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1. 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

2. Begusarai Leads Global Ranking as Most Polluted City (March 20, 2024)

Begusarai in Bihar has been identified as the most polluted city in the world in the World Air Quality Report 2023 by IQAir.

An Overview of the News

- According to the report, 83 of the top 100 most polluted cities globally are located in India.
- After Begusarai, Guwahati is the second most polluted city, while Delhi and Mullanpur (Punjab) are in the third and fourth positions respectively.

India's ranking in the Global Air Pollution Report

- Globally, according to the list of 134 countries, India ranks third behind Bangladesh and Pakistan among the top five most polluted countries.
- The World Air Quality Report underlines that India's PM2.5 level is 54.4 µg/m3, which is 10 times higher than WHO's annual guideline of PM2.5 refers to harmful fine particulate matter.

Impact of air pollution in South Asia

- South Asia has emerged as the most affected region, hosting the top 10 most polluted cities globally, with factors such as climate conditions and cross-border haze increasing PM2.5 levels across Southeast Asia.
- Of the 134 countries surveyed, only 7 countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and Iceland, meet WHO's annual PM2.5 guideline.

3. On top of the list of missing women in India: Maharashtra (July 29, 2023)

On-top-of-the-list-of-missing-women-in-India--Maharashtra
Among all states, Maharashtra topped the list with the highest number of missing women in 2021, with a **reported count of 56,498.**

An Overview of the News

- In 2021, a total of 375,058 women (above 18 years) were reported missing in India, according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as mentioned in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) press release.
- Additionally, 90,113 girls (under the age of 18) were also reported missing in India during the same year.
- **The second-highest number of missing women was in Madhya Pradesh with 55,704 cases.**
- Following closely, **West Bengal reported 50,998 missing women, while Odisha recorded 29,582 cases in the same year.**
- Compared to the previous year, in **2020, there were 320,393 women and 71,204 girls** reported missing across the country.
- Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were the two states that witnessed the highest number of missing girls and women from 2019 to 2021.
- In the three-year period from 2019 to 2021, a concerning total of 10,61,648 women and 2,51,430 girls went missing in India.

About Maharashtra

- It is a state located in the western part of India and covers a significant part of the Deccan Plateau.
- Chief Minister - **Eknath Shinde**
- Governor - **Ramesh Bais**

4. UN report: Only 1% of women live in countries with high gender equality, women empowerment (July 20, 2023)

A new global report launched by UN Women and UNDP at the Women Deliver conference highlights the challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment around the world.

An Overview of the News

- The report introduces two important indices to assess progress in women's human development: the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and the Global Gender Equality Index (GGPI).

Women Empowerment Index (WEI)

- It measures the power and independence of women in various dimensions including health, education, inclusion, decision making and violence against women.
- Globally, women achieve only 60% of their full potential, as measured by the WEI.

Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)

- It evaluates the position of women relative to men in key dimensions of human development, such as health, education, inclusion and decision-making.
- On average, women achieve 72% more than men, reflecting a 28% gender gap.

Conclusion

- A worrying finding is that less than 1% of women and girls live in countries with high levels of female empowerment and gender equality, while more than 90% of the female population live in countries with significant empowerment deficits and gender gaps.

5. 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

6. 13.5 crore Indians out of multidimensional poverty in 5 years (July 19, 2023)

According to the 'National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A Progress Review 2023' report released by NITI Aayog, between 2015-16 and 2019-21, 135 million people in India have successfully lifted themselves out of multidimensional poverty over a period of five years.

An Overview of the News

- The report highlights a sharp decline in the number of multidimensionally poor persons in India, which **increased from 24.85% in 2015-16 to 14.96% in 2019-21, showing a significant decrease of 9.89 percentage points.**

- Rural areas have seen the fastest decline in poverty, with the **poverty rate falling from 32.59% to 19.28% during the same period.**
- India is making significant progress towards achieving **SDG target 1.2, which aims to reduce multidimensional poverty by at least half before 2030, well ahead of schedule.**
- Improvements in various areas have contributed to **poverty reduction, including nutrition, years of schooling, sanitation and access to clean cooking fuel.**
- Among states, **Uttar Pradesh leads with the largest decline in the number of poor persons, followed by Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.**
- Improvements are evident in all 12 indicators of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), including nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, maternal health, education, access to basic amenities and financial inclusion.

About NITI Aayog

- Its full name is **National Institution for Transforming India,** serves as the **apex public policy think tank of the Government of India.**
- Its primary goals are to catalyse economic growth and promote cooperative federalism, involving state governments in the economic policy-making process through a bottom-up approach.

Formed - **1 January 2015**

Objective - **To promote participation in the economic policy-making process by the state governments of India**

Jurisdiction - **Government of India**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

Chairman **- Narendra Modi**

Founder - **National Democratic Alliance**

7. India to be world's second largest economy by 2075: Goldman Sachs Research (July 12, 2023)

India-to-be-world's-second--largest-economy-by-2075
According to the report of **Goldman Sachs Research**, by the year **2075, India** will become the **second largest economy** in the world after China leaving behind not only Japan and Germany but also America.

