India’s Position in World Happiness Index

Why in news?

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United Nations has released the World Happiness Index.

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What is World happiness report about?

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- World Happiness index released by UN is basically an appraisal of the general well-being of a nation rather than an indicator of personal happiness.
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- The index doesn’t measure joy and cheerfulness of the people of a nation, besides it is a measure of prosperity such as income and healthy life expectancy.
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- Index is based on six key factors found to support wellbeing: Income, Healthy life expectancy, Social support, Freedom, trust, and generosity.
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- Out these six the important variable is trust, which is measured by the absence of corruption in business and government.
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- The issue of migration was placed at the heart of the 2018 report, which also ranked 117 countries according to happiness of their immigrants.
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What are the findings of the recent report?

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- Finland, Norway and Denmark secured the first three positions, the remaining Scandinavian countries (Sweden and Iceland) found themselves in the top ten rankings.

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- The Scandinavian countries are the perennial toppers in the Global Happiness Index.
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- The United States and the United Kingdom were in 18th and 19th place respectively.
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- The study found that the 10 happiest countries in the overall rankings also scored highest on immigrant happiness, suggesting that migrants' well-being depends primarily on the quality of life in their adopted home
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What are the report findings about India?

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- India is ranked terribly low at 133 out of 156 countries alongside some Sub-Saharan African countries, dropping 11 spots from 2017.
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- Most of the emerging economies Mexico (24), Brazil (28), Argentina (29), Malaysia (35), Russia (59), and China (86) are placed far ahead of India.
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- All the South Asian countries, even Pakistan and Nepal ranked better compared to India.
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What are the reasons for India’s awful performance?

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- Despite being one of the fastest growing economies, India remains a non-egalitarian country with growing levels of economic inequality.
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- An Oxfam survey in 2017 has revealed that India’s richest 1 per cent has cornered almost 73 per cent of the total wealth created in the country.
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- India’s public health spending is well below the global average (just 1.4 per cent of GDP) leaving the deprived millions to pitiable public healthcare facilities.
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- Even the well-off Indian professional class, who can afford expensive

private healthcare, are not guaranteed a long, healthy and happy life.
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- India has failed in building a trustworthy social support system, helping people when they are in real trouble.
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- India’s political system and business establishments are unable to manage big cash flows in a sustainable, responsible and transparent way.
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- Indian response towards the Rohingya crisis, despite being a country that welcomed Tibetans and Sri Lankans, illustrates that generosity and altruism are giving way to pseudo-nationalism and self-obsession.
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What India must learn from Scandinavian countries?

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- Norwegians discovered a greater fortune than fishes in the North Sea, massive amounts of crude oil and natural gas.
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- The political consensus that emerged in Norway for sharing the suddenly-discovered oil wealth for the entire citizenry than falling into the hands of a few business giants, leading to the creation of a welfare state model par excellence.
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- When petroleum profits exceeded all expectations, the government established an ‘oil fund’ in 1990, which is now the world’s largest sovereign wealth fund entitling every Norwegian a millionaire on paper.
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- Life for Scandinavians is to be taken at a slow pace leaving their worries and anxieties into the hands of a dependable, trustworthy government.
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- In addition to its joyful locals, Finland is also home to the happiest immigrants due to the nation’s altruistic policies.
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Source: Business Line, First Post

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