Born in the best?

BR RESEARCH (January 07, 2013) : Expecting parents in Switzerland must be sleeping well knowing that Switzerland is the best place for 2013 newborns. In a survey conducted by the Economic Intelligence Unit, a sister company of the Economist, various countries were assessed for how they stacked up in terms of the quality of living for the years to come. Taking a rough number of years uptil 2030, the time when infants born in 2013 will reach adulthood, the survey measured up various subjective opinions and objective determinants to rank countries for being the best or worst places to be born. Amongst the facets of living considered were peoples opinions of how happy they were with their lives in a particular country, crime, trust in public institutions, health of family life, social and cultural characteristics, income per head, literacy, life expectancy, cost of living, etc. Its interesting to note the changes that have taken place in the list for 2013, versus the list that was compiled in 1988. Countries such as the US, France, Germany, Italy and Japan have lost to smaller nations like Australia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Singapore, etc. Switzerland bagged a comfortable top spot in this ranking for 2013. Whats notable is the decline of Asian economies, including the mighty China which has had global superpowers shifting in their seats with its astounding economic progress. However, these countries can be spared some flak given that the 1988 list comprised 50 countries, while the current list has a total of 80 countries that have been ranked. The addition of countries such as Kuwait, Costa Rica, Slovenia, Cuba, Columbia, Peru, Croatia, Latvia, etc could also be responsible for pushing down the ranks of countries such as India and Pakistan. In 1988, Pakistan was amongst the top-50 countries to be born in, ranked at number 43, while India stood at an impressive 27. Today, Pakistan is ranked at a very low 75, while India has fallen down to 66. Its interesting that while life expectancy, political freedom and income levels for most countries have gone up, suggesting improved living standards, the global economic crisis has led to many nations suffering from difficult problems such as unemployment and reduced social security benefits, leading to greater dissatisfaction and reduced personal security in the citizens. That explains the decline of countries such as big EU nations like Italy, France and Germany, and the US as far as these rankings go. "We find that GDP per head alone explains some two thirds of the inter-country variation in life satisfaction, and the estimated relationship is linear," explains the Economist. So a countrys GDP per capita is one variable that speaks more than what generally meets the eye. The rankings hold a lot for many economies to learn from. After all, its a measure of their potential in terms of what they have to offer for future generations. ==========
SELECTED COUNTRIES - WHERE-TO-BE-BORN INDEX
========== 2013 Rank 1988 Rank
(out of 80 (out of 50 countries) countries)
========== Switzerland 1 13
Australia 2 18 Singapore 6 36 Canada 9
5 United States 16 1 France 26 2 Britain 27
(UK) 7 Brazil 37 30 Iran 58 48 Pakistan 75
43 India 66 27 ---------- Source: Economist.
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