

India Rankings 2022 of higher educational institutes

(GS Paper 2, Education)

Why in news?

- Recently, the Union Minister Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, released the India Rankings 2022.

Report card

A look at the top 10 educational institutions in India, according to Ministry of Education's National Institutional Ranking Framework 2022



Rank	Institution	Score
1	Indian Institute of Technology-Madras	87.59
2	Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru	83.57
3	Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay	82.35
4	Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi	82.22
5	Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur	77.83
6	Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur	75.94
7	Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee	71.48
8	Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati	69.75
9	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi	69.57
10	Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi	67.25

Key Highlights of India Rankings 2022:

- Indian Institute of Technology Madras retains its 1st position in Overall Category for fourth consecutive year and in Engineering for seventh consecutive year.
- Top 100 in Overall category consists of 40 CFTIs and CFU (including 38 technical institutions), 26 state universities, 24 deemed universities, 6 private universities, 7 medical institutions and 3 management institutions.
- Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru tops the Universities Category for seventh consecutive year. It stood first in Research Institutions Category for second consecutive year.
- IIM Ahmedabad tops in Management subject retaining its first position for third consecutive year.

- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi occupies the top slot in Medical for the fifth consecutive year. Moreover, AIIMS is ranked at 9th position in Overall category for the first time.
- Jamia Hamdard tops the ranking in Pharmacy for fourth consecutive year.
- Miranda House retains the 1st position amongst Colleges for the sixth consecutive year.
- IIT Roorkee stands at 1st position in Architecture subject for second consecutive year.
- National Law School of India University, Bengaluru retains its first position in Law for the fifth consecutive year.
- Colleges in Delhi dominate ranking of colleges with five colleges out of first 10 colleges from Delhi.
- The Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences takes the top slot for the first time in Dental Subject displacing Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Manipal.

Five Broad Categories of Parameters and Weightage:

- The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), launched in November 2015 by the Ministry of Education, was used for this edition as well as for the past six editions of India Rankings released for the years 2016 to 2022.
- Each of these five parameters have 2 to 5 sub-parameters. A total number of 18 – 21 sub-parameters are used for ranking of HEIs in different categories and subject domains.
- Institutions are ranked based on total sum of marks assigned for each of these five broad groups of parameters.
- In addition to parameters used for Overall category, the following two additional sub-parameters were included in methodology developed afresh for ranking institutions under “Research Institutions”: i) Research Papers published in journals covered in the First Quartile of Journal Citation Report (JCRQ1); and ii) H Index.

Sl. No.	Parameter	Marks	Weightage
1	Teaching, Learning & Resources	100	0.30
2	Research and Professional Practice	100	0.30
3	Graduation Outcomes	100	0.20
4	Outreach and Inclusivity	100	0.10
5	Perception	100	0.10

Pacific leaders declare climate emergency

(GS Paper 2, International Relation)

Why in news?

- Recently, Pacific island national leaders declared a climate emergency.

Details:

- Leaders from across the South Pacific have called for urgent global action on climate change following a four-day **Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) meeting in Fiji**, where they also pledged more unity in dealing with regional security issues in an apparent rebuke of China’s push for a regionwide security deal.
- During their first in-person meetings since 2019, representatives declared that the Pacific is facing a climate emergency that **threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems**.

Rising sea levels:

- Small islands in the Pacific and Indian oceans, as well as coastal mega-cities in China and South and Southeast Asia, have a particular vulnerability to the effects of climate change, namely rising sea levels.
- Some could even see much of their territory become uninhabitable over the coming decades, according to experts.

- In this context, Australia’s renewed commitment to cutting emissions by 43% by 2030 was welcomed at the meeting.



2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent:

- It also saw the launch of the “2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent,” a long-term regional guideline for cooperation in key areas, including governance, people-centered economic development and climate change.

Sino-U.S. geopolitics:

- In terms of Sino-U.S. geopolitical competition in the region, the Pacific leaders appear to have rebuffed a Chinese push for closer security and trade ties with 10 island nations, while welcoming U.S.’s new plans for a greater American presence in the region and a tripling of U.S. development aid.
- The forum members agreed that, while every nation has the right to make its own sovereign decisions, the PIF would serve as a platform for closer coordination on security issues that have an impact beyond national borders.
- The pledge came after China struck a secretive security deal with the Solomon Islands in March, triggering concerns that this could pave the way for China establishing a military base in the region.

