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**Courage is contagious.
When a brave man takes
a stand, the spines of
others are often
stiffened.**

Billy Graham

BrainyQuote

IAF finishes black-topping of landing strip near LAC

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force's Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) in Nyoma, close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, has now been black-topped (paved runway), while work is going on to extend the runway so that it can eventually handle fighter jets, according to sources.

"The work is about 15% complete and is now stopped due to winter. It will restart in April. It is on track to be completed in two years," the source stated. Responding to apprehensions that the airfield could become an easy target for China as it is only 30 km away from the LAC, the source said it was well-located and would prove to be a great advantage for India. The first landing of a fixed-wing aircraft at the Nyoma ALG took place on September 18, 2009, when an AN-32 transport aircraft landed there. The runway is now being extended to 9,000 or 10,000 feet to en-



Strategic point: AN-32 aircraft is the first fixed-wing aircraft to land at the Nyoma Advanced Landing Ground in 2009. FILE PHOTO

able it to handle all fighter aircraft in the IAF's inventory. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had laid the foundation stone for the ALG last September, extending confidence that this airfield would prove to be a "game-changer" for the armed forces. The ALG's cost of development is approximately ₹200 crore.

Strategic infrastructure
The IAF also has airfields at Leh, Thoise and Kargil, as well as ALGs at Daulat Beg Oldie and Pukche. However, the Leh and Thoise airfields are located in interior areas and officials said that the weather at Nyoma

is much more stable in comparison to the other two airfields.

At the height of the standoff with Chinese forces in 2020, the IAF moved its Mi-17 medium-lift helicopters, CH-47 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters, and AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to Nyoma to support the forward deployment of troops, as well as for surveillance and intelligence gathering purposes.

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, to overcome the challenges that fighter jets face at high-altitude airfields, the engines are being tweaked to enable them to start at low temperatures.

CJI flags 'growing reluctance' of trial judges to grant bail

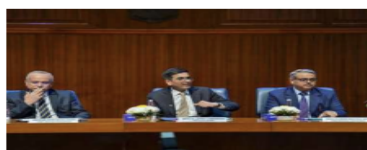
Worried about the increasing number of bail appeals reaching the High Courts and the Supreme Court, Chief Justice says the long-standing principle of 'bail being the rule' seems to be losing ground

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Saturday flagged the rising apprehension that the right to personal liberty is losing ground in trial courts, with jail, and not bail, becoming the rule. The Chief Justice said there is a "growing reluctance" on the part of trial judges to grant bail.

This was evident from the increasing number of bail appeals reaching the High Courts and the Supreme Court. "The long-standing principle that 'bail is the rule, jail is the exception' seems to be losing ground... This trend warrants a thorough re-evaluation," Chief Justice Chandrachud said in his address to the All India District Judges Conference held at Kachchhi in Gujarat.

The Chief Justice's remarks came even as the Supreme Court record on



CJI D.Y. Chandrachud with Justices Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih during a recent event. PH

grant of bail has remained unswayed. Student activist Umar Khalid chose to withdraw his bail application following multiple adjournments. The court had rejected bail to former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

'Adjourning culture'
Chief Justice Chandrachud also highlighted the "adjourning culture" in courts. Adjournments,

which were never intended to be commonplace, have become normalised within the judicial process, the Chief Justice noted.

"This culture of adjournments is effectively stopping time within a case, prolonging the agony of litigants and increasing the cycle of backlog," the Chief Justice said.

Delays are such that a farmer involved in a property dispute may never

see the outcome in his lifetime. "We should not wait for our citizens to die for their case to be decided by a court of law. Imagine a victim of sexual assault whose case remains unresolved in the courts for several years. Isn't this a clear violation of their fundamental right to access justice?" he asked.

The Chief Justice advised the district judiciary against using gender-stereotypical language that work to perpetuate systemic inequalities and contribute to the marginalisation of women within the legal system.

Chief Justice Chandrachud also highlighted that women now constitute 36.3% of the working strength of the district judiciary even as there is a significant vacancy rate for the seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which accounted 66.3% of the total unfilled posts.



Amarnath Ghosh

India keeping tabs on probe into dancer's killing in U.S.

Kailash Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

The Indian mission in Chicago is following up on the forensic investigation into the killing of an Indian Kuchipudi dancer in the U.S. earlier this week. A statement in this regard came after Amarnath Ghosh, the dancer, was found shot to death in St. Louis. "Deep condolences to family & friends of deceased Amarnath Ghosh in St. Louis, Missouri. We are following up forensic investigation with police & providing support," the Indian Consulate in Chicago posted on X.

The murder was flagged by actor Devoleena Bhatnagar, who said Mr. Ghosh had been pursuing a Ph.D. in the U.S., and that he was shot multiple times while he was out for an evening walk.

"Some friends in US are trying to claim the body but still no update about it. @indianembassyUS kindly see to it if you could. At least we should know the reason of his murder. @DrSajishankar @narenramnath @Bhatnagarjee had said.

Earlier, Mr. Ghosh studied dance at the Kalakshetra Foundation in Chennai.

Registration of periodicals moves online as Union govt. notifies new Act

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The new Press and Registration of Periodicals (PRP) Act, 2023, has come into force and the old Press and Registration of Books Act, 1957, now stands repealed. The Centre has notified the new law and the related rules in its official gazette. Accordingly, the

Act is effective from March 1. The registration of new papers and periodicals has moved online to the Press Sewa Portal, while the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNBI) has been renamed as the Press Registrar General of India (PRGI), said the Union Information and Public Relations Ministry on Saturday.

"In tune with the ethos

of Digital India, the new Act provides for an online system for facilitating the registration of newspapers and other periodicals in the country." The new system replaces the existing manual, cumbersome processes involving multiple steps and approvals at various stages which were causing unnecessary hardships to the publishers," it

said. Earlier, Union I&B Minister Anurag Singh Thakur had launched the Press Sewa portal, through which various applications as mandated by the new Act can be submitted online.

The Press Sewa portal ensures paperless processing and offers services through a digital gateway, QR code-

based digital certificates for instant download, online system for providing registration of newspapers and other periodicals in the country. The new system replaces the existing manual, cumbersome processes involving multiple steps and approvals at various stages which were causing unnecessary hardships to the publishers," it

mechanism," said the Ministry. The portal is accompanied by a new website with all the related information and a user-friendly interface. The new Act removes books and journals from the purview of registration necessitated by the old law. It defines a periodical as "any publication including a newspaper which is pu-

lished and printed at regular intervals containing public news or comments on public news but does not include a book or a journal of scientific, technical, and academic nature". Therefore, "book, or a journal including a book or journal of scientific, technical and academic nature" does not require registration with the PRGI.

Kerala sees a slide in leopard population

Sarath Babu George
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala has been witnessing a considerable decline in its leopard population as they faced the wrath of rapid development, habitat loss, and retaliatory killing by humans.

Presenting a dismal picture of the big cat population in the State, the fifth cycle of leopard population estimation found the population to have fallen from 650 (with a standard error of 26) in 2018 to 570 (with a standard error of 70) in 2022.

The Status of Leopards in India 2022, jointly prepared by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India, also detected 63% of leopards to live outside the protected areas in the state and recorded a surge in the number of human-wildlife cases in the Western Ghats landscape including several parts of Kerala.

The study sampled 10 sites using camera traps that yielded 3,709 photographs of 270 individual leopards. While Periyar Tiger Reserve showed an increase in leopard population, Noyyaludi and Malyattur regions experienced a significant decrease.

Eravikulam National Park, Kottai, Kannur, and Vazhachal exhibited consistent low leopard densities according to the report. The number of human-wildlife conflict cases rose from 6,022 in 2015-16 to 10,036 in 2021-22. The northern districts from Kasaragod to Thrissur witnessed the most number of cases.

Graceful steps



Song and dance: Artists from Rajasthan perform 'Kalbeliya' dance during the four-day National Culture Festival under the auspices of the Union Ministry of Culture in Hyderabad on Saturday. In this dance form, men play instruments and women dance. IANS/GOWD

Delhi L-G approves CBI probe against former Minister Jain

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena has sanctioned a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe against former Delhi Minister and AAP leader Satyendar Jain on an extortion complaint filed by alleged conman Suresh Chandrasekhar, officials said on Saturday.

Mr. Jain has been accused of running an extortion racket within the Faridkot jail premises, which sought "protection" money cases rose from 6,022 in 2015-16 to 10,036 in 2021-22. The northern districts from Kasaragod to Thrissur witnessed the most number of cases.



