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UN World Happiness Report 2019

Why in news?

United Nations World Happiness Report for 2019 was released recently.

What is the report on?

- The report ranks 156 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.
- A sample of individuals from each country is asked to score their happiness on a 1-10 scale.
- The variation in country scores is then attempted to be explained statistically with the six variables:

1. GDP per capita
2. social support
3. healthy life expectancy
4. freedom to make life choices
5. generosity
6. freedom from corruption

- The report has been released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) at the United Nations.
- It is published ahead of the International Day of Happiness marked on March 20th.

What are the highlights?

- Finland was the happiest nation followed by Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Netherlands.
- The next five in the top 10 are Switzerland, Sweden, New Zealand, Canada, and Austria in order.
- Australia replaced Israel in the 11th spot, followed by Costa Rica.
- The United States came in 19th place.
- The last spot for the least happy nation, 156, went to South Sudan.

TABLE 1: RANKING HAPPINESS AND COMPONENTS, 2019

Country*	Happiness	Social support	Freedom	Corruption	Generosity	Longevity	GDP per capita
Finland	1	2	5	4	47	27	22
Brazil	32	43	84	71	108	72	70
China	93	108	31	--	133	34	68
Bhutan	95	68	59	25	13	104	95
Nepal	100	87	67	65	46	95	127
South Africa	106	63	85	102	89	123	77
Bangladesh	125	126	27	36	107	90	119
Sri Lanka	130	80	55	111	35	54	79
India	140	142	41	73	65	105	103

*Number of countries varies between 155 and 158 over different annual reports.
Source: World Happiness Report, 2015 & 2019, United Nations.

Where does India stand?

- Indians have emerged as one of the unhappiest peoples on earth in the Happiness Report.
- India ranks itself at 140 in happiness out of 156 countries. In other words, it is at the bottom 10% of all countries.
- India is just at the 50% rank for corruption, and at the bottom 58% for generosity.
- Unsurprisingly, India is at the bottom 25% for per-capita GDP and longevity.
- It, however, ranks better for freedom, being within the top 27%.
- Even favourable aspects for Indians such as strong social/family support had come out poorly in the rankings.
- In global terms, India's unhappiness is considerably worse in the ranking than other countries of South Asia and China, and South Africa, and far worse than Latin America.
- India comes out at the bottom in South Asia in the 2019 report.
- Moreover, there has been a steady deterioration in Indians' happiness scores in recent years.
- On the change in the happiness score over 2015-19, India's score deteriorated the most in South Asia.

Source: Business Standard

Quick Fact

Sustainable Development Solutions Network

- The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has been

operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General.

- The SDSN mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development.
- These include the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement.

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