

# International Matters April 2020

## International Matters

### Operation Sanjeevani

#### Why in the news?

- Recently an **Indian Air Force C-130J transport aircraft** has delivered **6.2 tonne of essential medicines and hospital consumables** to **Maldives** under **Operation Sanjeevani**.
- Among other things, these **medicines include influenza vaccines, anti-viral drugs** such as **lopinavir and ritonavir** — which have been used to **treat patients with COVID-19**.
- India has also sent a 14-member COVID-19 Rapid Response Team of doctors to enhance preparedness.



Maldives has been one of the foremost countries which have received Indian assistance during COVID crisis. This act is in consonance to 'India's neighbourhood first policy and reciprocation of Maldives' India first policy. Friendship in action

#### **Previous India's Assistance to Maldives**

##### **a. Operation Cactus**

- It was conducted in 1988 by the Indian Armed Forces have helped the government of Maldives in the neutralization of the coup attempt.

##### **b. Operation Neer**

- It was conducted in 2014 to help Maldives with its drinking water crisis.

##### **c. Military Exercise**

##### **Ekuverin**

- It is a joint military exercise between India and Maldives.
- It is a 14 days Joint Exercise which held alternatively in India and Maldives.
- It focuses on enhancing interoperability between the two forces for carrying out counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under the United Nations mandate.

#### **Topic- GS Paper 2–International Relation**

#### **Source- AIR**

### World Food Programme

#### Why in the news?

- The **World Food Programme** has recently said that **rapidly growing novel Coronavirus pandemic** is so far having **little impact on the global food supply chain**, but that could change for the worse if major food importers remain anxious.



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### About the World Food Programme

- It is the **food-assistance branch** of the **United Nations**.
- It is the **world's largest humanitarian organization** addressing **hunger and promoting food security**.

### Objective

- It works to help **people who cannot produce or obtain enough food** for themselves and their families.
- It was **established in 1961** after the **1960 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Conference**.
- It is **headquartered in Rome (Italy)**.
- It is a member of the **United Nations Development Group (UNDG)** and **part of its Executive Committee**.

### Other Related Information

- **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)** has **launched its cinema ad campaign 'Feed Our Future'** against hunger and malnutrition in India.
- WFP has launched it **in collaboration with UFO Moviez – India's largest in-cinema advertising platform** and **SAWA -the Global Cinema Advertising Association**.
- It is also supported by **Showbox Music TV Channel, LF (Living Foodz TV Channel)** and **Red FM 93.5**.
- It will help drive the message of zero hunger deeper into the hearts & minds of India.

**Note: Goal 2 of Sustainable Development Goals:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture aims at ending hunger as stated.

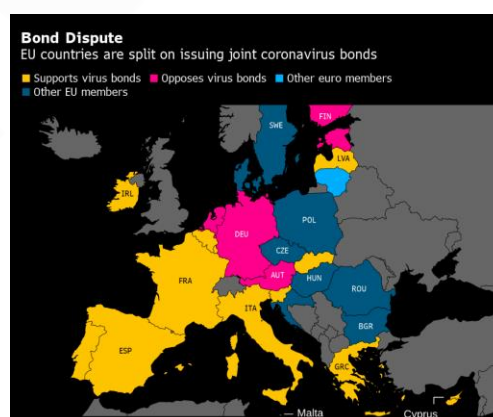
### Topic- GS Paper 2–International Organization

Source- AIR

### Coronabonds

#### Why in the news?

- Recently the idea of **"Coronabonds"**, was **rejected by Germany, the Netherlands, Finland and Austria**, fiscally **"frugal"** northern states wary of **pooling liabilities** with what they see as **more spendthrift countries** in **southern Europe**.



#### What was the issue?



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- The **ongoing virus outbreak** has revived the acrimonious **debate between eurozone countries** about **jointly issuing debt to meet healthcare needs** and **address the deep economic downturn** that is set to follow.
- **Nine of the 19 countries that use the single currency** called on **March 25** for a **common debt instrument** issued by a **European institution** to fight the **outbreak and its effects**.

#### Existing mechanisms:

- The **eurozone jointly issues debt** through its bailout fund, the **European Stability Mechanism**, which **borrow on the market against the security of its paid-in and callable capital provided** by eurozone governments.
- The **European Commission** issued debt through the **European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSM)** to help fund the **bailouts of Greece, Ireland and Portugal**.
- **All 27 European Union countries back EFSM debt** through the **bloc's joint long-term budget. European Investment Bank (EIB) borrowing**
- The **EIB, the investment arm of the EU**, is owned by EU governments and issues around 60 billion euros of debt every year to lend for various projects in the bloc.

