the use of naturally occurring mostly herbal medicines and some medicines of animals, marine and mineral origin.
- The Musalajati-Darshikohi of Nuruddin Muhammad, dedicated to Darashikoh, deals with Greek medicine and contains, at the end, almost the whole of Ayurvedic material medica.
- Siddha is one of the ancient systems of medicine in India having its close links with Dravidian culture. The term Siddha means achievements and Siddhars are those who have achieved perfection in medicine. 18 Siddhars are said to have contributed.
- Sowa Rigpa or Amchi is 1 of the oldest surviving system of medicine, popular in Himalayan region. It was added in 2009. It is practised in Himalayan regions throughout particularly in Leh and Ladakh, HP, Sikkim, Darjeeling etc. It is effective in managing chronic diseases like asthma, bronchitis, arthritis, etc.

In contemporary times,

- A department called Department of Indian System of medicine was created in March 1995 and renamed to AYUSH in November 2003 with a focus to provide increased attention for the development of these systems.
- In 2014, a separate ministry was created under the Union Government of India, which is headed by a minister of state.
- Ministry of AYUSH launched TKDL (Traditional Knowledge Digital Library) in collaboration with CSIR for prevention of grant of patents on non-original inventions by International Patents office.
- National AYUSH Mission includes co-location of AYUSH at PHCs, CHCs and District Hospitals, upgradation of hospitals and setting up of upto 50 bedded integrated AYUSH hospitals.

Contemporary relevance of AYUSH

- Non-Communicable Diseases can become bigger problem than being malnourished
- NCDs threaten progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a target of reducing premature deaths from NCDs by one-third by 2030.
- Unlike modern medicine, AYUSH follows a more holistic approach, with the objective of promoting overall well-being instead of focussing on curing illness alone.
- Such an approach assumes greater significance in the case of non-communicable diseases which are difficult to treat once they have developed into chronic conditions.
- Internationally, greater scientific evidence is becoming available regarding the health impact of alternative systems of medicine, especially Yoga.
- It has been proved beyond doubt that timely interventions in pre-diabetic and pre-hypertensive conditions with alternative medicines can result in regression of diseases and restoration of health.
- Yoga is effective not only in prevention and control but also in the treatment of diseases. The whole world today is adopting Yoga for a healthier lifestyle.
- In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of AYUSH recommended some self-care guidelines for preventive health measures and boosting immunity with special reference to respiratory health. These are supported by Ayurvedic literature and scientific publications.
- Following the AYUSH ministry initiative many state governments also followed up with healthcare advice on traditional medicine solutions to enhance immunity and disease-resistance, which are particularly relevant against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Way forward

- It is important to gather scientific evidence for the safety and efficacy of AYUSH medicines and practices.
- Work towards capacity building and developing a critical mass of competent professionals in the AYUSH sector through quality education and training at national and international levels.
- True integration of traditional and modern systems is the need of the hour. This would require a concerted strategy for facilitating meaningful cross-learning and collaboration between the modern and traditional systems on equal terms.
- There is a need to ensure substantial groundwork with respect to the prerequisites of an effective integration.
- Building a strong traditional medicine evidence corpus.
- Standardizing and regulating AYUSH practices and qualifications.
- Delineating the relative strengths, weaknesses, and role of each system in an integrated framework.
- Negotiating the philosophical and conceptual divergences between systems.
- Accordingly, a medium- and long-term plan for seamless integration should be developed expeditiously in view of the massive drive for achieving universal health care already underway in the country and considering the vast potential of AYUSH to contribute to this cause.

DAILY QUIZ

1. Which of the following statement is not correct about Sardar Patel National Unity Award.
 - a) It is the highest civilian award in the field of contribution to the Unity and Integrity
 - b) The award consist of medal and monetary grant**
 - c) Not more than 3 awards given in a year
 - d) It can be given posthumously in highly deserving cases
2. In the recent context the term “Sahkar se Samriddhi “ is often associated with
 - a) Ministry of finance
 - b) Ministry of Home Affairs
 - c) Ministry of corporate affairs
 - d) Ministry of Co-operation**
3. Which of the following measure/s can RBI take to control inflation
 1. Increase Repo Rate
 2. Decrease Reverse Repo Rate
 3. Carry out Open Market Operation
 Choose the correct answer using the codes given below
 - a) 1 only**
 - b) 1 and 2 only
 - c) 2 and 3 only
 - d) 1 and 3 only
4. Which of the following date has been observed as World Pulmonary Hypertension Day?
 - a) 1st may
 - b) 5th may**
 - c) 6th may
 - d) 10th may
5. Consider the following statements:
 1. A cloned animal is not the same as a genetically modified animal.
 2. A cloned animal shares the same DNA as another animal, while a genetically modified animal has had a change made to its DNA.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 only
 - c) Both 1 and 2**
 - d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. The 105th constitutional amendment act 2021 deals with which of the following statement ?
 - a) Restore the power of state governments to identify and specify Socially and Educationally Backward Classes**
 - b) Cased the reservation of seats for Anglo-Indians in the Lok sabha and State Assemblies
 - c) Introduced ten percentage reservation for economically weaker section from upper caste of the society in central government jobs
 - d) Gave constitutional status to National Commission For Backward Classes
7. Operation “clean Art” recently seen in news is related to which of the following species
 - a) King cobra
 - b) Indian Pangolin
 - c) Porcupine
 - d) Mongoose**
8. Which of the following is/are the possible consequence/s of heavy sand mining in river beds ?
 1. Decrease salinity in the river
 2. Pollution in the ground water
 3. Lowering of the water table
 Select the correct answer using the codes given below
 - a) 1 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only**
 - c) 1 and 3 only
 - d) 1,2 and 3
9. “Matosinhos Manifesto” was seen in news recently is associated with which of the following
 - a) ISRO
 - b) ROSCOSMOS
 - c) European space agency**
 - d) JAXA
10. “Zero Deficit Zero Effect” scheme is under the aegis of which of the following ministry
 - a) Ministry of IT and electronics
 - b) Ministry of Finance
 - c) Ministry of Micro, small, medium enterprises**
 - d) Ministry of science and Technology