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Freedom in the World 2020 Report

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Why in News

The **Freedom in the World 2020 report** has ranked **India at the 83rd position** along with **Timor-Leste** and **Senegal**.

- The report is released by **Freedom House, a U.S.-based watchdog**, which has been **tracking global political and civil liberties** for almost half a century.
- The report derives its methodology from the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted by the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** in **1948**.
- It covers 195 countries, awarding **scores based on-**
 - **Political rights indicators** such as the electoral process, political pluralism and participation and government functioning.
 - **Civil liberties** indicators related to freedom of expression and belief, associational and organisational rights, the rule of law and personal autonomy and individual rights.

Deterring democracy



The Freedom House report said that India showed a deteriorating trend when it came to personal autonomy

Year	Political rights	Civil Liberties	Total Score
2017	35/40	42/60	77/100
2018	35/40	42/60	77/100
2019	35/40	40/60	75/100
2020	34/40	37/60	71/100

Top five countries in the free category:

Finland, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Luxembourg

Bottom five countries in the free category:

Botswana, Peru, India, Timor-Leste, Tunisia



Leaders – including the chief executives of the United States and India, the world's two largest democracies – are increasingly willing to break down institutional safeguards – SARAH REPUCCI, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL PUBLICATIONS, FREEDOM HOUSE

Key Highlights of the Report

- India's **score fell by four points to 71**, the worst decline among the world's 25 largest democracies.
 - India scored **34 out of 40 points** in the **political rights category**, but only **37 out of 60** in the **civil liberties category**, for a total score of 71, **a drop from last year's score of 75**.
 - India is near the bottom of the pile among the countries categorised as **"Free"**, with only Tunisia receiving a lower score.
- The **scrapping of Article 370**, the **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** and the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)**, as well as the **crackdown on mass protests** have been listed as the main signs of declining freedom.
 - The report criticised the internet blackout in Kashmir, terming it the longest shutdown ever imposed by a democracy.
 - It highlighted that **freedom of expression (Article 19)** is under threat in India, with journalists, academics and others facing harassment and intimidation when addressing politically sensitive topics.
- The report noted that India has long been seen as a **democratic counterweight to China** and hence a **strategic partner for the United States** in the region.
However, that view is changing, with India attracting criticism similar to that levied against China.

Source: TH