**Topic- GS Paper 2–International Organization**  
**Source- Indian Express**

### World Health Organization Funding

#### Why in the news?

- Recently **President Donald Trump threatened to freeze US funding** to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, saying the international group had "**missed the call**" on the **coronavirus pandemic**. At present, the **United States is the World Health Organization's biggest contributor**, making up **14.67 per cent of total funding**.

#### How is the WHO funded?

There are four kinds of contributions that make up funding for the WHO. These are

- Assessed contributions
- Specified voluntary contributions
- Core voluntary contributions
- PIP contributions.

According to the WHO website, the contributions can be explained as follows:

- Assessed contributions are the **dues countries pay to be a member of the Organization**. The amount **each Member State** must pay is **calculated relative to the country's wealth and population**.
- Voluntary contributions** come from **Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or other partners**. They can range from **flexible to highly earmarked**.
- Core voluntary contributions allow **less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources** and **ease implementation bottlenecks that arise when immediate financing is lacking**.
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Contributions were **started in 2011** to **improve and strengthen the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential**, and to **increase the access of developing countries** to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies.



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### Some highlights

- In recent years, **assessed contributions to the WHO has declined** and now account for less than **one-fourth of its funding**.
- These **funds are important for the WHO** because they **provide a level of predictability and minimize dependence** on a **narrow donor base**.
- **Voluntary contributions** make up for **most of the remaining funding**.

### The current funding pattern

- As of fourth quarter of 2019, total contributions were around USD 5.62 billion, with assessed contributions accounting for USD 956 million, specified voluntary contributions USD 4.38 billion, core voluntary contributions USD 160 million, and PIP contributions USD 178 million.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–International Organization

Source- The Hindu

### Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

#### Why in the news?

- **OPCW** regraded as the **global chemical weapons watchdog** has for the first time **explicitly blamed Syria for toxic attacks**, saying **President Bashar al-Assad's air force used the nerve gas sarin and chlorine** three times in **2017**.

#### About the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

- It is an **intergovernmental organisation** and the **implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention**, which entered into **force in 1997**.

#### Mission

- The OPCW's mission is to **implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention** to achieve our vision of a **world free of chemical weapons and the threat of their use**. It oversees the **global endeavour to permanently and verifiably eliminate chemical weapons**.
- **Its headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands**.

#### Membership:

- State Parties to the Convention: **193**
- Signatory states: **1**
- Non-signatory States: **3**

#### How does it work?

The OPCW member states share the collective goal of preventing chemistry from ever again being used for warfare, thereby strengthening international security. To this end, the Convention contains four key provisions:

- Destroying all existing chemical weapons under international verification by the OPCW.
- Monitoring the chemical industry to prevent chemical weapons from re-emerging.
- Provide assistance and protection to States Parties against chemical threats.
- Fostering international cooperation and promote the peaceful use of chemistry.

#### Nobel Peace Prize

- The OPCW was awarded the **2013 Nobel Peace Prize** "for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons with most recent being in Syria civil war".



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**Topic- GS Paper 2–International Institutions**  
**Source- AIR**

**ASEAN Special Summit**

**Why in the news?**

- Recently, **Vietnam is chairing a Special Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit via video-conference due to Coronavirus pandemic.**

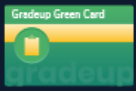
**About the ASEAN Special Summit**

- The Summit was **chaired by H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of Viet Nam**, in his capacity as Chair of ASEAN.
- In the Summit, concerns were raised for adverse effects of **the viral outbreak** and on the **well-being of the people** and **global socio-economic developments.**



**Highlights of the Summit**

- The heads of the nations pledged to remain united and reaffirmed the determination and commitment in the spirit of **'Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN'**.
- Pledged to work committedly with **WHO. Share timely and transparent exchange of information on the real-time situation and pandemic response measures** taken by the Member States to strengthen public health cooperation measures to contain the pandemic and protect the people, among other things.
- Prioritize the well-being of our peoples in **ASEAN's collective fight against COVID-19.**
- Encourage the **effective operationalization of the ASEAN Guidelines on the Provision of Emergency Assistance by ASEAN Mission in Third Countries to Nationals of ASEAN Member Countries** in Crisis Situations.
- Member nations remain committed to keeping **ASEAN's markets open for trade and investment** and **enhance cooperation among the ASEAN Member States** and also **with ASEAN's external partners.**
- To ensure **food security** utilization of the **ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR)** is sought.
- **Implement appropriate measures** to boost confidence and **improve stability of the regional economy**, including through policy stimulus, assist people and businesses suffering from the impact of COVID-19, especially the **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and vulnerable groups.**
- Members also encouraged the **development of a post-pandemic recovery plan** to share lessons learned, **restore ASEAN's connectivity, tourism**, normal business, and social activities, prevent potential economic downturns.



