

Finland 'happiest' for 7th year; India ranks #126 while US out of top 20

Helsinki: Finland remained the world's happiest country for a seventh straight year in an annual UN sponsored World Happiness Report published on Wednesday. And Nordic countries kept their places among the 10 most cheerful, with Denmark, Iceland and Sweden trailing Finland.

Afghanistan, plagued by a humanitarian catastrophe since the Taliban regained control in 2020, stayed at the bottom of the 143 countries surveyed. For the first time since the report was published more than a decade ago, the US and Germany were not among the 20 happiest nations, coming in 23rd and 24th respectively. In turn, Costa Rica and Kuwait entered the top 20 at 12 and 13.

The report noted the happiest countries no longer included any of the world's largest countries. "In the top 10 countries only the Netherlands and Australia have populations over 15 million. In the whole of the top 20, only Canada and the UK have populations over 30 million." The sharpest decline in happiness since 2006-10 was noted in Afghanistan, Lebanon and Jordan, while the Eastern European countries Serbia, Bulgaria and Latvia reported the biggest increases.

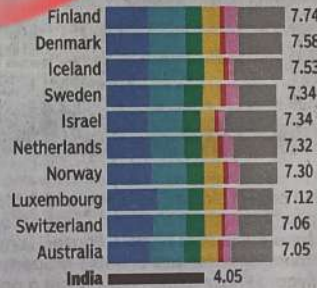
India ranked 126, the same as last year, in the happy index.

The happiness ranking is based on individuals' self-assessed evaluations of life satisfaction, as well as GDP per capita, social support, healthy li-

HAPPY LEAGUE OF THE WORLD

HAPPINESS FACTORS

- Dystopia-Residual
- Generosity
- Social support
- Perception of corruption
- Freedom to make life choices
- Log GDP per capita
- Healthy life expectancy



India ranked 126 the same as last year

India's key neighbours rank higher

China 60
Nepal 93
Pak 108

143 NATIONS RANKED

- > US (#23) & Germany (#24) not among top 20. Dropped from #15 and #16 respectively
- > Afghanistan, at bottom, saw sharpest decline in happiness since 2006-10
- > Younger generations happier than their older peers



fe expectancy, freedom, generosity and corruption.

Jennifer De Paola, a happiness researcher at the University of Helsinki in Finland, said Finns' close connection to nature and healthy work-life balance were key contributors to their life satisfaction.

The report also found that younger generations were happier than their older peers in most of the world's regions — but not all. In Australia and New Zealand, happiness among groups under 30 has dropped dramatically since 2006-10, with older generations now happier than the young. Also, happiness inequality increased in every region except Europe, which authors described as a "worrying trend". AFP

Lanka to let foreign ships dock for replenishments

Colombo: Sri Lanka has said it will allow foreign offshore research ships for replenishments at its ports despite a one-year ban on such vessels, a senior official said after China protested over Colombo allowing a German survey ship but turning down a similar request it had made.

This is the first time Sri Lanka has officially admitted foreign research vessels will be allowed for replenishments since President Ranil Wickremesinghe's govt imposed a one-year ban on offshore research vessels last Dec after strong security concerns raised by India and the US following the visit of two Chinese high-tech research

The move comes after China protested against Sri Lanka allowing a German survey ship but turning down its request

vessels in 14 months.

"The ban on foreign ships is for research purposes, not on replenishment," Economy Next quoted Niluka Kadurugamuwa, Sri Lanka's foreign ministry spokesman, as saying. "There was a German research vessel recently for replenishment and Sri Lanka allowed it," he added.

Sri Lanka is in the process of introducing SOPs for handling foreign vessels. PTI

UN adopts first global resolution aimed at ensuring safe use of AI

The United Nations General Assembly Thursday unanimously adopted the first global resolution on artificial intelligence to encourage protecting personal data, monitoring AI for risks, and safeguarding human rights, US officials said.

The non-binding resolution, proposed by the US and co-sponsored by India, China and 120 other countries, was adopted by consensus with a bang of the gavel and without a vote, meaning it has the support of all 193 UN member nations.

Future Gaming Gave ₹542cr To TMC, ₹503cr To DMK, ₹100cr To BJP

Megha money: Group No. 1 EB donor to BJP, BRS, No. 3 to Cong

BJP Got ₹100cr+ From 9 Entities; Cong From 3, Max From Vedanta

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The Election Commission on Thursday released data that cleared the air on who funded which party for Rs 12,146 crore worth of electoral bonds, or about 74% of the total issued, based on information provided to it by SBI following a Supreme Court order.