An Overview of the news:

- According to the world's important investment bank Goldman Sachs, India has left behind China in terms of population, so its GDP is expected to expand.
- India's current economy: **$3.2 trillion**
- Presently India's economy ranks in the world: **Fifth**

- India's economy in the world by 2075: **$52.5 trillion (2nd largest)**

Currently, the economy of the top countries (in trillions of dollars):

- America: 23.3
- China: 17.7
- Japan: 4.9
- Germany: 4.3
- India: 3.2
- UK: 3.1

Economy of top countries in 2075 (in trillions of dollars):

- China: 57
- India: 52.5
- No. Ra. America: 51.5
- Europe: 30.3
- Japan: 7.5

The main reasons for the reduction of India's dependence on developed countries:

- According to Goldman Sachs Research, India's dependence ratio on the regional economy will be the lowest in the next two decades. Because:
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    - Helping to grow the economy quickly with talent and workforce.
    - Here innovation and increasing labor productivity are quite strong.
    - Capital investment will continue to be an important driver of growth in the future as well.
    - Decreased dependency ratio on other countries.
    - Savings rate expected to rise due to rising incomes and favorable demographics.

8. 4 Indian-origin among 100 richest American women: Forbes (July 11, 2023)

4-Indian-origin-among-100-richest-American-women--Forbes
In July 2023, **4 Indian-origin women** have found a place in America's 100 richest women released by **Forbes.**

An Overview of the news:

- According to a **Forbes report,** due to the boom in the stock market, the wealth of these 100 women has reached a record $ 124 billion, which is about 12% more than a year ago.

Women on top of Forbes list:

- **Diane Hendrix,** co-founder of **ABC Supply,** one of the largest wholesale distributors of Roofing, Siding and Windows in the US. She holds the top spot with a net worth of $15 billion.
- Musician Rihanna is in second place with a net worth of $1.4 billion.
- This year's list includes eight people, including television producer **Shonda Rhimes** and **Insitro CEO Daphne Koller.**

- Four Indian-origin women have made it to the Forbes list of 100 richest American women who are 'self-made'. The total assets of these four women are $ 4.06 billion.

The order of the four Indian women in the list:

- **Jayshree Ullal (15th position):** President and CEO of computer networking firm Arista Networks, with a net worth of $2.4 billion. Ullal is also on the board of directors of cloud computing company Snowflake.
- **Neerja Sethi (25th rank):** IT consulting and outsourcing firm Synte, Sethi has a net worth of $990 million.
- **Neha Narkhede (ranked 50):** CTO and co-founder of cloud company Confluent. Narkhede's net worth is $520 million.
- **Indra Nooyi (77th position):** Former PepsiCo chairperson, with a net worth of $350 million.

9. Water level in 75% reservoirs in India less than 40% of their capacity: CWC data (July 5, 2023)

Water-level-in-75%-reservoirs-in-India
Recent data from the Central Water Commission (CWC) reveals that 110 out of the 146 monitored reservoirs have water levels at or below 40% of their total capacities.

An Overview of the news

Based on data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the following observations have been made:

- Around 33% of the 717 districts with available data have experienced deficient rainfall till July 4, while for an additional 10% of districts, the situation is even worse.
- As of June 30, the water levels in reservoirs across 10 states are lower than their respective 30-year average levels.
- The deficiency in water levels ranges from 11% to 80% in states such as Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Tripura, and Nagaland.
- However, it is worth noting that the current water levels are comparatively better than the average levels observed over the past 10 years.

About Central Water Commission:

- The organization is a prestigious technical institution in India that specializes in the field of water resources.
- Currently, it operates as an attached office of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, which falls under the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation of the Government of India.
- Headed by a Chairman, with the status of Ex-Officio Secretary to the Government of India.

Functions of Central Water Commission:

- General responsibilities of initiating, coordinating and furthering in consultation of the State Governments concerned, schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country, for the purpose of Flood Control, Irrigation, Navigation, Drinking Water Supply and Water Power Development.
- The Commission is responsible for conducting investigations, as well as overseeing the construction and execution of various schemes as needed.
- The Commission's work is organized into three wings: **Designs and Research (D&R) Wing, River Management (RM) Wing, and Water Planning and Projects (WP&P) Wing.**
- Each wing is headed by a full-time Member who holds the position of Ex-Officio Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

10. India ranks 67th on WEF's Energy Transition Index (July 3, 2023)

On 28 June, the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** published a report titled **'Fostering Effective Energy Transition 2023'** which ranked 120 countries on the basis of energy transition.

An Overview of the news:

India in ETI Report:

- In this ranking, WEF has placed India at **67th position (a jump of 20 places)** globally in the **Energy Transition Index (ETI)**. Because in the year 2021, India was at 87th position among 115 countries.
- According to WEF, India is the only major economy where the pace of energy transition is accelerating in all dimensions.
- Despite sustained economic growth, India has successfully reduced the energy intensity of its economy and the carbon intensity of its energy mix, achieved universal energy access and managed electricity affordability effectively.
- The ETI benchmarks countries based on the performance of their energy systems and their readiness to secure sustainable energy systems.
- In a report published in collaboration with Accenture, the WEF noted that the global energy transition has stagnated amid the global energy crisis and geopolitical instability, but India is among the countries that have made significant improvements in the energy transition.
- According to ETI the top five countries in the world are Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Switzerland respectively.

World Economic Forum (WEF):

- Establishment : **1971 in Geneva (Switzerland)**
- Headquarters: **Cologny, Switzerland**
- Founder : **Klaus Schwab**
- Chairman : **Borge Brende**

Major reports published by WEF:

- Global Gender Gap Report
- Energy Transition Index (published jointly by Accenture and WEF).
- Global Competitiveness Report
- Global Risk Report
- Global Travel & Tourism Report
- Global Information Technology Report (The report is published by WEF in association with INSEAD and Cornell University).