Jcroll.in

India falls 17 spots on 2020 Human Freedom Index to 111th rank

December 18, 2020

The Human Freedom Index 2020, a worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedom, released on Thursday, placed India at the 111th spot out of 162 countries. India ranked 94 on the index in 2019.

India is ahead of China and Bangladesh, which ranked 129 and 139 on the 2020 index respectively. New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong bagged the first three spots. Fred McMahon and Ian Vásquez, the authors of the report, said that they expected Hong Kong's rank to decline in the future, because of China's "aggressive interventions" in the region in 2019 and 2020.

India's scored 6.30 out of 10 in personal freedom and 6.56 in economic freedom. The country's overall human freedom score was 6.43.

The index was published by American think tank Cato Institute and Fraser Institute in Canada. It takes into account 76 indicators of personal, civil, and economic freedoms to rank 162 countries from 2008 to 2018. The institutes noted that the world has seen a notable decline in personal freedom since 2008.

"Overall freedom has also declined, though to a lesser degree, over the same time period," they said. "Of the 12 major categories that we measure in the report, all but five have seen some deterioration, with freedom of religion, identity and relationship freedoms, and the rule of law seeing the largest decreases."

The United States and United Kingdom are tied at the 17th spot on the index. War-torn Syria ranked the last on the list.

"The report continues to find a strong, positive relationship between freedom and prosperity, but also finds that here is an unequal distribution of freedom in the world," the authors said. "Fifteen per cent of the world's population lives in the freest quartile of countries in the index, while 34

per cent lives in the bottom quartile of countries. The gap in freedom between the most free and the least free countries has also been increasing since 2008."

India has dropped on several global freedom indexes.

Democracy watchdog Freedom House's report in October showed that internet freedom in India declined for a third straight year in 2019-'20. The period from June 1, 2019 to May 30, 2020 was under consideration. The watchdog said India had the most number of internet shutdowns in the world, even excluding the ones in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Global Economic Freedom Index 2020 released in September showed India drop 26 spots from 79 to 105. The report, prepared by Canada's Fraser Institute, was released in India in collaboration with New Delhi-based think tank Centre For Civil Society. The report pointed out that the prospect of improved economic freedom in India depended on the next generation of reforms in factor markets and in being more open to global trade.

The World Press Freedom Index, which was released in April, saw India slip two places. India ranked 142 on the index comprising of 180 countries and territories.