

India - UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Index

Why in News?

At the Hamburg Sustainability Conference 2026, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) released the Sustainable Development Report 2026, recently.

- **India's Rank** - The index reveals that India has achieved its highest-ever rank, securing the **94th position** among 167 countries.
- **Overall Score**- India registered a composite score of **68.3 out of 100**, marking a notable ascent from its 99th position in 2025.
- **Historical Growth** - Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, India has climbed 18 places (from 112th to 94th).
- One of the fastest-improving major economies alongside China.
- **Regional Contrast**- Despite this historic trajectory, India continues to trail behind 4 of its South Asian neighbours - Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- **2030 Horizon Projections** - Nationally, only 33.3% of SDG targets are on track to be achieved by the 2030 deadline. Meanwhile, 42.7% are progressing slowly, and 24% have actively deteriorated.

Core Pillars of Success - Infrastructure & Digital Expansion

- SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)
- SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)

Area of Concern - The Hunger Crisis (SDG 2: Zero Hunger)

- **Undernourishment** - The proportion of undernourished people rose back to 12% in 2023 after dropping to 10.5% in 2018.
- **Malnutrition Indicators**- Child wasting stands critical at 19% (among the highest globally), while child stunting remains severe at 29.3%.
- **Obesity** - Progress has reversed, with adult obesity rising from 4.91% (2015) to 7.27%.

Critical Red Flags in Climate & Governance

- **SDG 13 (Climate Action)** - Weakened due to expanding fossil fuel combustion and cement production; per capita CO2 emissions hit a record high of **2.21 tonnes**.
- **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)** - Major challenges remain in institutional indicators.

- Notably, the Press Freedom Index score dropped by over 27 points, declining from 59.51 in 2015 to 31.96 in 2026.
- **Other "Major Challenge" Zones** - India faces severe bottlenecks in
 - SDG 3 (Good Health),
 - SDG 5 (Gender Equality),
 - SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities),
 - SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and
 - SDG 15 (Life on Land).

Global Context

- **Global Off-Track Status**- None of the 17 SDGs are on track to be met globally by 2030. Merely 16.5% of global targets are progressing adequately.
- **Top Performers** - Nordic nations lead the index, ***with Finland*** ranking first, followed by Sweden and Denmark.

Reference

[Down to Earth | 2026 UN SDG Index](#)