U.S. proposals:

- Meanwhile, the PIF members welcomed a proposal by U.S. Vice President to, among other things, appoint a **regional envoy and triple economic development aid** to the region to bolster maritime security, combat illegal fishing and tackle climate change.
- The U.S. **would establish two new embassies in the region** in Tonga and Kiribati.

Kiribati:

- They agreed to try to bring Kiribati back to the region’s main diplomatic grouping.
- Kiribati announced it had withdrawn from the 18-member Pacific Islands Forum ahead of a leaders’ summit in Fiji.
- The move was seen as a sign of China’s growing influence in the region.

About Pacific Islands Forum (PIF):

- The Pacific Islands Forum is the region’s premier political and economic policy organisation.

- Founded in 1971, it comprises 18 members: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court

(GS Paper 2, Judiciary)

Why in news?

- Recently, the Supreme Court said its ‘overriding and exceptional’ power under the Constitution to hear appeals against any judgement **has to be exercised sparingly to prevent ‘grave or serious miscarriage of justice’**.
- The **Supreme Court, under Article 136 of the Constitution**, is vested with a special power to grant ‘special leave’, to appeal against ‘any judgement or order or decree in any matter or cause’ passed by any court, or tribunal in the country.



Case before SC:

- The observations came in a verdict from a bench comprising justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Krishna Murari while setting aside the appeal of one Mekala Sivaiah against his conviction and award of life imprisonment for stabbing to death an agriculturist near Amravati in Andhra Pradesh on 6 September, 2006, in a vegetable market.
- The trial court and the high court both held him guilty of the offence.

Key Highlights:

- Article 136 of the Constitution is an **extraordinary jurisdiction** which this court exercises when it entertains an appeal by special leave and this jurisdiction, by its very nature, is exercisable only when this court is satisfied that it is necessary to interfere in order to prevent grave or serious miscarriage of justice.
- Referring to past judgements, the bench said it is not the practice of the apex court to "re-appreciate the evidence for the purpose of examining" whether the findings of fact concurrently arrived at by the trial court and the high court are correct or not.
- It is only in rare and exceptional cases where there is some manifest illegality or grave and serious miscarriage of justice on account of misreading or ignoring material evidence, then Supreme Court would interfere with such finding of fact.
- The overriding and exceptional power is, however, to be exercised sparingly and only in furtherance of the cause of justice.

High Court is a final court of appeal:

- Normally, the high court is a final court of appeal and this court is only a court of special jurisdiction. This court would not, therefore, reappraise the evidence to determine the correctness of findings unless there are exceptional circumstances where there is manifest illegality or grave and serious miscarriage of justice.
- Citing an example, the verdict said the apex court would intervene when the forms of legal process are disregarded or principles of natural justice are violated or substantial and grave injustice has otherwise resulted.
- Dealing with the facts of the case and the dispute raised by the convict over the veracity of witnesses' accounts, the testimony of a witness in a criminal trial cannot be discarded merely because of minor contradictions or omissions.

GRAP Guidelines by Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

(GS Paper 3, Environment)

Context:

- At times, the Air Quality Index (AQI) has indicated 'hazardous' levels of pollution in Delhi. In a bid to tackle the menace of air pollution, the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** has updated a set of anti-air pollution measures called **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** which will be implemented in Delhi and its vicinity in line with the severity of the situation.
- Released by CAQM, the new restrictions under GRAP will incorporate the air pollution index, which reflects the concentration of pollutants and not just particle matter (PM) 2.5 and 10 that were considered as a trigger to impose the curbs.

Background:

- The Graded Response Action Plan was notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2017. It is brought into effect every year mid-October when pollution levels in the region starts deteriorating.
- Moreover, all the restrictions under the three most serious levels will be imposed pre-emptively and not after pollution levels have spiked.

Why does Delhi choke every winter?

- **In 2021, Delhi was found to be the most polluted city in the world for the fourth consecutive year.** In 2021, it saw 14.6 per cent increase in PM2.5 concentrations than 2020.
- Owing to poor air quality, Delhi's city hospitals got more patients with respiratory conditions like asthma, respiratory infections and even heart attacks in 2021.
- Poor air quality is directly associated with respiratory problems as deficit in lung function and growth in children.
- A new study conducted by Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago revealed that life expectancy in Delhi is being reduced by 9.7 years due to air pollution.










