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## Indian Passport Rises in Global Ranking, Offering More Travel Freedom

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In a significant stride, the Indian passport has jumped eight ranks to 77th position in the mid-year Henley Passport Index update. This marks the country's biggest rise in six months, with its holders now enjoying visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to 59 destinations, up from 57 previously.

The Henley Passport Index, which monitors travel freedom based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), places India's passport climb as the most notable upward movement globally this period.

“The strengthening of the Indian passport reflects the country's growing diplomatic outreach and international relationships,” said Dr. Juerg Steffen, CEO of Henley & Partners, in an NDTV news report. “Passport strength is a reflection of a nation's diplomatic influence.”

India added just two more destinations to its list – including popular spots like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Maldives (visa-free), as well as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Macau (visa-on-arrival). Yet, this modest expansion resulted in the passport's impressive rise from 85th to 77th position.

The ranking shift parallels notable gains in other countries as well. Saudi Arabia jumped to 54th, while China surged from 94th to 60th over the past decade, driven by new visa deals with the Gulf States and South American nations. However, traditional powerhouses like the US and UK slipped to 10th and 6th, respectively, signaling changing global mobility landscapes.

For Indian citizens, the improved access benefits students, tourists, and professionals seeking simpler international travel. Though major countries like the Schengen Zone, UK, US, and Australia still require visas, a wider range of destinations now welcomes Indians with fewer hurdles.

India's climbing passport ranking highlights the country's growing diplomatic footprint and global integration. While outbound travel freedom has expanded modestly, the recent leap reflects strides in bilateral relations and policymaking aimed at increasing mobility opportunities for its citizens.