

Henley Passport Index

All passports in the world are subjected to the original and authoritative rankings. This is done based on the number of countries the passport holders can visit without any prior visa. These rankings are referred to as the Henley Passport Index. Under this index, the visa-free accessibility status is compared in the context of 199 different passports covering a total of 227 travel locations. In cases where a visa is not required, a score having a value of 1 is provided to a particular passport. This rule also applies in cases where a visa can be obtained on arrival or when an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) or a visitor's permit can be obtained on entering a particular destination.

What is the Henley Passport Index?

The Henley Passport Index is a worldwide ranking system for countries and their passports, based on the freedom of the holders of such passports to travel visa-free or obtain a visa on arrival in various travel destinations. Earlier it was known as Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index (HVRI), when it was first implemented in 2006. However, in January of 2018, the system was later named the Henley Passport Index.

The visa-free score for a specific passport is basically the number of countries that its holder can access without a prior visa. Since 2006, Henley & Partners have analysed the status of the visa regulations associated with all the countries and territories worldwide. For this, Henley & Partners has collaborated with the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The index is an important part of the UPSC syllabus. Therefore, students must read and understand its different aspects, especially about the rankings of various countries, as per this index.

Based on the 2021 rankings under the Henley Passport Index, Germany is the European country with the most powerful passports providing access to 190 locations. In the 2021 list, the topmost positions are held by Japan and Singapore. Both these countries have passports that allow visa-free travel to their holders in 192 countries. The Henley Passport Index India rank as of 2021 is 90.

India Rank in Henley Passport Index 2022

The Henley Passport Index 2022 India rank will depend on the current status of India, as per the rankings. In 2021, India had gone down by six ranks compared to its 2020 rank, moving to the 90th spot in the Henley Passport Index. In comparison with the topmost position holders in the list, India has been quite behind in allowing access to passport holders. While Japan and Singapore provide passports that allow visa-free access to their holders to 192 countries, Indian passports only allow 58 countries to be accessed without a prior visa.

India's rank in Henley Passport Index 2022 will be of much concern for the Indian Government regarding the international status of Indian passports. India's rank has been low since 2020, and it has

been worsening since then. Thus, 2022 holds greater importance as it has to be seen whether India can climb the list.

It is to be noted that the Henley Passport Index does not consider the present-day COVID restrictions. This will account for different situations for the countries to cope with while the COVID pandemic keeps affecting the travel standards in major countries. However, India's rank in the 2022 list will remain unaffected with this additional factor coming into place.