Factors responsible for pollution in Delhi:

- A range of urban factors along with stubble burning by farmers in neighbouring regions contribute to the increasing pollution levels in the national capital. However, the Supreme Court in 2021 said that stubble burning is only partly responsible for pollution in Delhi.
- The weather plays a key role in increasing pollution levels. Delhi and its neighbouring cities encounter a phenomenon called winter inversion, which results in low wind speeds and combined with a dip in temperature pollutants are brought closer to the ground.
- Other contributors include construction activities, harmful pollutants emitted by industries as well as the use of fireworks during Diwali which usually falls just before winter arrives in Delhi.

What do the new GRAP guidelines say?

- GRAP for the National Capital Region (NCR) has now been classified under **four stages based on the severity of air pollution:** Stage I- 'Poor' (AQI 201-300), Stage II- 'Very Poor' (AQI 301-400), Stage III- 'Severe' (AQI 401-450) and Stage IV- 'Severe Plus' (AQI over 450).

- Before revising GRAP, the categories were 'Good' (AQI 0-50), 'Satisfactory' (AQI 51-100), 'Moderate' (AQI 101-200), 'Poor' (AQI 201-300), 'Very Poor' (AQI 301-400) and 'Severe' (AQI more than 401).

CATEGORY	ACTION PLAN
 Moderate to Poor PM _{2.5} —61-120 µg/m ³ PM ₁₀ —101-350 µg/m ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stop garbage burning, impose heavy fines ➤ Enforce pollution regulations in all industries ➤ Do periodic mechanised road sweeping ➤ Stop plying of visibly polluting vehicles ➤ Enforce SC order on diversion, ban on crackers ➤ Ensure fly ash ponds are watered every alternate day from Mar – May ➤ Use apps to inform people and register complaints 
 Very Poor PM _{2.5} —121-250µg/m ³ PM ₁₀ —351-430 µg/m ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stop use of diesel gensets ➤ Enhance parking fee by 3-4 times ➤ Increase bus and Metro services ➤ Stop use of coal/firewood in hotels and restaurants ➤ RWAs to provide electric heaters to security staff to stop bonfires ➤ Issue media alerts and advisories 
 Severe PM _{2.5} —250 µg/m ³ PM ₁₀ —430µg/m ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Close hot mix plants, stone crushers ➤ Shut down Badarpur power plant and maximise generation from natural gas-based plants ➤ Intensify public transport ➤ Mechanised cleaning of road and sprinkling of water 
 Emergency PM _{2.5} —300µg/m ³ PM ₁₀ —500 µg/m ³ <i>(persist for 48 hours or more)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stop entry of trucks except those carrying essential commodities ➤ Stop construction ➤ Introduce odd-even scheme without exemptions ➤ Task Force to decide on additional steps  

Measures:

- Under the new policy, measures such as ban on entry of trucks and construction activities will be implemented based on the early warning given by forecasting system.
- The revised GRAP measures call for an embargo on entry of trucks and heavy goods vehicles, except those carrying essential commodities, under the 'Severe Plus' (Stage IV) category or when AQI is more than 450.
- **Under 'Stage III', when the situation turns severe**, authorities will enforce a **ban on construction and demolition activities**, except essential projects like railways, metros, airports and the like. Along with these activities, brick kilns, hot mix plants and stone crushers that don't operate on clean fuels will also be prohibited under this stage.
- A ban on coal and firewood and on diesel generator sets can be imposed under 'Stage I'.
- The policy also said that state governments can considering allowing 50 per cent staff from public, municipal and private offices to work from home and the closure of educational institutions as part of emergency measures.

What do experts say?

- Experts have lauded the revised GRAP. It is believed that by going for pre-emptive actions based on AQI projections the curbs are expected to bring down peak-level of air pollution in Delhi.
- The existing plan had been a failure as the implementation was largely taking place during winter and peak-pollution events, but one needs to ensure this gets implemented throughout the year.
- The pollution levels can cross over 200 even during summers and hence pollution control measures should be implemented in Delhi throughout the year.