Satyendar Jain

settlements between 2018 and 2021, either personally or through his accomplices, including Raj Kumar, a former Jail Superintendent, against whom the L-G has also ordered a probe last month. Lashing out at the

Centre, senior AAP leader Somnath Bhatti on Saturday termed the L-G's decision to approve the CBI inquiry against Mr. Jain "a political vendetta".

'Desperate RIP'
Mr. Bhatti said that a "desperate" RIP had resorted to taking help from a "bug like Chandrasekhar". Mr. Chandrasekhar, a former businessman, is being investigated in multiple cases, which include extortion and money laundering. He has been booked for duping several people to the tune of ₹200 crore.

The AAP leader Satyendar Jain is lodged in a Delhi jail in connection with a money laundering case.

Deerzad Ashiq
Srinagar

Most houses in Srinagar's Nawa Kadal area used to be abuzz with whirring noise emanating from charkhas and spindles. Introduction of machines to bypass hand-driven processes for manufacturing shawls and carpets muted these houses, with hundreds of women artisans forced to discontinue. However, the move to tag hand-made shawls and carpets with Geographical Indications (GI) labels is finally bringing workers back to charkhas and spindles.

Nazima Jan from Nawa Kadal in the old city was a

Shah launches umbrella body for urban cooperative banks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Urban Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday inaugurated an umbrella organisation for urban cooperative banks (UCB) — Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation Limited.

Mr. Shah stated that the organisation was a necessity of the time, and marked a new beginning for self-regulation, which would increase the development of UCBs in the country. "It is necessary that we upgrade ourselves and adhere to all the regulations of the RBI. If we fail to do so, we will not be able to sustain the competition in the times to come," he



Amit Shah presents a certificate to TISE Sahakar Bank in New Delhi on Saturday. PH

said. He highlighted a major role of the organisation is to prepare small banks for compliance with the Banking Regulation Act. "Our goal should be to open urban cooperative banks in every city," he said.

The Cooperation Minis-

ter stated that the organisation had a strength of 11,000 branches with 1,500 banks, deposits of ₹5 lakh crore. "Our goal should be to open urban cooperative banks in every city," he said.

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GI tags bring back women artisans to whirring charkhas in Kashmir

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Nazima Jan from Nawa Kadal in the old city was a



Soft hands: A woman works on a colourful pashmina shawl in Srinagar. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

third-generation pashmina artisan and quit pashmina spinning 10 years ago. "The hand-driven process is like debairing, spinning, and weaving almost van-

ished in the past three decades due to the introduction of machines. I decided to shift my daughter from this age-old family profession to become a beautician," Ms. Jan said. The GI labels, however, are fast transforming the art scene in Kashmir. "GI tagging has been crucial for preserving and reviving traditional motifs used in making shawls and carpets. It emphasises authentic hand-spun yarn. It safeguards traditional handcrafts associated with these crafts, preserving their cultural significance and authenticity," Mahmood Shah, Director, Handloom and Handicrafts, Kashmir, told *The Hindu*. While shawls are made of pashmina, carpets are used to make carpets. Intricate techniques are used.

GI tags bring back women artisans to whirring charkhas in Kashmir

Peerzada Ashiq

SRINAGAR

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While shawls are made of pashmina, wool and silk are used to make carpets. Intricate techniques are used.

Odisha's famed Rupa Tarakasi, Banglar Muslin earn GI tag

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

The famous Cuttack Rupa Tarakasi (silver filigree) has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai. The application for this was filed by the Odisha State Cooperative Handicrafts Corporation Limited and was facilitated by the Department of Textile and Handicrafts, Government of Odisha. Filigree has been traditionally associated with fine craftsmanship and luxurious design in classical jewellery.

The historical records

pieces of evidence that mention the exchange of jewellery and gems between Kalinga and Indonesia," the record noted.

The other products to join the GI league are Banglar Muslin, one of the popular traditional handloom crafts of Bengal; Narasapur crochet lace products; and Kutch rogan craft.

Ratlam Riyawan Lahsun (Garlic), a variety named after Riyawan village in Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh, also bagged the GI tag along with the Ambaji White Marble, which is formed when limestone is re-crystallised under the

and was facilitated by the Department of Textile and Handicrafts, Government of Odisha. Filigree has been traditionally associated with fine craftsmanship and luxurious design in classical jewellery.

The historical records attached along with the GI filing mention: "Archaeological evidence suggests that filigree was incorporated into jewellery as early as 3,500 BCE in Mesopotamia where it is practised even today as Telkari work. According to historians, there is every possibility that the Tarakasi work reached Cuttack from Persia through Indonesia some 500 years ago by sea trade. The argument is based on similar workmanship seen in both Cuttack and Indonesia."

"There are multiple

Ratlam Riyawan Lahsun (Garlic), a variety named after Riyawan village in Ratlam district of Madhya Pradesh, also bagged the GI tag along with the Ambaji White Marble, which is formed when limestone is re-crystallised under the earth's crust due to intense pressure and heat. Tripura Risa Textile, Hyderabad Lac Bangles, Majuli Mask of Assam and the Assam Majuli Manuscript Painting are other products that got GI tag.

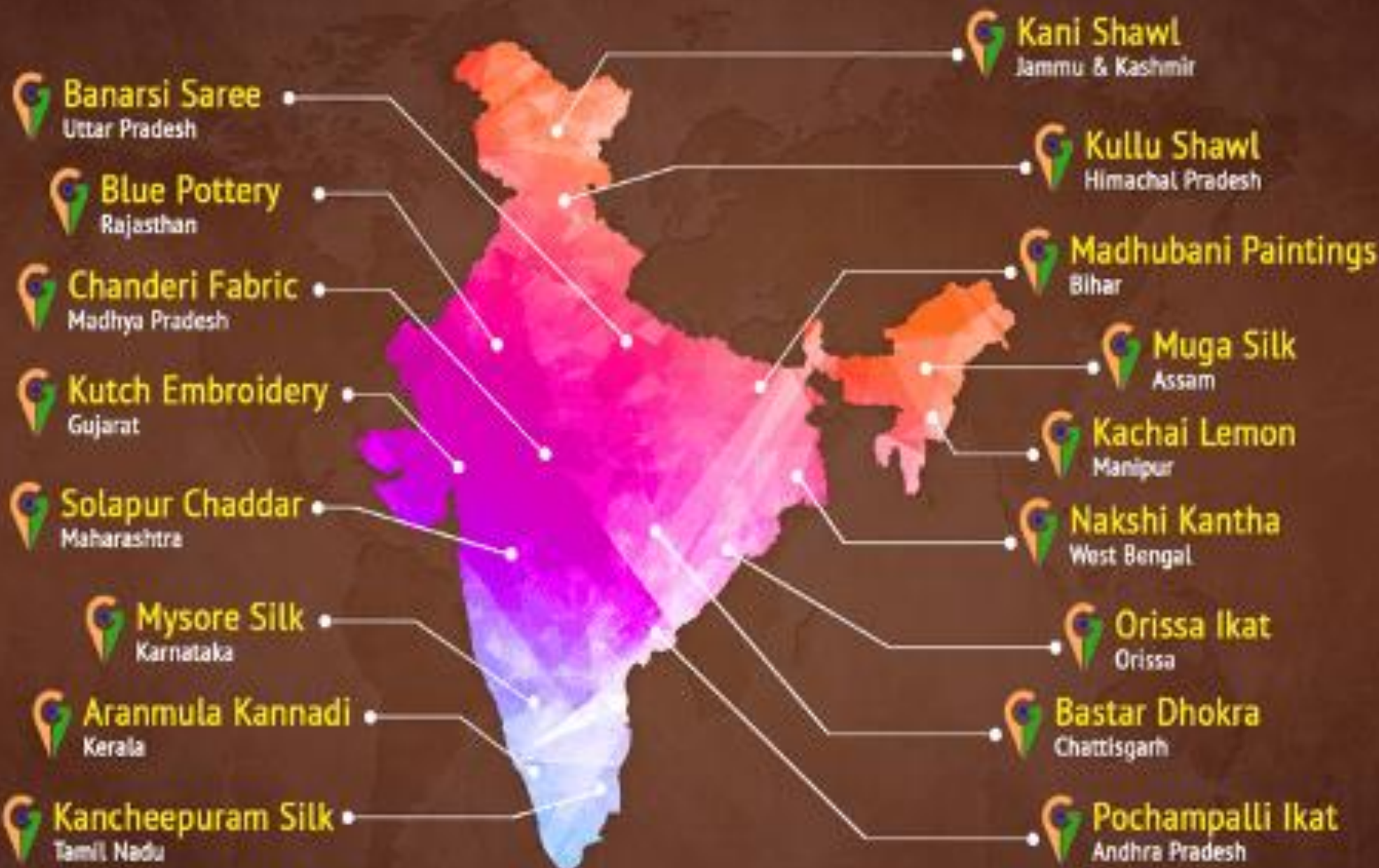
The Majuli Mask of Assam is made in different varieties and sizes as they are mainly divided into different categories – *Mukha bhaona* covers the face; the *Lotokoi* hanging mask, which is bigger in size, extends to the chest; while *Cho Mukha* (huge mask) covers the head and body.



