Why in News

India ranked 131 among 189 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2019, slipping two places from the previous year, according to the Human Development Report (HDR) 2020 released by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

- The 2020 Report has introduced planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index, which adjusts the standard Human Development Index (HDI) by a country’s per capita carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint.
- The other indices that form the part of the Report are:
  - Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI),
  - Gender Development Index (GDI),
  - Gender Inequality Index (GII) and
  - Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

Key Points

- Human Development Index:
  - About: HDI emphasizes that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone.
  - Based on three Basic Dimensions of Human Development:
    - A long and healthy life,
    - Access to knowledge, and
    - A decent standard of living.
  - Top Performers for 2019:
    - Norway topped the index, followed by Ireland and Switzerland. Hong Kong and Iceland complete the top five.
Performance of the Asian Region:

- Singapore was ranked 11, Saudi Arabia 40, and Malaysia was at 62 in the global index, representing the top bracket among the Asian countries with “very high human development”.
- Sri Lanka (72), Thailand (79), China (85) and Indonesia and Philippines (both 107), and Vietnam (117), among others, were “high human development” countries.
- India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Cambodia, Kenya and Pakistan were ranked among countries with “medium human development" with ranks between 120 and 156.

India’s Performance:

- Overall Performance: HDI value for 2019 is 0.645, which puts the country in the medium human development category, positioning it at 131 out of 189 countries and territories.
  
  Between 1990 and 2019, India’s HDI value increased from 0.429 to 0.645, an increase of 50.3%.

- Long and Healthy Life: Life expectancy for Indian’s at birth was 69.7 years in 2019, slightly lower than the south Asian average of 69.9 years.
  
  Between 1990 and 2019, India’s life expectancy at birth increased by 11.8 years.

- Access to Knowledge: The expected years of schooling in India was 12.2 years, compared with 11.2 years in Bangladesh and 8.3 years in Pakistan.
  
  Between 1990 and 2019, mean years of schooling increased by 3.5 years, and expected years of schooling increased by 4.5 years.

- A Decent Standard of Living: In terms of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, India at USD 6,681 fared better than some others in 2019, despite a fall over the previous year.
  
  India’s GNI per capita increased by about 273.9% between 1990 and 2019.
- **Planetary pressures-adjusted Human Development Index (PHDI):**
  - **About:** The PHDI adjusts the standard HDI by a country’s level of carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint, each on a *per capita basis*.
  - **Performance of the Countries:**
    - Norway, which **tops the HDI**, falls **15 places** if this metric is used, leaving Ireland at the top of the table.
    - The United States (HDI Rank -17) and Canada (HDI Rank -16) would fall **45 and 40 places** respectively, reflecting their disproportionate impact on natural resources.
    - The oil and gas-rich Gulf States also fell steeply. China would drop **16 places** from its current ranking of 85.
  - **India’s Performance:**
    - India would move up **eight places** in the ranking.
    - Under the Paris Agreement, India pledged to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP from the 2005 level by 33-35% by 2030 and to obtain 40% of electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
      - Solar capacity in India increased from 2.6 gigawatts in March 2014 to 30 gigawatts in July 2019, achieving its target of 20 gigawatts four years ahead of schedule.
      - In 2019, India ranked fifth for installed solar capacity.
      - The National Solar Mission aims to promote solar energy for power generation and other uses to make solar energy competitive with fossil fuel-based options.

**Other Indices**

- **Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index:**
  - The IHDI indicates *percentage loss in HDI due to inequality.*
  - For India, IHDI value for 2019 is 0.537 (16.8% overall loss).
- **Gender Development Index:**
  - GDI measures disparities on the HDI by gender.
  - For India, GDI value for 2019 is 0.820 (World: 0.943).
- **Gender Inequality Index:**
  - GII presents a composite measure of gender inequality using three dimensions:
    - Reproductive health,
    - Empowerment and
    - The labour market.
  - In GII, India is at **123rd rank**. Last year, it was ranked 122nd out of 162 countries.
• **Multidimensional Poverty Index:**
  - MPI captures the multiple deprivations that people in developing countries face in their health, education and standard of living.
  - The most recent survey data publicly available for India’s MPI estimation refer to 2015-2016. In India, **27.9% of the population** (3,77,492 thousand people) are **multidimensionally poor**, while **an additional 19.3%** are classified under **vulnerable to multidimensional poverty** (2,60,596 thousand people).

**Other Findings**

• **Major Challenges:**
  While the devastating effects of **Covid-19** have taken the world’s attention, other layered crises, from **climate change to rising inequalities**, continue to take their toll. The challenges of **planetary and societal imbalance** are intertwined: they interact in a vicious circle, each making the other worse.

• **Challenges Related to Children:**
  - **Indigenous children** in Cambodia, India and Thailand show **more malnutrition-related issues** such as stunting and wasting.
  - In **India**, different responses in parent behaviour as well as some disinvestment in girls’ health and education have led to **higher malnutrition among girls than among boys** as a consequence of shocks likely linked to climate change.

• **Displacements in 2020:**
  **Disasters continued to trigger most new displacements** in 2020. **Cyclone Amphan** hit Bangladesh and India, driving the largest single displacement event in the first half of the year, triggering 3.3 million pre-emptive evacuations.

• **Solutions:**
  - **Expanding human development** - more education of women and girls, more economic empowerment of women, more bargaining power of young girls in households, reduced poverty, etc.
  - Evidence from Colombia to India indicates that **financial security and ownership of land improve women’s security** and reduce the risk of gender-based violence, clearly indicating that **owning land can empower women**.

**Source:** TH