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# Environmental Performance Index 2024 — EPI

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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**ISSUING BODY**
**Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy and Columbia University CIESIN**
**FREQUENCY**
**Biennial**
**INDIA'S RANK**
**176 / 180 -4**
**TOP PERFORMER**
**Estonia**
**KEY FINDINGS**

- India ranked 176th out of 180 countries with a score of 27.6
- Only Pakistan, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar rank below India
- Estonia topped the index with a score of 75.7, reducing GHG emissions by 59% since 1990
- India ranks 177th in air quality and 172nd in projected emissions
- India fares relatively better at 133rd in the climate change sub-category
- Index uses 58 performance indicators across 11 issue categories
- India's MoEF&CC rejected the methodology as 'unfounded assumptions'

## ABOUT THE INDEX

The **Environmental Performance Index (EPI)** is published biennially by the **Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy** and the **Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN)**. First published in 2006 as a successor to the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), the 2024 edition ranks 180 countries.

### Methodology

The 2024 EPI uses **58 performance indicators** across **11 issue categories** grouped under **three policy objectives**:

POLICY OBJECTIVE	ISSUE CATEGORIES
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Air Quality, Sanitation & Drinking Water, Heavy Metals, Waste Management
<b>Ecosystem Vitality</b>	Biodiversity & Habitat, Ecosystem Services, Fisheries, Acid Rain, Agriculture
<b>Climate Change</b>	Climate Change Mitigation, Energy, CO2 emissions, GHG emission projections

**Score range:** 0 (worst) to 100 (best environmental performance).

The EPI focuses on **outcomes** rather than inputs — measuring actual environmental quality rather than policies or spending.

## INDIA'S PERFORMANCE

India ranks **176th out of 180 countries** with a score of **27.6**, placing it among the five worst performers globally. Only Pakistan (177th), Vietnam (178th), Laos (179th), and Myanmar (180th) rank lower.

### Category-wise Performance

CATEGORY	INDIA'S RANK	KEY ISSUE
Air Quality	177th	PM2.5 levels among highest globally
Climate Change	133rd	Better due to renewable energy push
Biodiversity & Habitat	~170th	High species threat levels
Sanitation & Drinking Water	~155th	Below average access metrics
Projected Emissions (by 2050)	172nd	Coal dependence drives poor projection

### Historical Trend

YEAR	RANK	SCORE	COUNTRIES
2018	177	30.57	180
2020	168	27.6	180
2022	180	18.9	180
2024	176	27.6	180

## Regional / BRICS Comparison

COUNTRY	EPI RANK (2024)	EPI SCORE
Brazil	~49	~49
China	~116	~38
South Africa	~107	~39
Russia	~78	~44
India	176	27.6

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF LATEST EDITION

- **Estonia** topped the 2024 EPI with a score of 75.7 — a surprise result — driven by its **59% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions** since 1990 through a transition away from oil shale
- Top 5: Estonia (1st, 75.7), Luxembourg (2nd), Germany (3rd), Finland (4th), United Kingdom (5th)
- The report found that **most countries are failing to meet international biodiversity commitments** under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
- India's heavy **dependence on coal** (over 70% of electricity generation) drives its poor projected emissions ranking
- India's **air quality** remains among the worst globally, with annual average PM2.5 levels far exceeding WHO guidelines
- Despite the low overall ranking, India's **renewable energy push** (target: 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030) and **net-zero by 2070** commitment are reflected in a relatively better climate change sub-ranking (133rd)

### INDIA'S GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has rejected the EPI methodology, claiming:

- Several indicators are based on **unfounded assumptions** and **unscientific methods**
- The projected emissions indicators penalise developing countries for future economic growth
- India's per capita emissions (about 1.9 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>) are far below the global average (~4.7 tonnes) and should be weighted
- The index does not adequately credit India's achievements in solar energy, forest cover increase, and wildlife conservation

## UPSC RELEVANCE

*EPI issuing bodies (Yale + Columbia), India's rank, top performer (Estonia), number of indicators (58), three policy objectives, score range* **Mains GS-3:** *Environmental conservation – air pollution (NCAP), renewable energy targets, Paris Agreement commitments, net-zero 2070 pledge, coal transition challenges, biodiversity conservation* **Interview:** *“India ranks 176th on EPI yet has the lowest per capita emissions among major economies – is the index methodology fair to developing countries?”*

### RELATED TERMS

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