Geographical Indication tags

India












Disclaimer : This map is just a pictorial depiction of the original Map Of India.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS - INDIA

GI tags give trademarks to different states for indigenous or unique goods that they produce

State	No. of GI tags	Examples
	Karnataka	Mysore Silk, Mysore Sandal Soap, Coorg Green Cardamom
	Uttar Pradesh	Patan Patola, Lucknow Zardozi, Firozabad Glass
	Odisha	Ikat, Konark Stone Carving, Pattachitra
	West Bengal	Darjeeling Tea, Nakshi Kantha, Baluchari Saree
	Gujarat	Agates of Cambay, Kutch Embroidery, Gir Kesar Mango
	Rajasthan	Kathputlis of Rajasthan, Blue Pottery of Jaipur, Makrana Marble
	Himachal Pradesh	Kullu Shawl, Kangra Tea, Chamba Rumal

Status of GI Tags Registration:



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graph TD; A[Status of GI Tags Registration:] --> B[Compared to other nations, India lags in GI registration.]; B --> C[Till December 2023, Intellectual Property India received just 1,167 applications, of which only 547 products have been registered, as per the GI Registry.]; C --> D[Germany leads in GI registrations, with 15,566 registered products, followed by China (7,247), as per 2020 data with the World Intellectual Property Organization.];
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-
- **Globally, wines and spirits comprise 51.8% of registered GIs, followed by agricultural products and foodstuffs at 29.9%.**
 - **In India, handicraft (about 45%) and agriculture (about 30%) comprise the majority of the GI products.**

-
- **Concerns Regarding the GI Tags in India:**
 - **Concerns with GI Act and Registration Process:**
 - **The GI Act, 1999 framed over two decades ago, requires timely amendments to address current challenges.**
 - **Registration forms and application processing times need simplification for easier compliance.**
 - **The current application acceptance ratio is only about 46% in India.**



- Lack of **suitable institutional development** hampers effective implementation of GI protection mechanisms.
- Producers often struggle **post-GI registration due to a lack of guidance and support.**
- **Ambiguity in Producers' Definition:**
 - The lack of clarity in **defining "producers" in the GI Act of 1999** leads to the involvement of intermediaries.
 - Intermediaries benefit from GIs, diluting the intended advantages for genuine producers.

GI Tag Products of 2024

Kapdaganda shawl	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is an embroidered shawl on an off-white coarse cloth with red, yellow and green colored threads by women of the Dongria Kondh tribe
Lanjia Saura Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a painting art that belongs to the Lanjia Saura community, paintings are in the form of exterior murals
Koraput Kala Jeera Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a black-colored rice variety, famous for its aroma, taste, texture and nutritional value.
Similipal Kai chutney	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a chutney made with red weaver ants by the tribals in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district. Chutney is a good source of protein, calcium, zinc etc.
Nayagarh Kanteimundi Brinjal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">They are known for the prickly thorns on the stems and whole plant. The green and round fruits contain more seeds as compared to other genotypes.
Odisha Khajuri Guda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a natural sweetener extracted from date palm trees and has its origin in the Gajapati district.
Dhenkanal Magji	<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a sweet made from buffalo milk cheese, with a distinct appearance, taste, flavor, shape, and size.



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INSIDE
KERALA GOVERNOR STUDENTS V-C OVER STUDENT DEATH P 10
SHARAD, AJIT PAWAR SHARE STAGE P 8

'LOW-KEY, LOW-RISK' OUTREACH
With new envoy and National Day function, Pakistan reaches out

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 2

E. Wait & watch until May

AS THE new civilian government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), backed by the Pakistan Army, takes shape, moves are afoot in Islamabad to start a "low-key and low-risk" engagement with New Delhi. The Indian Express has learnt. The two sides have not had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CHOUHAN TO CONTEST, PRAGYA NOT IN LIST
BJP first list for LS polls names 195, PM Modi to fight from Varanasi again

RS MPs Bhupender Yadav, Mansukh Mandaviya, Rajeev Chandrasekhar to contest for LS

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 2

WITH NO CHANGES in constituencies of top leaders, the Bharatiya Janata Party Saturday announced it would field Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again from Varanasi. Home Minister Amit Shah from Gandhinagar, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh from Lucknow.

The first list of 195 candidates released by the party, however, made some drastic changes — in Delhi, it has fielded only one of

PM Narendra Modi and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar in Aurangabad on Saturday. PTI REPORT, PAGE 8

Mix of old, new; social justice is the big message

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 2

CONTINUITY AS well as change, along with some social justice messaging, this is what the BJP's first list of 195 candidates for the Lok Sabha elections signals, striking a balance between the old guard and new faces, while balancing social representation on caste and gender lines.

If Union Minister Rajnath Singh, the party's only pre-2009 national leader who is still prominent on the national stage,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MORE REPORTS P 8

Centre signs pact with Tripura govt, Tipra Motha for tribal rights

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, MARCH 2

AHEAD OF THE Lok Sabha elections, the Union government on Saturday signed a tripartite agreement with the Tripura government and The Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance, popularly known as Tipra Motha, for a "time-bound" and "honourable" solution to "all issues" related to the state's indigenous people.

"Under the pact, it was agreed to amicably resolve all issues of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INTERVIEW
'STEP TOWARDS REALISATION OF ASPIRATIONS'
PRADYOT DEBBARMA
TIPRA MOTHA FOUNDER

Spanish vlogger gangraped in Jharkhand's Dumka, 4 arrested

ISHISHEK ANGAD
GANCHI, MARCH 2

A 28-YEAR-OLD Spanish travel vlogger was allegedly gangraped in Jharkhand's Dumka on Friday night after she and her partner topped in the area for the night

while on a biking trip. Four suspects have been arrested in connection with the case.

The woman, who has almost 2 lakh followers on Instagram where she posts snippets from her travels, said in a video message in Spanish: "We are in the hospital, and something hap-

pened to us that we wouldn't wish on anyone. Seven men raped me, and they have beaten us and robbed us, although not many things (were taken) because what they wanted was to rape me. We are in the hospital with the police. It happened

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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DAY AFTER 9 INJURED IN BENGALURU CAFE
Blast probe tracks CCTV footage of suspect's route

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, MARCH 2

A DAY after the blast at the Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on Friday, police are scanning footage from scores of

CCTV cameras located in the path that the suspect took — to arrive at the cafe and to leave hurriedly — to pick up leads on his identity.

Nine people were injured in the blast.

A man wearing a cap, glasses

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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CM Bhagwant Singh Mann Leads Launch of 'Mission Samarth' for Punjab Schools

PUNJAB launched 'Mission Samarth' in government schools. Under the dynamic leadership of CM Bhagwant Singh Mann, 'Mission Samarth' aimed to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy skills of children from classes 3 to 8. The Punjab Government geared up to enhance the learning enhancement program, 'Mission Samarth', in government schools.

Under Mission Samarth, teachers identified 'weak' children through baseline tests and categorized them into two groups—'Level 1 and Level 2'. Special classes and study materials were provided to bring them up to the required learning levels according to their age and grade. The project focused on

English, Mathematics, and Punjabi.

"It was not the first time that such baseline tests were conducted and weak students were given special focus. A similar exercise was undertaken earlier under the 'Parho Punjab, Parhao Punjab' project during the previous government. However, this time, the entire exercise was further refined to ensure no student was left behind. Special learning materials were provided to teachers to help them focus on students who needed extra coaching."

Teachers from primary and upper-primary sections had already been trained on how to conduct baseline tests under Mission Samarth, and the project was launched. It was a two-month project, and students received extra coaching until

December and were tested again.

