



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# India Improves Its Global Passport Ranking But Loses Visa-Free Access to Two Nations

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India has moved up 10 places in the 2026 Henley Passport Index, rising to 75th position from 85th in 2025, indicating improved global mobility relative to other countries. However, despite this rise, Indian passport holders now have visa-free access to 56 countries, which is one fewer than before and represents the loss of visa-free entry to two nations compared to 2025.

## About the Henley Passport Index

The **Henley Passport Index**, published by Henley & Partners, ranks 199 passports against 227 destinations based on travel freedom. It assigns a passport a “score” by counting destinations that allow visa-free entry, visa-on-arrival, visitor’s permit at border, or basic electronic travel authorisation without prior embassy approval. Passports are then ranked globally based on total score.

## Why India Lost Visa-Free Access

### India lost visa-free access to Iran and Bolivia:

Iran suspended its visa-free entry for ordinary Indian passport holders in November 2025, reportedly after cases involving fraud and trafficking that targeted Indian travellers. This meant Indians had to obtain a visa before departure.

Bolivia changed its policy from visa-on-arrival to an e-visa system, requiring Indians to apply online and obtain approval before travel, which disqualifies it from being counted as visa-free under the Index methodology.

Despite these losses, The Gambia was added back to India’s visa-free list by February 2026, bringing the total accessible destinations to 56.

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## **India's Travel Freedom at a Glance**

2026 ranking: 75th place

Visa-free destinations: 56

2025 ranking: 85th place

Visa-free access in 2025: 57 destinations

Highest historical rank: 71st (in 2006)

These shifts show that global mobility is relative—a passport can move up in rank even if the number of visa-free countries decreases, because other countries may lose more access in the same period.

## **Global Context of Passport Strength**

The most powerful passports globally — such as Singapore, Japan, and South Korea — offer visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to well over 180 destinations, illustrating wide international travel freedom.

India's rank among South Asian neighbours like Pakistan (roughly 100+) or Bangladesh (95th) shows a more moderate travel freedom compared to some peers.