

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2022

Recently, the World Economic Forum released the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2022, on June 6, 2022, ranking 180 countries in terms of climate change performance, environmental health and ecosystem vitality. These metrics show how near countries are to meeting stated environmental policy objectives on a national basis. India was ranked worst out of 180 countries assessed by US-based institutes for their environmental performance, which has been criticised by India.

Who calculates this index, and how? What issues has India flagged? What are the key highlights of the report? Find all the answers to these questions in this article. The reports, policies and indexes are a very essential part of the CSE syllabus. Aspirants must look into such terms while preparing for prelims and mains.

About Environmental Performance Index (EPI)

- What is the Environmental Performance Index?
 - The EPI is a global rating system that ranks nations based on their environmental health.
 - The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) provides a data-driven evaluation of the global level of sustainability.
 - EPI indicators help to identify issues, define goals, follow trends, understand outcomes and identify effective policy methods.
 - Good data and fact-based research may also help policymakers narrow their goals, improve relationships with important stakeholders and optimise the return on environmental spending.
 - The EPI is an effective policy instrument for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and moving society toward a more sustainable future.
- Who publishes the Environmental Performance Index?
 - The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) is a biennial index, launched by the **World Economic Forum** in 2002 as the Environmental Sustainability Index in partnership with the **Yale Centre for Environmental Law and Policy** and the **Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network**.
 - This index was first published in 2002 and designed to supplement the environmental targets set forth in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.
- What does the Environmental Performance Index measure?
 - The EPI ranks 180 nations using **40 performance indicators across 11 issue areas** on the following **policy objectives**:
 - climate change performance
 - environmental health
 - ecosystem vitality
 - These indicators reflect how near countries are to meeting stated environmental policy objectives on a national basis.
 - The EPI produces a scorecard that recognises environmental leaders and laggards and gives practical suggestions for nations seeking to move toward a more sustainable future.
- What is India's rank on Environmental Performance Index?
 - India is ranked **180th among 180 countries** in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2022.
 - India is ranked after Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar, with a trifling score of 18.9.
 - According to EPI, India also ranks poorly in terms of rule of law, corruption control, and government performance.

- “India slips to the bottom of the rankings for the first time, with increasingly hazardous air quality and quickly rising greenhouse gas emissions,” the report stated.
- With a score of 27.6, India was **ranked 168th in EPI-2020**.

Significance of Environmental Performance Index

- The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) statistics show that financial resources, excellent governance, human development and regulatory quality all play a role in boosting a country’s sustainability. EPI helps decision-makers to identify all these factors that contribute to top-tier performance.
- By emphasising these connections, the EPI contributes to the promotion of sustainable development in support of a more ecologically secure and equitable future.
- Overall EPI rankings show which nations are doing the greatest job of managing the environmental concerns that each country experiences.
- Drilling down into the data to assess performance by issue category, policy objective, peer group and nation provides policymakers with even more value. This granular insight and comparative perspective can help in understanding the drivers of environmental development and improving policy decisions.

Key Highlights of Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2022

- **Denmark tops the 2022** rankings, owing to outstanding performance across virtually all EPI-tracked problems, including considerable leadership in efforts to promote a clean energy future and sustainable agriculture.
- The **United Kingdom and Finland come in second and third**, respectively, with strong marks for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in recent years.
- The **US ranks 20th out of 22 rich democracies** in the Global West and 43rd worldwide. According to the report, this relatively low ranking reflects the rollback of environmental protections during the Trump administration.
- **Russia** came in at number **112** on the list and **China is ranked 161st**, with an EPI score of 28.4.
- India (18.9), Myanmar (19.4), Vietnam (20.1), Bangladesh (23.1), and Pakistan had the lowest ratings (24.6). According to the report, the majority of low-scoring countries have prioritised economic expansion above sustainability or are dealing with civil upheaval and other crises.
- The report also stated that just a few nations, like Denmark and the United Kingdom, are currently on track to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality by 2050.
- EPI projections indicate that just four countries- China, India, the US and Russia- will account for over 50 per cent of residual global greenhouse gas emissions in 2050 if current trends hold.

