

2. Academic Freedom Index report

Why in News?

- According to the Academic Freedom Index report which is recently released, India's academic freedom index is in the bottom 30% among 179 countries in 2022.

Highlights

- Academic freedom refers to the principle that scholars and researchers should have the freedom to pursue their research and express their findings without interference, censorship, or retaliation from the government, private institutions, or other external entities.
- It has been published by Global Public Policy Institute as a part of a global time-series dataset (1900-2019) in close cooperation with Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg, Scholars at Risk and the V-Dem Institute.
- The report provides an overview of academic freedom in 179 countries by assessing five indicators. It is based on assessments by more than 2,197 country experts from around the world.
- It Identified 22 countries, including India, China, the United States and Mexico – where it said universities and scholars experience significantly less academic freedom today than they did ten years ago.
- Only five small countries (Gambia, Uzbekistan, Seychelles, Montenegro, and Kazakhstan) representing 0.7 % of the global population, improved their rankings.
- In the remaining 152 countries, academic freedom has stayed stagnant, For the average global citizen, academic freedom has gone back to levels last registered four decades ago.
- Like China and India, populous countries like the United States of America and Mexico have recorded a decline in academic freedom over the past decade
- India scored 0.38, lower than Pakistan's 0.43 and the United States' 0.79.
- India's freedom index score was high in the past, ranging from 0.60-0.70 between 1950 and 2012, except from 1974-1978.
- China's academic freedom index stood at 0.07 in 2022, occupying the bottom 10 %.
- India scored low in campus integrity, which measures the extent to which campuses are free from politically motivated surveillance or security infringements.