"Several studies and surveys, including ASER and NAS, suggested that a large number of children in Punjab still could not read basic text nor do simple calculations. The aim was to identify such children and provide them support and a conducive learning environment to bring them up to the required learning levels. Teams from the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) prepared special learning materials, which would soon reach schools. The project was the brainchild of Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains and was inspired by CM Bhagwant Singh Mann's vision of Transforming Education in the Punjab State.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS CELEBRATING WOMEN

International Women's Day is a global holiday celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement. It gives focus to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women. Spurred on by the universal female suffrage movement, Women's Day originated from labour movements in North America and Europe during the early 20th century. However, March 8 is not the only day which is focused on women or women's issues. Here are some of the other such days...



International Day of the Girl Child

On December 19, 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognise girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world. The day also focuses attention on the need to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights. It helps raise awareness not only of the issues that girls face, but also of what is likely to happen when those problems are solved. For example, educating girls helps reduce the rate of child marriage, disease and helps strengthen the economy by helping girls have access to higher paying jobs.

International Girls in ICT Day

The International Girls in ICT Day is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in

April to create awareness on the need for more girls and women in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. It was established 12 years ago by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and since then, it has been celebrated every year with events, training, mentoring and networking opportunities for girls and young women.

Roses Revolution Day



Roses Revolution, an international movement against obstetric violence founded in Spain in 2011, gave the day an additional designation as the Roses Revolution Day. Affected women place roses in front of hospitals and delivery rooms to protest against violence they have experienced during childbirth, including messages to physicians and midwives. Roses Revolution is

supported by the German National Committee of UN Women.

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

The day is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on February 6 as part of the UN's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003. It provides an opportunity to forge stronger ties and take concerted action to reinforce our commitments to eliminate this harmful practice which continues to impact the lives of millions of women and girls. In 2024, nearly 4.4 million girls — or more than 12,000 each day — are at risk of genital mutilation around the world. Despite tremendous progress made over the years, female genital mutilation continues to remain a serious challenge in many countries.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

The United Nations General Assembly has designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The premise of the day is to raise awareness around the world that women are subjected to rape, domestic violence and other forms of violence; furthermore, one of the aims of the day is to highlight that the scale and true nature of the issue is often hidden.

The date was selected to honour the Mirabal sisters, three political activists from the Dominican Republic who were brutally murdered in 1960 by order of the country's ruler, Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961).

International Day of Women & Girls in Science

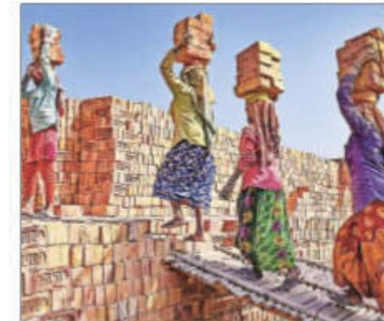


The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is an annual observance adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to promote the full and equal access and participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. It is celebrated on February 11 every year. A theme is selected annually to highlight a particular focus and area of discussion around a focus point for gender equality in science. The day is implemented annually by Unesco in collaboration with UN Women. Both the organisations work with national governments,

intergovernmental organisations, civil society partners, universities and corporations in order to achieve the shared goal of promoting the role of women and girls in scientific fields and celebrate those already successful in the field.

International Day of Rural Women

International Day of Rural Women is celebrated on October 15 every year. The day is dedicated to the millions of women who live in remote, rural areas. It is to celebrate and highlight their achievements and contributions towards rural development and agriculture. The day focuses on gender equality and women empowerment in rural areas. These women include mothers, daughters, and grandmothers in rural areas who contribute by producing food and building agricultural and rural development worldwide. It reminds us that the world cannot become progressive if rural society is ignored.



A women's urban employment guarantee act

Reducing gender gaps and increasing women's employment are part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Notwithstanding ethical and constitutional imperatives, there is also evidence suggesting that increasing women's employment rates can be an engine for economic growth.

Unmet demand
Despite functioning at a fraction of its intended capacity, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been pivotal in providing financial autonomy to women in rural areas. More than half the MGNREGA workforce are women. However, urban realities are different. Social norms, lack of safety, and hostile transportation options are some of the factors inhibiting urban women to enter the workforce. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) pegs women's employment rate in urban areas at 22.9% in the last quarter of 2023. There are clear signs of high unmet demand for employment among urban women. First, the unemployment rate in urban areas, which is a measure of how many would like employment (irrespective of whether they are actively seeking it), is 3% compared to 4% in rural areas. Second, there are two types of unemployed individuals who would like to work and are actively seeking a job: those who would like to work but may not be actively seeking a job. A much larger share of unemployed women in urban areas are seeking employment compared to rural areas. Further, nearly 25% of urban women have completed higher secondary education compared to 8% in rural areas. The low urban employment rate also points to wastage of much potential.

To address overall urban unemployment, some States have an urban employment programme. While these are not restricted to women, early evidence suggests a higher



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Views expressed are personal. The authors thank Akshat Arora for data support

Notwithstanding ethical and constitutional imperatives, there is also evidence suggesting that increasing women's employment rates can be an engine for economic growth

participation rate for women. Building on these and other ideas such as the Decentralised Urban Employment and Training Scheme by Jean Dreize, we propose a national Women's Urban Employment Guarantee Act (WUEGA). We envision a WUEGA where women form at least 50% of the staff and are involved in management staff. Involving women and local communities can also potentially strengthen the constitutional mandate of decentralisation. Each worksite would have essential worksite facilities including childcare facilities. Work must be available within a 5-km radius and public transportation must be free for women. A detailed list of possible urban works such as plantation and end-of-rain water management in wetlands already exist; these should be supplemented based on local needs and wider consultation. Incentives such as automatic inclusion in welfare boards can be created; these could act as agencies to provide maternity entitlements, pensions, and serve as resources for emergency funds. For many women, the school to work transition is impeded by the lack of skills and mobility issues. A recent study of women in Delhi and Bengaluru found that three out of four reported not having adequate skills as a constraint to getting secure employment. Apprenticeship for women college students from different disciplines could be a good option to create a channel for women with higher degrees to join as programme coordinators. This could also act as a stimulus for younger women to take up technical courses. Women who have completed Class 10 could be eligible to run a Franchise Facilitation Centres at each urban local body with computer training facilities. Such centres can be empowered through regular capacity-building programmes for all, not just women. The benefits of this far outweigh fiscal conservatism. It is also time to move from income as insurance to assurance of income, especially for women.

for women can neatly dovetail with the larger mandate of apprenticeships of making women more job-ready. Additionally, it can be a means to empower local communities acting as a single window for grievance registration. A social audit unit of WUEGA, with at least 50% women staff can be conceived for independent monitoring of the programme. Social audits would require an array of skill sets and this could be an important avenue for women to have completed Class 10 to join part time or full time and improve their job readiness.

Women-led initiatives
There is precedence of such initiatives in Karnataka, for instance, women handle end-of-rain water management in gram panchayats of selected districts including collection and driving of the 'Swacch' vehicles. Not only has the initiative been a success, it has also enabled several women to acquire driving licenses. As per the PLFS, an estimate of the number of women in urban areas in the age group of 15-59 who are out of the workforce is 2.18 crore. If we add those who are self-employed and in casual labour, we get about 6.65 crore. In reality, to begin with, perhaps 50% of them are likely to be interested in such a programme. Assuming 150 days of work per year at ₹500 as daily wages, the wage component, to be funded by the Union government, would then cost around 1.2% of the GDP. Adding material and administrative costs to this is likely to make it around 2%. Such a scheme has to be rolled out in a phased manner with periodic assessments on uptake and the nature of the shelf of works. This is also likely to smoothen the cost. Depending on its positives and challenges, this can pave the way for an urban employment programme for all, not just women. The benefits of this far outweigh fiscal conservatism. It is also time to move from income as insurance to assurance of income, especially for women.

Not the right cure for urban maladies

The unification of urban local bodies may not help citizens

STATE OF PLAY
Swathi Vaidyanand
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The Government of Telangana is exploring the possibility of expanding the purview of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) by merging several peripheral corporations and municipalities. All the seven municipal corporations eagerly await grants from the government and Finance Commissions. In several municipalities and corporations outside the GHMC, the property tax reforms proposed by the Central government have been adopted. Accordingly, the basis for calculating the tax has been shifted from the Annual Rental Value (ARV) to the Market Capital Value of the property. With the changes in calculation, residents in corporations and municipalities with higher property prices are paying a higher tax compared to those living within the GHMC. Taxpayers say that civic administration and amenities are not improving according to the higher tax collection.