The data showed that the biggest donors to BJP, which got about half of the amounts raised through EBs, were Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering & Infrastructure (Rs 584 crore), Qwik Supply Cha-

Only a/c details, KYC not made public: SBI

SBI told Supreme Court that it has given EC all details of electoral bonds, including the unique numbers that help link the donor and recipient political party. In a compliance affidavit filed ahead of the Thursday 5pm deadline, SBI chairman said only complete bank account numbers of parties and KYC details of both sides have not been made public for security reasons. TNN

▶ EDIT PAGE: Electoral or marital, bond is bond

in (Rs 375cr), mining and metals giant Vedanta Ltd (Rs 230cr) and Bharti Airtel (Rs 183cr). For Congress, the biggest chunks came from Vedanta (Rs 125cr), MKJ Enterprises and associated firms (Rs 120cr) and Western UP Power Transmission Co (Rs 110cr), part of Megha group.

While nine separate entities contributed more than Rs 100cr to BJP and another 11 gave between Rs 50cr and Rs 100cr, Congress had just three

that donated over Rs 100cr and another three in the Rs 50-100cr range. Trinamool, the third largest recipient of EB funds, had lottery major Future Gaming and Hotel Services as its biggest benefactor (Rs 542cr) and Haldia Energy of the RPG Sanjeev Goenka group as the next biggest with Rs 281cr.

The biggest donor, Future Gaming gave the biggest portion of its largesse to regional parties like Trinamool (Rs

542cr), DMK (Rs 503cr) and Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP (Rs 154cr), but also gave BJP Rs 100cr and Congress Rs 50cr.

The second biggest donor, Megha Engineering, gave BJP Rs 584cr, followed by BRS (Rs 195cr) and DMK (Rs 85cr). Qwik Supply was the third biggest donor and has been linked to Reliance with one of its directors identifying himself as head of accounts (consolidation) at RIL and another holding directorships in a

number of group companies. Reliance, however, has stated that Qwik is not a subsidiary. The firm gave Rs 375 crore of its total of Rs 410 crore to BJP with the rest going to Shiv Sena (Rs 25cr) and NCP (Rs 10cr).

The data for which donor and recipient could be matched was for bonds that had been bought on or after April 12, 2019. SC had ordered SBI to put out donor and recipient details only for the period starting from this date.

TOP DONORS TO MAJOR PARTIES...

BJP Megha Engg (₹584 crore); Qwik Supply (375); Vedanta (230); Bharti Airtel (183); Madanlal (175.5); Keventer Foodpark (144.5); DLF Commercial (130); Birla Carbon (105); Future Gaming (100); Haldia Energy (81); Others (3486.1)

Cong Vedanta (125); MKJ Enterprises+ (120); Western UP Power Transco (110); Yashoda Hospital (64); Avees Trading (53); Future Gaming (50.0); Sasmal Infra (39); Rithwik Projects (30); SEPC Power (30); Siddhi Trading (22); Others (736.5)

TMC Future Gaming (542); Haldia Energy (281); Dhariwal Infra (90); MKJ Enterprises (45.9); Avees Trading (45.5); IFB Agro (42); Chennai Green Woods (40); PCBL (40); Prarambh Securities (38.8); Crescent Power (33); Others (394.1)

BJD Essel Mining (174.5); Jindal Steel & Power (100); Utkal Alumina (70); Rungta Sons (50); SN Mohanty (45); Rashmi Cement (45); Vedanta (40); Penguin Trading (30.5); Jindal Stainless (30); Rashmi Metaliks (27); Others (163.5)

BRS Megha Engg (195); Yashoda Hospital (94); Chennai Green Woods (50); Dr Reddy's Labs (32); Hetero Drugs (30); IRB MP Expressway (25); Honour Lab (25); NSL SEZ (Hyd) (24.5); L7 Hitech (22); Others (693.7)

DMK Future Gaming (503); Megha Engg (85); Others (44)

YSRCP Future Gaming (154); Megha Engg (37); Ramco Cements (24); Ostro Jaisalmer (17); Ostro Madhya Wind (17); Sneha Kinetic Power Projects (10); Others (69.8)

TDP Shirdi Sai Electricals (40); Megha Engg (28); Western UP Power Transco (20); Natco Pharma (14); Dr Reddy's Labs (13); Bharat Biotech (10); Others (86.6)

