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## Henley Passport Index 2026 | National Current Affairs | 19 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

India's passport has climbed in the **2026 Henley Passport Index**, a globally recognised ranking of passports based on **visa-free travel access**. The rise in rank reflects **enhanced global mobility** for Indian citizens and strengthened diplomatic relations.

### Key Points:

- **Global Ranking:** India's passport has moved to the **75th position** in the 2026 Henley Passport Index, rising **10 places from 85th in 2025**.
  - Indian passport holders can now enter **56 countries** without a prior visa, including those allowing **visa-free entry, visa-on-arrival, or electronic travel authorisation (ETA)**, facilitating ease of international movement.
- **Methodology:** The index, published by **Henley & Partners**, ranks **199 passports across 227 destinations** using data from the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**, based on **ease of entry without prior visa approval**.
  - **Top-Ranked Passports:** **Singapore** retains the top position with **192 visa-free destinations**, followed closely by **Japan and South Korea**.
  - **Bottom-Ranked Passports:** Countries like **Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria** remain at the bottom of the index, reflecting **restricted international mobility** due to geopolitical and security challenges.
- **Regional Comparison:** India ranks above several **South Asian** peers such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal, while Maldives ranks substantially higher in the region.
- **Significance:** The improved ranking indicates **strengthened diplomatic ties, enhanced business and tourism opportunities**, and **better international recognition of Indian citizens' travel freedom**.

Read More: [Henley Passport Index 2025](#)

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## BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025 | National Current Affairs | 19 Feb 2026

### Why in News?

Indian women's cricketer **Smriti Mandhana** has been named the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year for 2025** at a prestigious award ceremony in **New Delhi**, in recognition of her outstanding achievements in sport during the year.

### Key Points:

- **Recognition: Smriti Mandhana** was honoured as the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025** for her consistently brilliant performances.
  - Especially in her pivotal role in **India's historic 2025 Women's World Cup triumph** and success in domestic leagues.
- **Sport Honourees:** Chess prodigy **Divya Deshmukh** was named **Emerging Player of the Year** for her historic win at the **FIDE Women's World Cup**.
  - **Preethi Pal** received the **Para-Sportswoman of the Year** title for her **two bronze medals** at the **2024 Paris Paralympics**.
- **Lifetime Achievement:** Veteran shooter **Anjali Bhagwat** was honoured with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for her trailblazing career, including being the **first Indian woman shooter** to reach an **Olympic final**.
- **Selection Process:** The winners were chosen by a distinguished jury comprising sports figures such as **Leander Paes, Deepa Malik, and Anju Bobby George**.
- **Promotion of Women's Sport:** The awards ceremony celebrates and spotlights **excellence and impact of Indian women athletes**, highlighting their contributions in international events and inspiring future generations.

**Read More:** [2025 Women's World Cup](#), [Olympic](#), [FIDE Women's World Cup](#).

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