The GHMC, which is poised to subsume all the peripheral ULBs and grow in size, has never been in worse situation. After elections to the legislative Assembly at the end of 2023, the corporation has found itself bankrupt and unable to pay salaries as well as pending dues to its contractors. The high amount of borrowings, which were used on road infrastructure such as flyovers and underpasses, have not brought much relief to the citizens who continue to

struggle with traffic problems. Sanitation issues have worsened. The sewerage system collapses every time it rains. Illegal structures are flourishing. Government lands in the city are being encroached on, and lakes are disappearing while the civic body is struggling with a poor staff strength. Most staff members are reaching retirement age. A third of the sanctioned posts in the GHMC are vacant. Even if all the posts are filled up now, the corporation will still struggle to pay salaries. Under such circumstances, it is anybody's guess how the proposed merger can improve local governance. For robust local self-governance as envisaged by the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, there needs to be minimum interference from the State and central governments in the functioning of local bodies. In the case of the GHMC, however, the earlier formula based on ARV continues to be followed. The GHMC is yet to form statutory ward committees and the State government, which should ideally make resolutions for local area development. The State is yet to form statutory ward committees and the State government, which should ideally make resolutions for local area development. The State is yet to form statutory ward committees and the State government, which should ideally make resolutions for local area development.

Against this backdrop, it is difficult to believe that the unification of ULBs will help the common citizen.

A majority of Indians support authoritarianism: Few survey

The share of Indians who supported representative democracy was on the wane in 2023, with more wanting strong leaders or the military to rule

DATA POINT
The Hindu Data Team

In India, 85% of respondents to a 2023 survey said that military rule or rule by an authoritarian leader would be good for the country. India's share was the highest among the 24 countries surveyed. Notably, the share of Indians who said that it is important for Opposition parties to operate freely was the third lowest among countries surveyed. In 2023, there was a very high share of Indians who believed that representative democracy is a good way of governance declined considerably from 2017, when the same survey was conducted. Interestingly, a very high share of Indians also wanted experts to rule and not elected officials.

These were some of the conclusions of the Pew Research Center's Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey. In India, face-to-face interviews were conducted between March 25 and May 11, 2023, among adults. The north-eastern States and the Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands were excluded. The sample was selected in a way to proportionally represent Indians across gender, age, education, region and urban/rural. The survey asked about preferences for two types of authoritarian governance: one led by a powerful leader who operates without the need for approval from legislative or judicial bodies (authoritarian leader) and another governed by the military (military rule). Public support for at least one of these governance models varied significantly across countries, with 85% in India showing support in contrast to just 40% in Sweden. Such support was more prevalent in middle-income countries than in wealthier ones. Further, a higher proportion of respondents from countries in the Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America expressed support for

these models compared to those from Europe and North America. Chart 1 displays the share of participants who believed that governance by a strong leader or military rule would be beneficial for their country. In 2023,

In countries where fewer individuals regarded democratic values as crucial, there was a greater share of people favouring governance by an authoritarian leader or military rule. In countries where a smaller proportion of the population believed in the importance of allowing Opposition parties to operate without restrictions, there tended to be greater endorsement of authoritarian forms of governance. India had the third lowest share of people who considered the freedom of Opposition parties crucial. Concurrently, Indians exhibited high levels of support for authoritarian governance, as shown in Chart 2.

Since the last survey in 2017, in many countries, there has been a notable decrease in support for representative democracy. In 11 of the 22 countries with comparable data from 2017 (excluding Australia and the U.S.), there was a significant reduction in the share of the population that viewed representative democracy as a highly effective method of governance. Chart 3 shows the figures for India. Close to 44% of Indians believed that representative democracy was a very good approach in 2017, while just 36% held this view in 2023. Compared to 2017, in 2023 there was also a considerable increase in the number of people who favoured a governance model where experts, rather than elected representatives, put in charge of taking crucial decisions. This shift in opinion towards technocracy may be partly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. This share in India increased from 65% in 2017 to 82% in 2023. The share who felt that this was a bad way of governance stayed put at around 15% in both these years.

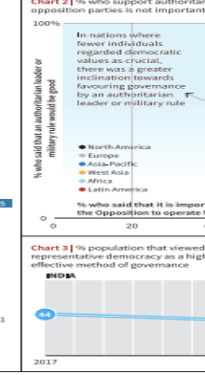
Democracy in decline

The charts and text are sourced from the Pew Research Center's Spring 2023 Global Attitudes Survey



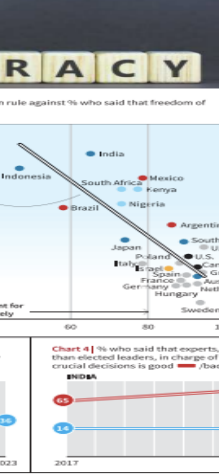
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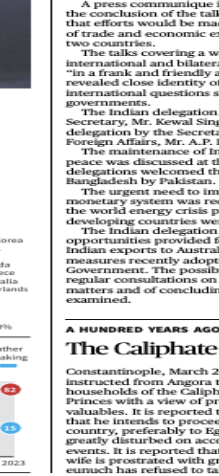
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FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

Scope for more exports to Australia

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 4, 1974
New Delhi, March 3: Considerable emphasis was placed on developing and strengthening bilateral relations at the sixth round of Indo-Australian officials' talks held in Canberra from February 27 to March 1.

A press communique issued here today of the conclusion of the talks said it was agreed that efforts would be made to increase the level of trade and economic exchanges between the two countries.

The talks covering a wide range of international and bilateral questions were held "in a frank and friendly atmosphere" and revealed close identity of views held on international questions shared by the two governments.

The Indian delegation was led by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Kewal Singh, and the Australian delegation by the Secretary of Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. A.P. Benitez. The delegations welcomed the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan.

The urgent need to improve the international monetary system was recognised. The effects of the world economic crisis particularly on the developing countries were also discussed. The Indian delegation noted the increased opportunities provided for the expansion of Indian exports to Australia as a result of the measures recently adopted by the Australian government. The possibility of expanding regular consultations on bilateral economic matters and of concluding trade agreements was examined.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Caliphate abolished

Constantinople, March 2: The police have been instructed from Ankara to remove householders of the Caliph and the Imperial Princes with a view to their removal of valuables. It is reported that the Caliph has said that he intends to proceed to a Mohammedan country, preferably to Egypt. Haron ladies are greatly disturbed on account of the impending events. It is reported that the Caliph's principal wife is prostrated with grief and the principal eunuch has refused to take food for three days.

Chart 1 | % who believed that governance by a strong leader or military rule would be beneficial

■ High-income ■ Middle-income

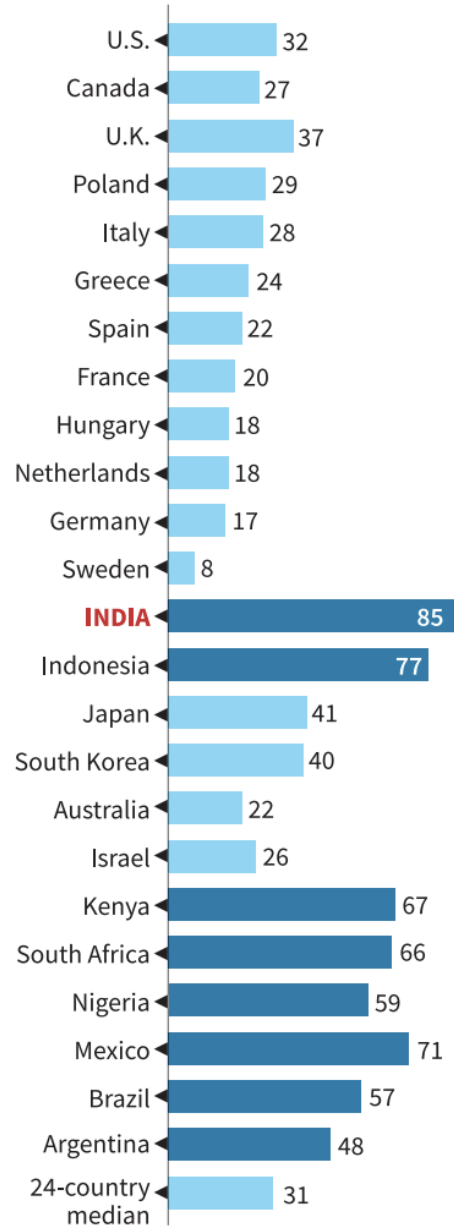


Chart 2 | % who support authoritarian rule against % who said that freedom of opposition parties is not important