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- Support **reallocating existing available funds and encourage technical and financial support** from **ASEAN's partners to facilitate cooperation against COVID-19**, including the proposed establishment of the **COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund**.

#### **About the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

- The **ASEAN is a regional grouping** which was **established in 1967** with the **signing of the Bangkok Declaration**.
- **Members Countries:** Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, The Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei, and Laos.
- The **headquarters** is in **Jakarta, Indonesia**.
- **India**, which is also **ASEAN's FTA partner**, **opted out of RCEP in November 2019**.

#### **What is RCEP?**

- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed agreement between the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its free trade agreement (FTA) partners.
- The pact aims to cover trade in goods and services, intellectual property, etc.
- Last year, in Nov 2019, India had decided to not join the RCEP agreement with China and other ASEAN countries over the imbalance in the agreement that was reached.
- RCEP aims to create an integrated market with 16 countries, making it easier for products and services of each of these countries to be available across this region.
- India was reluctant to join the RCEP trade agreement as its industries would be unable to compete with China and Chinese goods would flood Indian markets. India's farmers were also worried given that they would be unable to compete on a global scale.

#### **Other related Summit**

##### **a. ASEAN Plus Three**

- It is a **forum that was set up in 1997** to function as a **coordinator of cooperation** between the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the three East Asian nations of China, South Korea and Japan**.

##### **b. East Asia Summit**

- It was **established in 2005**. It comprises **ten member states of the ASEAN countries** along with **eight members**, namely **Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia, and the United States**.

#### **Topic- GS Paper 2–International Organization**

**Source- TOI**

#### **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**

##### **Why in the news?**

- Recently the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation** urges the Indian **Government** to take **urgent steps to stop the growing tide of Islamophobia in India** and **protect the rights of its persecuted Muslim minority** as per its obligations under **international Human Rights law**.

#### **About the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**

- It is an **international organization founded in 1969**, consisting of **57 member states**. It is also the **second-largest intergovernmental organization** after the United Nations.



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- The OIC has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.
- The official languages of the OIC are Arabic, English, and French.

### Objective

- To work as a **collective voice of the Muslim world** by **safeguarding the interests of the Muslims** in the spirit of **promoting international peace and harmony** among various people of the world.
- Its headquarters located in **Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**.

### Observer countries

- Central African Republic, Thailand, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation and Turkish Cypriot State.

**Note:** India is not a member of the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**.

**Topic-** GS Paper 2–International Organisation

**Source-** AIR

### World Press Freedom Index 2020

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, the **World Press Freedom Index 2020** has been released by **Reporters Without Borders**.
- Reporters Without Borders is a **non-profit organization** that **works to document and combat attacks on journalists** around the world.

#### Highlights of the Report


- **Norway ranks first for the fourth consecutive year** whereas **Finland** and **Denmark** in **second and third** place.
- South Asia in **general features poorly on the index**, with **Pakistan dropping three places to 145**, and **Bangladesh dropping one place to 151**.
- **China at 177th position** is just three places above **North Korea, which is at 180th**.



#### India and Report

- **India has dropped two** places on a global press freedom index to be ranked 142nd out of 180 countries.

Countries	Rank
Norway	First
Finland	Second
Denmark	Third
India	142 <sup>nd</sup>



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### Reason behind India's rank improvement

- **Security improved:** The World Press Freedom Index 2020 said that with **no murders of journalists in India in 2019, as against six in 2018**, the security situation for the country's media might seem to have improved.

### Concern

- Press freedom violations: There have been constant press freedom violations, including police violence against journalists, ambushes by political activists, and reprisals instigated by criminal groups or corrupt local officials

### About Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontiers

- **Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF)**, or **About World Press Freedom Index** is based in Paris.
- It is published annually by **Reporters Without Borders since 2002** which **measures the level of media freedom in 180 countries**. Evaluation parameters are **pluralism, media independence, and the quality of the legal framework** and the **safety of journalists**.
- It also includes indicators of the level of media freedom violations in each region.

