



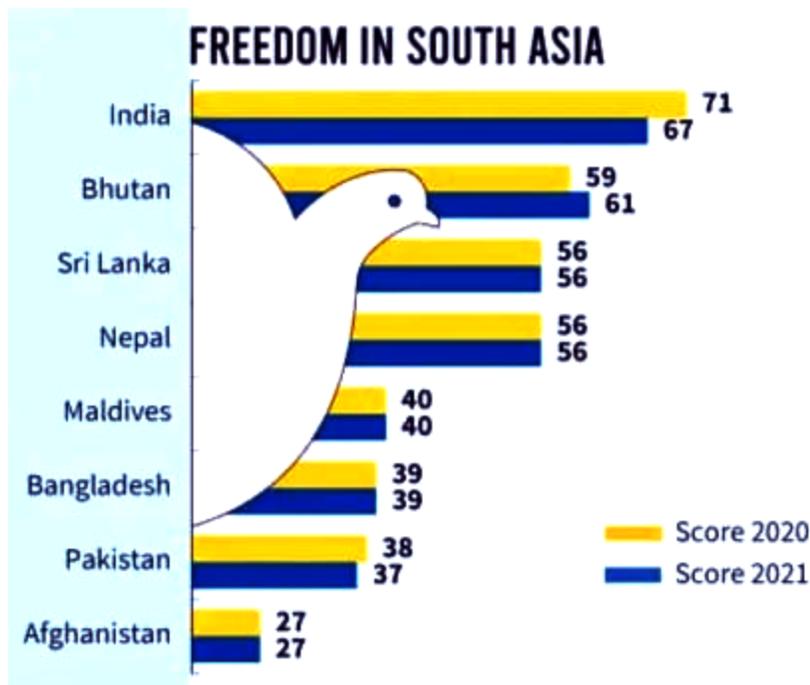
Freedom in the World 2021 Report

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/freedom-in-the-world-2021-report

Why in News

The **Freedom in the World 2021** report has downgraded India's status from 'Free' to 'Partly Free'.

- Pointing to a decline in global democracy over the last 15 years, the report said that nearly **75% of the world's population lived in a country that faced deterioration** over the last year.
- The **most free countries** in the world, with a score of 100, are **Finland, Norway and Sweden**, while the **least free with a score of 1** are **Tibet and Syria**.



Key Points

- **About the Report:**
 - **Published By:**

USA based human rights watchdog **Freedom House**, which is largely **funded through USA government grants**, has been **tracking the course of democracy since 1941**.
 - **Scores are 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.
 - Countries are declared as “**free**”, “**partly free**” or “**not free**”.
- **India’s Score:**

India’s **score was 67, a drop from 71/100 from last year** (reflecting 2019 data) downgrading it from the free category last year (i.e., based on 2020 data).
- **Reasons for India’s Fall:**
 - **Freedom of Media:**

Attacks on press freedom have escalated dramatically, and reporting has become significantly less ambitious in recent years, citing the use of **security, defamation, sedition and contempt of court** laws to quiet critical media voices.
 - **Elevation of Hindu Nationalist Interests:**

India appears to have abandoned its potential to serve as a global democratic leader, **elevating narrow Hindu nationalist interests** at the expense of its founding values of inclusion and equal rights for all.
 - **Internet Freedom:**

In a year when **social media** censorship has been hotly seated, while the government shut down **Internet connectivity in Kashmir** as well as on Delhi’s borders, **India’s Internet freedom score dropped to just 51**.
 - **Covid Response:**
 - Response to **Covid-19** included a hamfisted lockdown that resulted in the dangerous and unplanned **displacement of millions of internal migrant workers**.
 - It added that **Muslims were disproportionately blamed** for the spread of the virus and faced attacks by vigilante mobs.
 - **Crackdown on Protesters:**

The government intensified its crackdown on protesters opposed to a discriminatory **citizenship law** and arrested dozens of journalists who aired criticism of the official pandemic response.
 - **Laws:**

Uttar Pradesh’s law prohibiting forced religious conversion through interfaith marriage was also listed as a concern.

Source:TH