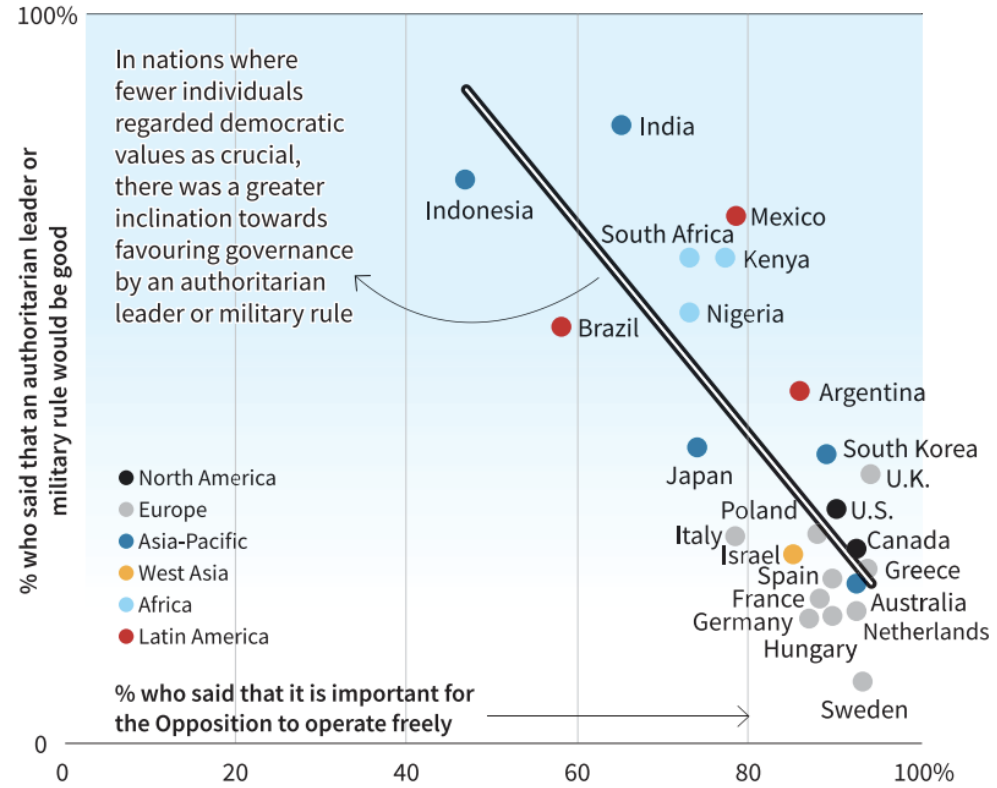


Chart 3 | % population that viewed representative democracy as a highly effective method of governance

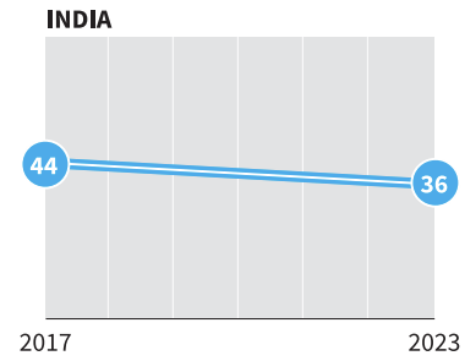
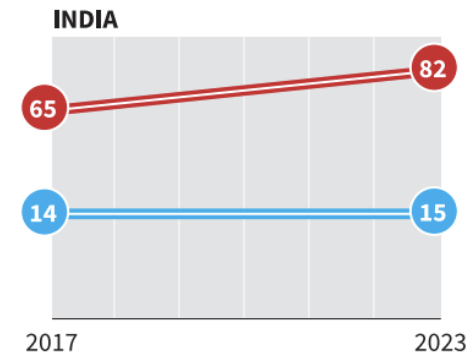


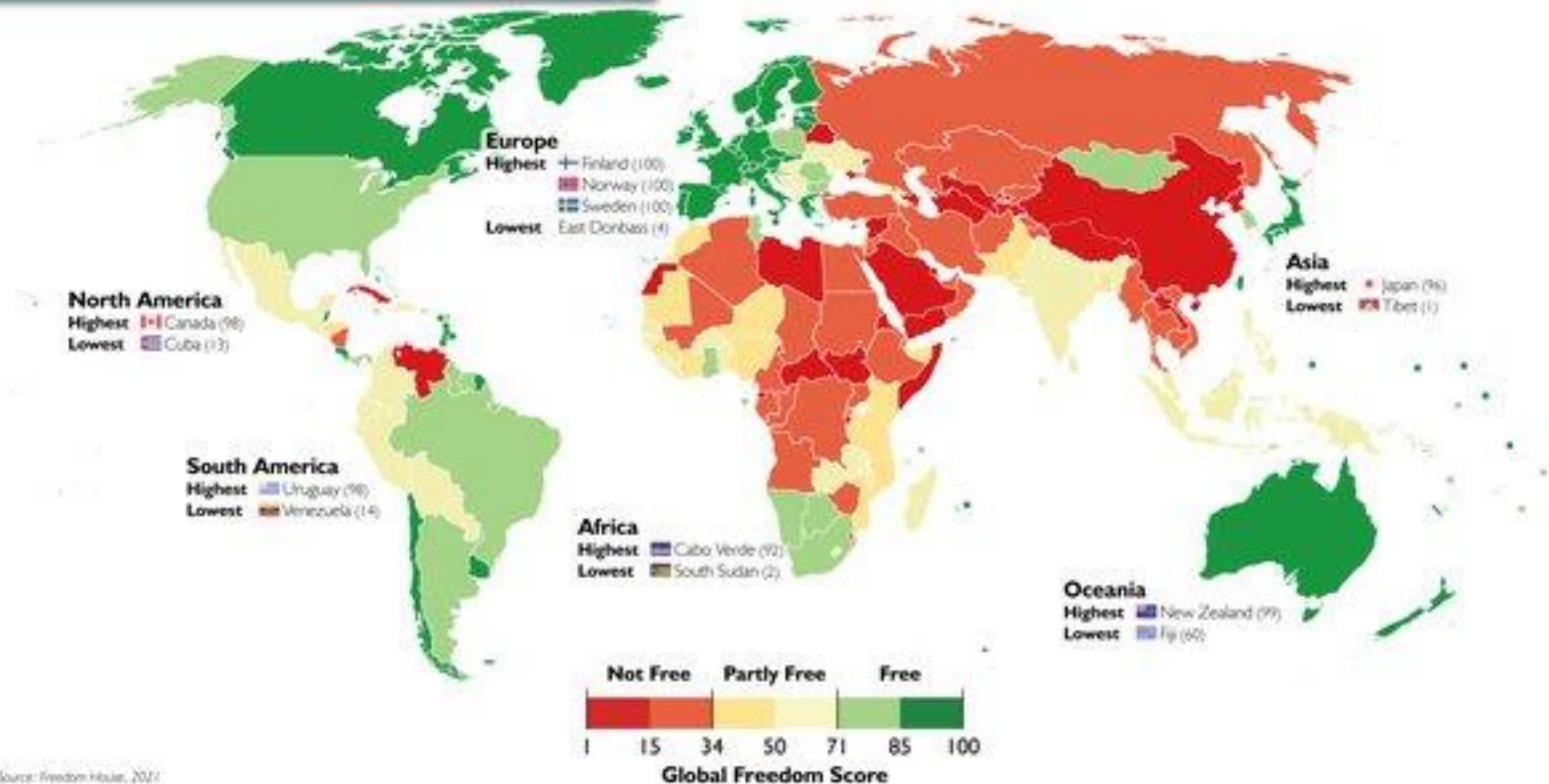
Chart 4 | % who said that experts, rather than elected leaders, in charge of making crucial decisions is good /bad



TOP-10 AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES, 2010–2020

		CHANGE	LDI 2010	LDI 2020	REGIME TYPE 2010	REGIME TYPE 2020
1	Poland	-0.34	0.83	0.49	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
2	Hungary	-0.32	0.68	0.37	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
3	Turkey	-0.29	0.40	0.11	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
4	Brazil	-0.28	0.79	0.51	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Democracy
5	Serbia	-0.27	0.51	0.24	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
6	Benin	-0.26	0.55	0.29	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
7	India	-0.23	0.57	0.34	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
8	Mauritius	-0.23	0.73	0.50	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
9	Bolivia	-0.18	0.41	0.231	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
10	Thailand	-0.17	0.34	0.17	Electoral Autocracy	Closed Autocracy

Global Freedom Index



Comparison Element	Democracy	Autocracy
Meaning of Term	From Greek - Demos means "people" and Kratos means "power" or "authority".	From Greek - Auto means "self" and Kratos means "power" or "authority".
Government	The power and strength of the government are given to it by the people.	One person or group holds all the power, without the participation, or sometimes even the consent, of the people.
Freedoms & Rights	Identified in country's constitution and created by laws.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determined by person or group in power ▪ Often severely restrictive to suppress opponents. ▪ Vary based on religion, sex, status etc. ▪ Books, magazines censored by government ▪ Ability to express one's point of view, to assemble etc. often limited.