### Seven Criteria categories

- **Pluralism:** Measures the degree to which opinions are represented in the media.
- **Media independence:** Measures the degree to which the media are able to function independently of sources of political, governmental, business and religious power and influence.
- **Environment and self-censorship:** Analyse the environment in which news and information providers operate.
- **Legislative framework:** Measures the impact of the legal framework governing news and information activities.
- **Transparency:** Measures the transparency of the institutions and procedures that affect the production of news and information.
- **Infrastructure:** Measures the quality of the infrastructure that supports the production of news and information.
- **Abuses:** Measures the level of abuses and violence.

### Note:

- This qualitative analysis is combined with quantitative data on abuses and acts of violence against journalists during the period evaluated.
- Each indicator is given a score between 0 and 100.

### Topic- GS Paper 3–Important Report

Source- The Hindu

### Global Report on Food Crises 2020

#### Why in the news?

- The Global Network has released the Global Report on Food Crises 2020 **against Food Crises**.
- The **Report is the result of a consensus-based and multi-partner analytical process** involving **16 international humanitarian and development partners**.



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### Key findings of the Global Report

- The report by the **Global Network Against Food Crises** indicates that at the close of **2019, 135 million people across 55 countries and territories** experienced **acute food insecurity**. Additionally, in the **55 food-crisis countries covered by the report, 75 million children** were stunted, and **17 million** suffered from **wasting in 2019**.
- This is the **highest level of acute food insecurity and malnutrition** documented by the **Network since the first edition of the report in 2017**.
- **More than half (73 million)** of the **135 million people** covered by the report live in **Africa**; **43 million** live in the **Middle East and Asia**; **18.5 million** live in **Latin America** and the **Caribbean**.

### About Acute food insecurity

- **Acute food insecurity** is when a **person's inability to consume adequate food** puts their **lives or livelihoods in immediate danger**.
- It draws on **internationally accepted measures of extreme hunger**, such as the **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** and the **Cadre Harmonise**.
- The report by the **Global Network Against Food Crises**, along with **key findings, statements by partners, and multimedia products unpacking its contents** are now available at:

### Global Network against Food Crises

- It was **launched by the European Union, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP)** during the **2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)**.
- It aims to combat **food crises from humanitarian and development perspectives** and **tackle its root causes** by promoting **coordination among stakeholders** and by **projects implementation**.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–Food Security

Source- UNICEF and TOI

### India among top 3 military spenders: report

#### Why in the news?

- According to the report of **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, the **global military expenditure** rose to **\$1917 billion in 2019** with **India and China** emerging among the top three spenders.

#### About the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

- **SIPRI** is an **independent international institute** and **Swedish think tank** established in 1966.



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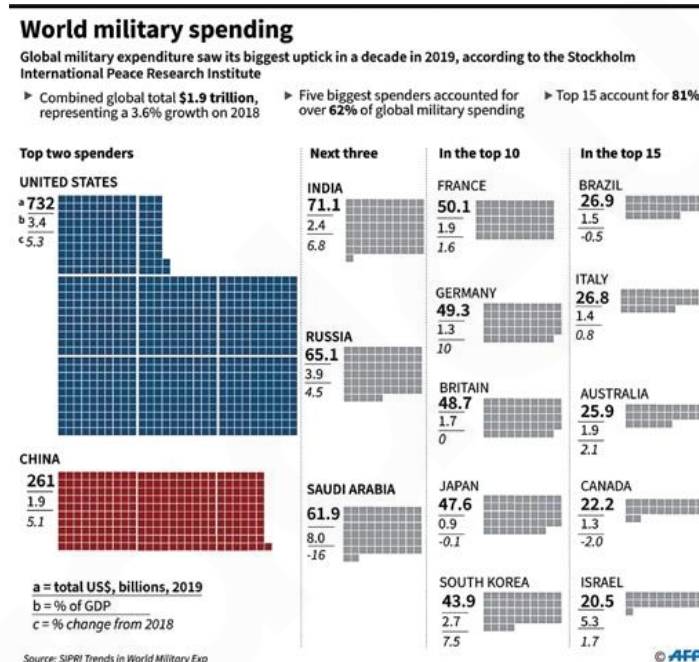
- It researches into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- It provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.
- It is **headquartered** in **Stockholm**.

**Vision and mission**

- **SIPRI's vision** is a world in which **sources of insecurity** are identified and **understood, conflicts are prevented or resolved, and peace is sustained**.

**SIPRI's mission is to:**

- **Undertake research** and **activities on security, conflict and peace**.
- **Provide policy analysis** and **recommendations**.
- **Facilitate dialogue** and **build capacities**.
- **Promote transparency** and **accountability**
- **Deliver authoritative information** to **global audiences**.



