NITI Aayog's Health Index

Why in news?

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NITI Aayog recently released a comprehensive Health Index report titled “Healthy States, Progressive India”.

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What is the report on?

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- It ranks all states and Union territories based on their year-on-year incremental change and overall performance in health.
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- All States and UTs have been ranked in three categories to ensure comparison among similar entities.
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- They are accordingly Larger States, Smaller States, and Union Territories (UTs).
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- The report has been developed by NITI Aayog with technical assistance from the World Bank.
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- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) was also consulted in the process.
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- The report is the first attempt to establish an annual systematic tool to measure and understand the nation’s health performance.
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What are the highlights?

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- **Larger States** - The Health Index is a weighted composite Index, which for the larger States, is based on indicators in three domains.

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- These are Health Outcomes (70%), Governance and Information (12%) and Key Inputs and Processes (18%).
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- Among the Larger States, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu ranked on top in terms of overall performance.
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- Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh ranked as top three States in terms of annual incremental performance.
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- Some of the indicators for incremental performance ranking include:
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i. Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)
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ii. Under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR)
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iii. Full immunization coverage
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iv. Institutional deliveries
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v. People Living with HIV (PLHIV) on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART)
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- Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh occupied the bottom ranks.
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- Odisha is estimated to have the highest neonatal mortality rate at 35 per thousand live births.
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- **Smaller States** - Among Smaller States, Mizoram ranked first followed by Manipur on overall performance.

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- In terms of annual incremental performance Manipur ranked top followed by Goa.
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- Manipur registered maximum incremental progress on indicators such as:
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i. PLHIV on ART
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ii. First trimester antenatal care (ANC) registration
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iii. Grading quality parameters of Community Health Centres (CHCs)
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iv. Average occupancy of key State-level officers
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v. Good reporting on Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)
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- **UTs** - Among UTs, Lakshadweep showed best overall performance as well as the highest annual incremental performance.
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- It showed the highest improvement in indicators such as:
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i. institutional deliveries
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ii. tuberculosis (TB) treatment success rate
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iii. transfer of National Health Mission (NHM) funds from State Treasury to implementation agency
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What does it imply?

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- **Trend** - Clearly, States with a record of investment in literacy, nutrition and primary health care have achieved high scores.

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- States and UTs that start at lower levels of development are generally at an advantage in notching up incremental progress.
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- Whereas for States with high Health Index scores, it is a challenge to even maintain their performance levels.
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- E.g. Kerala ranks on top in terms of overall performance but sees the least incremental change.
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- However, the incremental measurement reveals that about one-third of States have registered a decline in their performance in 2016 as compared to 2015.
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- **Significance** - Health-care delivery is the responsibility of States, with Centre providing the financial and policy support.
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- States' performance in health is crucial for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals over the coming decade.
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- The Index hopes to make a difference by leveraging co-operative and competitive federalism for potentially better health outcomes.
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What does it call for?

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- Intra-State inequalities in health performance have to be addressed.
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- Both the Centre and the States have to scale up their investment on health as a percentage of their budgets.
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- The findings stress the need for pursuing domain-specific, targeted interventions.
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- Common challenges for most States and UTs include the need to focus on:
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i. addressing vacancies in key staff
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ii. establishment of functional district Cardiac Care Units (CCUs)
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iii. quality accreditation of public health facilities
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iv. institutionalization of Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS)
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- Additionally, almost all Larger States need to focus on improving the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB).
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- The index could be linked to incentives offered under the National Health Mission by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
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Source: PIB, The Hindu

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