Alang makes more space for dying ships



More on the decks: The additional plots can double the ship-recycling capacity of Alang to 9 million LDT, the venue

Avinash Nair

Almost four decades after the Alang ship-breaking yard was set up on the Gulf of Khambhat coast in Gujarat, the State government is preparing a master plan to equip the country's biggest ship-recycling yard to take up more work.

"Currently there are 153 plots at Alang where ageing ships are broken down. We will be adding another 50 plots, as per the new master plan, which is being prepared for the entire Alang region in Bhavnagar district," an official of Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) says.

The additional plots can double the ship recycling capacity of Alang from 4.5 million light displacement tonnage (LDT) to 9 million LDT. Alang is currently equipped to recycle 400-450 ships a year. On an average, it has been producing 3.5 million tonne of steel annually from recycling about 200 ships.

"We will be expanding the capacity of Alang in two phases. In the first phase, we will make some changes in regulations to attract more ships to Alang. We will also try to operationalise the vacant plots at Alang. In the second phase, as per the new master plan for Alang region, we will be adding new ship-breaking plots," says the official, who declined to be named. There are 153 plots at Alang of which 131 are 'operational' and the rest vacant. However, workers point out that Alang has been on a decline since 2011-12. From 415 ships with 3.8 million LDT for recycling, the count dwindled to 167 ships in 2020-21. The numbers improved a bit at 209 ships in 2023-22, before dipping again to 137 ships in 2022-23.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Mall makeover: driving footfalls via promotions, pop ups and festivals

Consumer preferences are shifting from buying products to services and more experience-based shopping, so, retailers are turning more proactive in approaching and bringing in customers, to drive footfalls, mall developers and retailers are collaborating to come up with unique experiences

Janaki Krishnan

Recently, I was surprised when I got a call from my local supermarket that they were running a discount sale and as a valued customer to make sure not to miss it. In all the years I have been doing my weekly shopping, I never had they called me to announce their offers.

As consumer preferences are shifting from buying products to buying services and more experience-based shopping, retailers are becoming more proactive in approaching and bringing in customers. To drive footfalls, mall developers and retailers are collaborating to come up with unique experiences. Concerts, food fairs, free makeovers, book shows, events themed around cultural and religious festivals, artificial snow parks - it's all happening.

Shifts in consumption
 Consumer patterns have shifted over the past few years, especially after COVID-19. Lockdowns, the much publicised "revenge" theme played out for a bit but people got tired of it. Now, there is another shift.

Sales data show consumption is back in malls but what customers are spending upon has changed. Earlier, it was apparel and fashion that



New paradigms: Food, dining out, entertainment and experiences are driving consumption. REUTERS

drove sales. Now, food, dining out, entertainment and experiences are driving consumption at shopping centres.

Mallu, a communications professional, says when her family decides to go out they identify the Starbucks outlet, or a pizza place they want to go to and then pick the mall where it is located.

"If you see the number of shopping bags in the hands of customers, apparel, fashion and accessories, they have gone down in terms of purchases," says Abhishek Sharma, Director, Retail Agency, Knight Frank India. He points out the share of food and beverage outlets had risen to 35-40% from 20% before.

This is not just anecdotal evidence. The numbers bear out this trend. In the last quarter of 2023, fashion sales of listed offline retailers dipped 5%, electronics fell 7% and so did grocery, according to a report by BCG India. Quick service restaurants saw a 12% dip in sales after decelerating growth over the last several quarters. Jewellery was the only category that showed growth.

Consumption growth lagged rental growth
 at malls, but entertainment and experiences have become a big part of the consumption basket

Historically, organised retail has outperformed the underlying category growth by a significant margin, and this was the case till 2022. In 2023, there was a sudden change in trend and while the underlying category growth was more or less stable with a slight downward bias, listed retailers saw a steep dip in their sales.

Mall movements
 Consumption patterns at malls mirror this trend. At Phoenix Mills, one of the largest mall operators in the country, it was jewellery, gourmet dining and experiences that drove growth in the first nine months of FY24. The top-performing categories were family entertainment centres such as Time Zone and Game Lane and multi-

plexes across its malls. Consumption growth has lagged rental growth at malls. But entertainment and experiences have become a big part of the consumption basket in malls.

With 68% of the population under 25, "you will see there will be more consumption on the experience side," says Anand Kamanathan, Partner and Consumer, Products and Retail Sector Leader, Deloitte India. "Gen Z and millennials don't save as much, and they go in for experiences. They travel more. Their buying preferences are a lot less product-centric, and more services oriented. Even when buying a product, they look at what experience they can get out of it."

Abheek Singh, MD and Senior Partner, BCG India, points out that shopping at malls were always about the experience, but now that has escalated.

The nature of the experience has changed, and it has moved to different elements. Mall owners and retailers are doing different things to target different customer segments.

At Inffinit Mall in Mumbai, experiences have become a key factor in drawing in customers. Previously people were looking for options in multiplexes and multiplexes. Now, it has shifted to

getting not just the look and feel of the product, but also how it will give a different kind of experience to the person," says Gaurav Bhandari, DGM-Marketing, Inffinit Mall. The Souled Store, for instance, that sells casual apparel has taken experiential clothing to a new level with prints featuring superheroes, cartoons and comics and characters from Netflix shows such as 'Stranger Things'.

Last year Inffinit Mall unveiled 'Lock the Box', a book fest where customers can take as many books as they like that can fit into a box and pay a flat rate. Customers also get to meet their favourite authors at the events. Encouraged by the overwhelming response, Season 2 of the event will take off in April.

Over 80% of brands are common to malls across the country, especially in the tier 1 cities.

"To provide a novelty factor, malls are giving space to pop-up stores. These are niche, home-grown brands that lease space for six months to a year."

"It encourages local skills, local entrepreneurs but at the same time it allows them to bring in a new product or category into the mall," says Sarita Agarwal of beyond square feet, an advisory that specialises in retail development and management.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

For a few dollars more



Cuban legacy: Workers roll cigars at cigar manufacturer El Laguito during the XXIV International Habano Festival in Havana. International sales of Cuban cigars, the island nation's most emblematic product, soared 31% last year as global demand rose for luxury items, the country's main export, said.

CSL builds on success with South Asia's largest ship repair unit

V. Sajeev Kumar

Kochi's Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) was in the national limelight recently when PM Narendra Modi inaugurated ₹4,000-crore worth infrastructure projects and expressed confidence the port city in Kerala would soon become South Asia's largest ship-repair unit.

With the addition of a new dry dock and international ship repair facility costing ₹2,800 crore approximately, the public sector unit is racing to achieve new highs.

Madhu S. Nair, CMD, CSL, says opportunities abound in the shipbuilding market, given the growing demand globally. "We are inspired by the PM's speech during his recent visit, which is a major in-

cent for CSL and India's shipbuilding infrastructure. We are not expecting any immediate outcome after the PM's statement, but we believe it would help us push for further orders."

The shipbuilding sector is set for greater growth primarily due to the challenges faced by ageing fleets the world over in meeting the new regulatory requirements, thus accelerating the demand for fleet replacements.

India commands less than 1% of the \$140-billion global shipbuilding market. "However, going by the order intake over the past 2-3 years at CSL and other yards in the country, we could be looking at a much better picture in the coming years," he says.

In the area of ship re-



Smooth sailing: CSL is set to reach ₹3,200-₹3,400 cr. turnover for FY24, says CSL. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

pair, an estimated \$20-billion global market, India's share is about 1%. CSL's share in the Indian ship repair market is about 50%. "The new international ship repair facility adds about 25% capacity.

The recent expansion at CSL is in line with the Central government's Maritime India Vision 2030 to position India among the world's top 10 maritime trade, and promotion of sustainable practices.

Air cargo conundrum: The hungry elephant in the room

B. Govindarajan

At a recent conclave of air cargo CEOs in Chennai, a pharma exporter said Indian freight forwarders were nothing more than booking agents since they could offer guaranteed rates for a given period, unlike their counterparts in other export markets.

He had a valid point since fluctuating air freight put Indian exporters at a disadvantage vis-a-vis competition.