**Topic- GS Paper 2–International Organization**  
**Source- The Hindu**

**UN75 Initiative**

**Why in the news?**

- The **UN's 75th-anniversary initiative (UN75)** has yielded **preliminary findings from data** collected in the **first three months of 2020** regarding how **people around the world** view **international cooperation**.

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### Highlight of the Data

- According to the **UN75 Office's publication** titled, '**Resolved to Combine our Efforts: Preliminary Assessment of the UN75 Survey and Dialogues,**' the data collected in early 2020 indicate
  - a. **Overwhelming support** for countries to **work together on managing global trends.**
  - b. The **support increased** beginning in late February – which **coincides with the spread of COVID-19 around the world.**
- **Analyzing the responses** also shows that **people believe the climate and environment will most affect humanity's future.**

### About UN75 Initiative

- The United Nations launched the UN75 Initiative **in 2019.**
- It aims to **build a global vision** for the **year 2045** by **initiating a dialogue** and action on how we **can make a better world** despite the many challenges we face.
- The views and ideas that are generated through the dialogue will be presented during the **75th Session of the General Assembly** in **September 2020.**

### About the United Nations

- It is an **international organization** founded **in 1945** after **World War II.**
- Its charter was **signed in San Francisco** on **June 26, 1945**, and came into existence on **October 24, 1945**, after **51 countries** have **signed the charter.**
- Its predecessor, the **League of Nations**, created by the **Treaty of Versailles** in **1919**, was **disbanded in 1946.**
- Its mission is to **maintain international peace and security**, developing **friendly relations among nations** and promoting **social progress, better living standards and human rights.**
- **Headquarters - New York**
- Official Languages - **Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, Russian**
- **Members - 193** (Latest Member South Sudan)
- **Secretary-General - Antonio Guterres (Portugal)**

### It has six principal organs

- a. General Assembly
- b. Security Council
- c. Economic and Social Council
- d. Trusteeship Council
- e. International Court of Justice
- f. The UN Secretariat.

### Topic- GS Paper 2–International Organisation

Source- UN.org



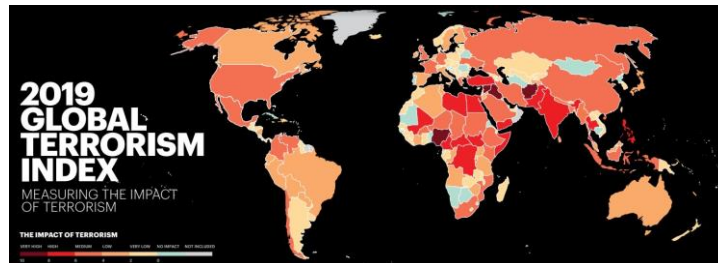
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## Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019

### Why in the news?

- A **report** compiled by **NITI Aayog** has **questioned** the **methodology** adopted by the **Institute for Economics and Peace** to rank **India** as the **seventh-worst** terrorism affected country.



### Highlights of the Index

- **India** has moved to the **seventh position** from the **previous years eighth** in the **annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019**.
- The countries ahead of it are **Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan and Somalia**. The **first to six rank countries** are the **Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Palestine and Lebanon**.

### About the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019

- The **report** published **annually** by the **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**.
- The **Index** provides a **comprehensive summary** of the **key global trends and patterns** in **terrorism since 2000**.
- It produces a **composite score** to **provide an ordinal ranking of countries** on the impact of terrorism.
- The **Index** combines **many factors** associated with **terrorist attacks** to build an **explicit picture of the impact of terrorism, illustrating trends, and providing a data series for analysis** by researchers and policymakers.

### Database used in Index

- The **Index** is based on data from the **Global Terrorism Database (GTD)**.
- The **GTD** is collected and **collated** by the **National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)** at the **University of Maryland**.
- It has codified over **190,000 cases of terrorism**.

### Where these scores used?

The score used directly and indirectly in **different Index**.

- **Index Score** was used **directly** in the **Global Peace Index, the Global Slavery Report** published by the **Walk Free Foundation**.
- **It is used indirectly** in computing country scores in the **World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness and Global Competitiveness Indices** and compilation of **Safe Cities Index** by the **Economist Intelligence Unit**.

### About the Institute for Economics & Peace



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- The **Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)**, is a global think tank headquartered in **Sydney, Australia** with branches in **New York City, Mexico City and The Hague**.
- It also published the **Global Peace Index**.

**Note:** In 2017, **India** wrote to the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** challenging its **ranking in a global slavery report** compiled by Australia's Walk Free Foundation.

**Topic- GS Paper 3–Important Index**  
**Source- The Hindu**

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