UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT: ECONOMY

NEWS: India breaks into top 100 of SDG Index for the first time

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?
India has entered the top 100 in the 2025 SDG Index published by SDSN, reflecting progress in electricity access, internet penetration, and child health, though challenges remain in climate, biodiversity, and sustainable agriculture.

About Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The SDGs are a universal blueprint adopted by all UN member states in 2015 to achieve a more sustainable, equitable, and peaceful world by 2030.

- Comprising 17 interconnected goals, they cover a wide range of issues, including ending poverty, ensuring good health and quality education, promoting gender equality, supporting economic growth, protecting the environment, and taking action on climate change.

- Each goal has multiple targets and indicators to measure progress, emphasizing inclusivity, global cooperation, and a focus on leaving no one behind.

Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

- Established in 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General by Ban Ki-Moon and economist Jeffrey Sachs.

- SDSN supports the implementation of SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement by promoting education, research, policy analysis, and cross-border collaboration.

- Since 2016, SDSN has published the annual Sustainable Development Report, which evaluates the performance of 193 UN member states on SDG progress.

- It focuses on using evidence-based data to hold nations accountable and encourage policy improvements for sustainable development.

Key Highlights of the 2025 SDG Report

Global Highlights:

- Only 17% of SDG targets are currently on track to be achieved by 2030, with 83% showing either limited progress or a reversal since 2015.

- Progress globally has stalled since 2020, particularly for goals related to hunger (SDG 2), life below water (SDG 14), life on land (SDG 15), and peace and strong institutions (SDG 16).

- Brazil leads the G20 nations in SDG progress, while Chile is ranked highest among OECD countries.

- The United States ranks last (193rd), attributed to its withdrawal from key global agreements and lack of commitment toward SDGs.

- Barbados tops the index for commitment to UN multilateralism, followed by Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Progress Areas:

- Improvements have been observed in areas like access to mobile broadband and internet (SDG 9), electricity access (SDG 7), and reductions in under-five and neonatal mortality rates (SDG 3).

Reversal Areas:

- Since 2015, some indicators have seen declines, including:

    - Increase in obesity rates (SDG 2)

    - Decline in press freedom (SDG 16)

    - Worsening nitrogen management in agriculture (SDG 2)

    - Decline in Red List Index (SDG 15) indicating worsening biodiversity

    - Increased challenges in the Corruption Perceptions Index (SDG 16)

Uneven Global Progress:

- Finland, Sweden, and Denmark occupy the top three spots, with 19 of the top 20 countries being European.

- Even high-performing countries face hurdles in achieving climate action and biodiversity targets due to high levels of unsustainable consumption.

- East and South Asia have recorded the fastest regional progress since 2015, fueled by rapid socioeconomic development and infrastructure expansion.

Fastest-Improving Countries:

- Among the fastest-improving countries (based on SDG Index score increases since 2015) are Nepal, Cambodia, Philippines, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Benin, Peru, UAE, Uzbekistan, Costa Rica, and Saudi Arabia.

Challenges in Global Financial Architecture:

- The global financial system remains skewed, prioritizing capital flows to wealthier nations while depriving emerging and developing economies (EMDEs) of much-needed investment to achieve SDGs.

India's Performance in the 2025 SDG Index:

- India has achieved its highest ranking yet, entering the top 100 for the first time at 99th place, with an overall SDG Index score of 67.0.

- Key factors contributing to India's improved performance include:

    - Enhanced access to electricity (SDG 7)

    - Growth in internet and mobile broadband coverage (SDG 9)

- Significant reduction in under-five and neonatal mortality (SDG 3)

- Despite gains, India continues to face challenges in biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture practices, and climate change mitigation efforts.

Regional Comparison:

- India (99th, 67.0)

- China (49th, 74.4)

- Maldives (53rd, 74.0)

- Bhutan (74th, 70.5)

- Nepal (85th, 68.6)

- Sri Lanka (93rd, 67.9)

- Bangladesh (114th, 63.9)

- Pakistan (140th, 57.0)

Significance:

- India's improved ranking highlights notable achievements in basic services and infrastructure but underlines the need for urgent action in environmental sustainability and social equity to meet the 2030 targets.

- The global report underscores the need for reform in the international financial system to facilitate equitable resource flow for SDG progress, particularly in developing nations.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-enters-top-100-in-global-sustainable-development-goals-rankings-for-first-time/article69730436.ece