Shiv Sena BG Shirke Construction (85); Qwik Supply (25); Others (42.5)

JD(S) Nara Constructions (10); Rithwik Projects (10); Others (21)

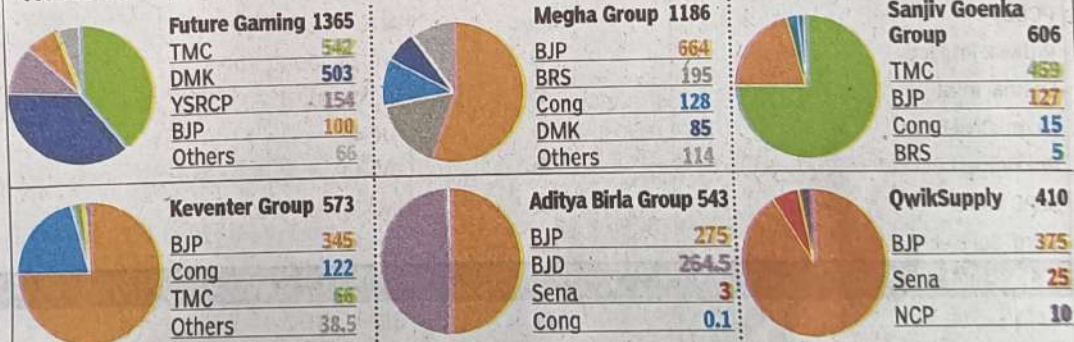
RJD IFB Agro (35); Others (37.5)

NCP Qwik Supply Chain; Others (18.5)

AAP Avees Trading (10); Others (55.3)

JD(U) Megha Engg (10); Others (2)

...AND HOW THEY DISTRIBUTED THEIR FUNDS (in ₹ cr)



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ED's reaction after skipping 9 summons

Delhi CM Kejriwal arrested



Security personnel deployed outside the residence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, in New Delhi on Thursday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Mar 21 (PTI)

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in an

Excise Policy-linked money laundering case on Thursday night and took him to the agency's headquarters here, officials said.

The arrest, the first of a sitting Chief Minister, came hours after the Delhi High Court refused to grant protection to the AAP national convener from any coercive action by the agency. The 55-year-old leader's arrest, amid campaign for the Lok Sabha elections, drew angry reactions from his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Soon after the HC order, a 10-member ED team reached his residence and carried out searches. Subsequently, he was arrested, officials said. On Thursday, Kejriwal skipped the ED's ninth summons in the Delhi liquor policy case.

Officials said the ED would produce the Chief Minister before a court here on Friday and seek his custody for interrogation. As the ED officials carried out their action inside, additional Delhi Police personnel and Rapid Action Force

(RAF) and CRPF teams were deployed around the Chief Minister's residence. The additional deployment was made as the ED sought extra security measures in anticipation of protests by AAP supporters, sources said.

A large number of AAP workers and leaders gathered near the Chief Minister's residence and shouted slogans against the ED action. During the day, Kejriwal moved the Supreme Court against the High Court's order denying him any relief in the matter. The ED's action is virtually a replay of what transpired during the arrest last week of Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha, who is now in ED custody in the same case. The case pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in formulating and executing the Delhi Government's Excise Policy for

2021-22, which was later scrapped. AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh are in judicial custody in the case.

Delhi Cabinet Minister Atishi said Kejriwal will continue as the Chief Minister and run the city Government from prison if needed after his arrest by the ED in money laundering case. She said they have moved the Supreme Court for quashing the arrest of Kejriwal and 'asked for an urgent hearing... Tonight itself.' However, sources said that no special Supreme Court bench was being set up on Thursday night to hear Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea against his arrest by the ED. The AAP alleged that there was a 'huge conspiracy' behind Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's arrest ahead of the LS polls and accused the BJP of stooping to any level to make him bow down.

After skipping 9 ED summons, the first of a sitting Chief Minister, Kejriwal arrested in Excise Policy-linked money laundering case

India will be 3rd largest economy in 5 yrs: Amitabh Kant

BENGALURU, Mar 21 (PTI)

INDIA will surpass Japan and Germany to emerge as the third-largest economy and also the third-largest stock market in the world in the next five years, India's G20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO, Amitabh Kant said on Thursday.

Speaking at a conference on 'The Deccan Conversations, Accelerating Our Growth Story', organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (Southern Region), he said India has been growing in the last three quarters at 8.3 per cent plus and has emerged as a very "resilient powerhouse" during this period. Quoting the IMF, Kant said India will be contributing close to 20 per cent of the world's economic expansion in the next decade and South is the engine of India's growth story for the country to be a USD 35 trillion economy by 2047.

