

# India improves ranking but still way down

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## UNDP Report

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The latest Human Development Report has put India at the 126th rank in the Human Development Index.

This means that though India has marginally improved its position from the last report on the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), it still is way down the list of 177 countries evaluated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The HDI is a composite index measuring average development in terms of a long and healthy life, knowledge or education and a decent standard of living.

The HDR- 2006 has said India lost 4.5 lakh lives annually to diarrhoea, more than any country. It says that water and sanitation are under-financed compared to military spending in India and what the country needs are adequate funds for basic amenities so

that increased income levels can be successfully translated into human development.

"India spends eight times more of its national wealth on military budgets than on water and sanitation. All countries see national security and defence as priorities. But viewed through the prism of human security, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that water and sanitation are under-financed relative to military spending," the report titled 'Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis', pointed out.

On the top of the HDI list is Norway, followed by Iceland, Australia, Ireland and Sweden. On the other end of the scale are Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Mali, Sierra Leone and Niger. The report says that the average person in Norway and Niger "certainly live in different human development dis-

tricts of the global village.

However, it is the comparison between the incomparable that Union Minister for Water Resources Saifuddin Soz, who released the report in India, raised objection to.

He said the report was based on a relevant theme that could be utilised for helping understand the complex issue. "But as far as the ranking is concerned, I am blank. How can you compare India with Norway? It doesn't appeal to my mind. I do not agree with the ranking," he told the gathering in the UN Conference hall, here on Thursday.

In the South Asian neighbourhood, Pakistan too has moved up one point to 134. Bangladesh is up by two points to 137 while Sri Lanka maintains its status quo at 93. Maldives is down by two points at 98, Nepal by two points to 138 and Bhutan is at 135.