Performance of Countries on Environmental Performance Index 2022

The table below will better elaborate on the performance of countries in Southern Asia in the EPI among Asian countries:

Country	Ranking in Asia	Global Ranking
Afghanistan	1	81

Bhutan	2	85
Maldives	3	113
Sri Lanka	4	132
Nepal	5	162
Pakistan	6	176
Bangladesh	7	177
India	8	180

The top 10 performer countries on the Environmental Performance Index 2022 is given below:

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	77.90
2	United Kingdom	77.70
3	Finland	76.50
4	Malta	75.20
5	Sweden	72.70
6	Luxembourg	72.30
7	Slovenia	67.30
8	Austria	66.50
9	Switzerland	65.90
10	Iceland	62.80

Concerns Raised by India on EPI 2022

On India's 180th ranking, the Government of India has responded by saying that some indicators are extrapolated and based on surmises and unscientific methods. Some concerns raised by India are:

- Projected GHG Emissions Levels in 2050 the **new indicator** in the Climate Policy Objective is calculated **using the average rate of change in emissions over the previous ten years rather than modelling that takes into account a longer time period**, the level of renewable energy capacity and usage, extra carbon sinks, energy efficiency and so on in the individual nations.
- The **equity principle is given relatively small weightage** in the form of statistics such as GHG emission per capita and GHG emission intensity trend. The CBDR-RC concept is likewise scarcely represented in the index's composition.
- The **country's forests and wetlands are important carbon sinks** that have been overlooked while calculating EPI 2022's predicted GHG emissions trajectory up to 2050.
- The **weight** of indicators in which the **country performed well has been lowered**, and the reasons for the change in weight assignment are not stated in the report.
- Indicators such as **agricultural biodiversity, soil health, food loss and waste are not included**, despite the fact that these are critical for developing nations with significant agrarian populations.
- In the current calculation, **historical data on the lowest emission trajectory was ignored**.

India's Ranking in Environment Performance Index (2018, 2020)

As mentioned before, India scored 168 out of 180 countries in 2020. Although it was an improvement from 177 in 2018, it lagged behind other South Asian Nations with the exception of Afghanistan. The table below will better elaborate on India's performance in the EPI among Asian countries

Environment Performance Index 2020

Country	Ranking in Asia	Global Ranking
Bhutan	1	107
Sri Lanka	2	109
Maldives	3	127
Pakistan	4	142

Nepal	5	145
Bangladesh	6	162
India	7	169
Afghanistan	8	178

The country needs to focus on a wide spectrum of sustainability issues, with a high priority on critical issues such as air and water quality, biodiversity and climate change.

The top countries ranking high in the EPI are as follows:

Country Ranking

Denmark	1
Luxembourg	2
Switzerland	3
United Kingdom	4
France	5
Austria	6
Finland	7
Sweden	8

Norway	9
Germany	10

The rankings of the 2018 Environment Performance Index of SAARC nations are given below

Environment Performance Index 2018

Country	Regional Standing (Asia)	Global Ranking
Bhutan	15	131
Sri Lanka	6	70
Maldives	10	111
Pakistan	23	169
Nepal	24	176
Bangladesh	26	179
India	25	177
Afghanistan	22	168

The top countries ranked high in the EPI 2018 are as follows:

Country: Ranking

Switzerland	1
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France	2
Denmark	3
Malta	4
Sweden	5
United Kingdom	6
Luxembourg	7
Austria	8
Ireland	9
Finland	10

Conclusion

India ranked lowest on the parameters set by the Environmental Performance Index. Although India has criticised the methods used while calculating the indicators, in the end, facts are the only true and relevant response. India must make information about its efforts and achievements easily available and verifiable. This will aid in providing a more accurate picture of the country's environmental performance.

The country must conduct an internal review to determine whether its environmental performance is adequate. It must assess if it is adopting sufficiently appropriate steps and implementing policies aimed at promoting human well-being and lowering environmental impact.

The report shows that India had slipped behind on many climate-related parameters. Thus, India needs to focus on a wide spectrum of sustainability issues, with a high priority on critical issues such as air and water quality, biodiversity and climate change.