India, he stressed, needs to grow on the back of manufacturing, Smart urbanisation and



India's G20 Sherpa and former Niti Aayog CEO, Amitabh Kant with CII Southern Region Chairman Kamal Bali during the CII Southern Region Annual Regional Meeting 2024 and conference on 'Deccan Conversations: Accelerating Our Growth Story' in Bengaluru on Thursday. (PTI)

agriculture. "India needs to improve learning outcomes and skills to ensure India provides 30 per cent of the skilled manpower globally by 2047, focus on creating a large num-

ber of large companies in India to create an ecosystem for MSMEs and SMEs to thrive and increase its R&D spending from 0.7 per cent to at least 2.5-3 per cent of GDP," Kant said.

Subianto declared winner of Indonesia's presidential poll

JAKARTA, Mar 21 (AP)

INDONESIAN Defence

Minister Prabowo Subianto was announced the winner of the presidential election in the world's third-largest democracy on Wednesday over two former governors who vow to contest the result in court over alleged irregularities.

Subianto, who was accused of abuses under the past dictatorship and chose the son of the popular outgoing President as his running mate, won 58.6 per cent of the votes.

Former Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan received 24.9



per cent and former Central Java Gov Ganjar Pranowo got 16.5 per cent, the General Election Commission said. It posted polling stations' tabulation forms on its website, allowing for independent verification.

Subianto said he will respect those who made different choices in the vote. "We call on all Indonesian people to look to the future together," he told a news conference.

Subianto has received congratulatory messages from other South-East Asian nations as well as the Chinese, Russian, French, Dutch and British Governments.

Op Indravati begins to evacuate Indians from Haiti to Dominican Republic: EAM

NEW DELHI, Mar 21 (PTI)

INDIA has started Operation Indravati to evacuate its nationals from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday and asserted that it was “fully committed” to the security and well-being of Indians abroad.

The move comes days after India had said it was looking at evacuating up to 90 of its nationals from Haiti in view of the deteriorating security situation in the Caribbean nation.

“India begins Operation

Indravati to evacuate its nationals from Haiti to the Dominican Republic. 12 Indians evacuated on Thursday. Fully committed to the security and well-being of our nationals abroad. Thank the Government of the Dominican Republic for their support,” Jaishankar said in a post on X.

He also shared a photograph along with his post.

Various gangs have launched coordinated attacks on key installations in Haiti in an attempt to force the resignation of the country’s embattled Prime Minister Ariel Henry.

India doesn’t have an embassy in Haiti and the situation in the country is being monitored by the Indian mission at Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic.

There are between 75 and 90 Indians in Haiti and about 60 of them have registered with Indian authorities to return to India “if need be”, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said at his weekly media briefing on March 15.

“We are ready to evacuate everybody,” he had said.

Arunachal Pradesh is Indian territory: US

■ **By Lalit K Jha**

WASHINGTON, Mar 21 (PTI)

THE United States recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory and strongly opposes any unilateral attempts by China to advance its territorial claims across the Line of Actual Control, a senior Biden administration official has said, days after the Chinese military reiterated its claim over the State following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit there.

Earlier this week, Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Senior Colonel Zhang Xiaogang said that the southern part of Xizang (the Chinese name for Tibet) is an inherent part of

China's territory, and Beijing "never acknowledges and firmly opposes" the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India".

Speaking at his daily press conference on Wednesday, State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel said, "The United States recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory and we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments, military or civilian, across the Line of Actual Control."

India has repeatedly rejected China's territorial claims over Arunachal Pradesh.

Helicopter Unit inducted at Air Force Station Thanjavur

NEW DELHI, Mar 21 (PTI)

ONE Helicopter Unit has been inducted at Air Force Station Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu, a move that will ensure availability of sufficient resources with the Southern Air Command's headquarters to enhance operational capabilities as well as meet peacetime tasks, officials said on Wednesday.

The unit was inducted at a ceremony held on March 19.

The Southern Air Command (SAC) is based in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. SAC was established in July 1984 "in response to certain geopolitical developments to ensure effective command and control of IAF assets and facilitate quick deployment of combat forces in the event of threats developing in the Indian Ocean Region," the Defence Ministry said.

In a recent redeployment of IAF assets, one Helicopter Unit was inducted at AFS, Thanjavur on March 19, the officials said.