World Happiness Report 2026 – India 116th of 147; Finland tops for the 9th year in a row

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News

The World Happiness Report 2026 was released on 20 March 2026, the International Day of Happiness, by Oxford University's Wellbeing Research Centre with Gallup and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN SDSN). India is 116th of 147 countries (118th in 2025). Finland is first for the 9th year running; Iceland is 2nd, Denmark 3rd, Costa Rica 4th. Afghanistan is last (147th). This year's special theme: Happiness and Social Media (its effect on young people's well-being).

Key facts

Release	20 Mar 2026; Oxford Wellbeing Research Centre + Gallup + UN SDSN
India	116/147 (118th in 2025)
Top	Finland (9th straight year); Iceland 2, Denmark 3, Costa Rica 4
Bottom	Afghanistan (147), Sierra Leone (146), Malawi (145)
Neighbours	China 65, Nepal 99, Pakistan 104, Bangladesh 127, Sri Lanka 134
Others	USA 23rd; theme – Happiness and Social Media

Background

- Method: in the Gallup World Poll people rate their lives on a 0–10 'Cantril Ladder'; a three-year average is used. Six explaining factors: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption.
- History: the first World Happiness Report came out in 2012. The UN General Assembly declared 20 March as the International Day of Happiness in June 2012 (resolution 66/281); it has been observed since 2013. Bhutan led the initiative.
- Bhutan's 'Gross National Happiness' (GNH): a concept put forward in the 1970s by the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck – measuring people's well-being rather than GDP alone; 4 pillars and 9 domains.

Tamil Nadu link: the report ranks only countries; there is no State-wise data. For comparison: Madhya Pradesh was the first Indian State to set up a 'Department of Happiness' (2016).

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