The freight forwarders said they had no option as the rates were quoted by foreign airlines that decided on available capacity.

A speaker, representing a foreign airline, confirmed they were forced to



Air peckers: Fluctuating air freight put Indian exporters at a disadvantage vis-a-vis competition. REUTERS

juggle capacity between countries in pursuit of the highest bid, leading to rate volatility. The geopolitical crisis that has hit maritime carriage via the Red Sea raised India's demand for air-cargo capacity, but almost 80% is con-

trolled by foreign airlines. At yet another meet in Bengaluru, experts pitched for converting India's major gateways into transshipment cargo hubs.

While the aspirations of the industry are laudable, the reality is starkly dif-

ferent. A country can host transshipment hubs only if it has at least one "anchor" airline operating globally.

Foreign airlines such as Emirates and Cathay Pacific, operate in India do not have a sizeable home market but boast of a large fleet and capacity far exceeding their country's needs.

They effectively use the sixth freedom traffic right (common aviation right of an airline to carry load from one foreign country to another with a stopover in home country) and gain the most. India, however, does not have even one airline comparable with these foreign carriers in size.

(The writer is founder-CEO of Tirwin Management Solutions Pvt. Ltd.)

CSL builds on success with South Asia's largest ship repair unit

V. Sajeev Kumar

Kochi's Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) was in the national limelight recently when PM Narendra Modi inaugurated ₹4,000-crore worth infrastructure projects and expressed confidence the port city in Kerala would soon become South Asia's largest ship-repair centre.

With the addition of a new dry dock and international ship repair facility costing ₹2,800 crore approximately, the public sector unit is raring to achieve new highs.

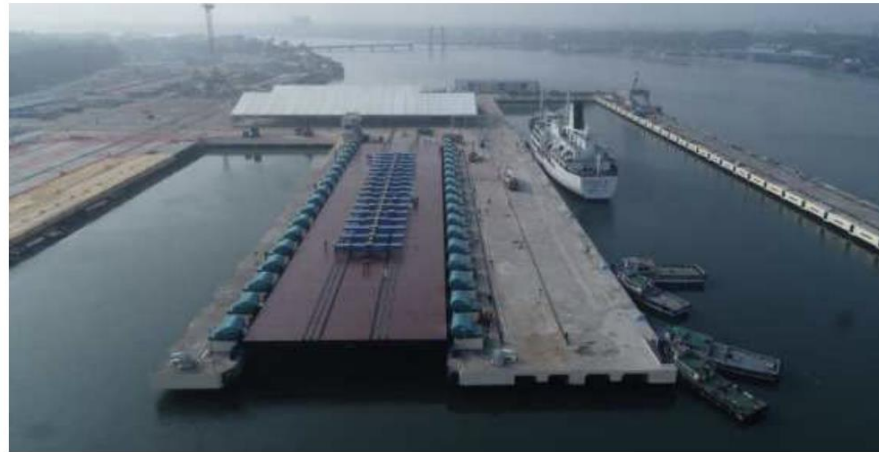
Madhu S. Nair, CMD, CSL, says opportunities abound in the shipbuilding market, given the growing demand globally. "We are inspired by the PM's speech during his recent visit, which is a major im-

petus for CSL and India's shipbuilding infrastructure. We are not expecting any immediate outcome after the PM's statement. But we believe it would help us pick up further orders."

The shipbuilding sector is set for greater growth primarily due to the challenges faced by ageing fleets the world over in meeting the new regulatory requirements, thus accelerating the demand for fleet replacements.

India commands less than 1% of the \$140-billion global shipbuilding market. "However, going by the order intake over the past 2-3 years at CSL and other yards in the country, we could be looking at much better numbers in the coming years," he says.

In the area of ship re-



Smooth sailing: CSL is set to reach ₹3,200-₹3,400 cr. turnover for FY24, says Crisil. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

pair, an estimated \$20-billion global market, India's share is about 1%. CSL's share in the Indian ship repair market is about 50%. The yard's new international ship repair facility adds about 25% capacity.

The recent expansion at CSL is in line with the Central government's Maritime India Vision 2030 to position India among the world's top 10 shipbuilding and ship repair destinations by 2030. It also aligns

with the recently announced 'Amrit Kaal Maritime Vision 2047' initiatives, which include expansion of port infrastructure and maritime trade, and promotion of sustainable practices.

The new dry dock at CSL is 310 metre long; the international ship repair facility is equipped to hoist vessels weighing up to 6,000 tonne.

The large capacity will not only buttress Kochi's prowess in shipbuilding and repairs but also facilitate the development of a business ecosystem in the region encompassing micro, small and medium enterprises, as well as ancillary facilities. Larger vessels like aircraft carriers and LNG carriers can be accommodated, thereby cutting India's dependence on foreign nations for their construction and repair.

The yard had built and unveiled India's first hydrogen fuel cell ferry, which is in the final stages of trials and be commis-

sioned soon. The new, indigenous technology vessel has been developed by CSL in collaboration with Indian technology partners and would be propelled by an indigenous fuel cell. Globally, several countries are working on similar pilot vessels for technology demonstration, Mr. Nair explained.

Hydrogen is considered one of the cleanest fuels for achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions. CSL is hopeful of rolling out eco-friendly vessels in riverine and/or coastal cities as part of this initiative.

Defence works

CSL's units in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Port Blair have helped spread ship repair services on both the east and west coast of India.

The units offer maintenance, repair and operations (MRO) services to domestic, foreign and defence vessels, generating more than ₹200 crore turnover until the third quarter of FY24. On the shipyard's work on new projects for the Indian Navy, Mr. Nair says eight anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft, worth about ₹6,300 crore, are under construction. Also, six next-generation missile vessels, worth about ₹9,800 crore are in the design and equipment-ordering stage. Rating agency Crisil said CSL achieved sales of ₹1,488 crore during first half of FY24 and is set to reach ₹3,200-3,400 crore for the full year.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

DOMINATION

Lyon spins Australia to a thumping victory over New Zealand



Nathan Lyon took six for 65 as Australia dismissed New Zealand for 196 before lunch on the fourth day of the first Test at the Basin Reserve on Sunday to win by 172 runs and 1-0 up in the series. **The scores:** Australia 383 & 164 bt New Zealand 179 & 196 (Ravindra 59, Lyon 6/65). **Point:** Green, Australia won by 172 runs.

POLE POSITION

India climbs to top spot in the latest WTC standings



India jumped to the top of the World Test Championship standings, replacing New Zealand in the latest rankings issued on Sunday. India has a point percentage of 64.58 (62 points in eight matches); five wins, two losses and one draw. NZ has points percentage of 60.00. (36 points in five matches: three wins, two losses).

DETERMINATION

RCB skipper Smriti praises Perry's fighting spirit



RCB captain Smriti Mandhana hailed Perry's resilience during the WPL match against Mumbai Indians. "Puzz (Ellyse Perry) is a fighter. Derwin (Nuggetts), James, who last year overtook Karen (Abdul-Jabbar) for the all-time scoring mark, is a four-time NBA champion, four-time NBA MVP as well as the oldest active player.

INCREDIBLE FEAT

James becomes first NBA player to score 40,000 career points



LeBron James on Saturday became the first NBA player to reach 40,000 career regular-season points, when scoring nine against Denver Nuggets. James, who last year overtook Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the all-time scoring mark, is a four-time NBA champion, four-time NBA MVP as well as the oldest active player.

Capitals move to top of the table with win over Giants

Meg Lanning kicks things off with a half-century; Ashleigh Gardner is lone star for Gujarat but Jess Jonassen and Radha Yadav neutralise her efforts as Beth Mooney side ends Bengaluru leg winless

WPL SEASON 2

Meg Lanning
BENGALURU

Ashleigh Gardner (two for 37 and 40, 31b, 584, 1x6) shone for Gujarat Giants, but Jess Jonassen (4-0-22-3) and Radha Yadav (4-0-20-3) shone brighter to pilot Delhi Capitals to a 25-run win in the Women's Premier League match at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

A spirited bowling effort helped DC pile on Giants' misery as the Beth Mooney side finished the Bengaluru leg winless after only managing 138 for eight chasing a target of 164.

Titas Sadhu and Shikha Pandey started with maidens, the latter cleaning up Laura Wolvaardt for a duck as Giants got off to a dreadful start.

Jonassen then picked up two in her first over. She



Wreaking havoc! Radha and Jonassen scalp three apiece to pile on Giants' misery after Lanning's breezy knock. K. MURALI KUMAR

trapped Mooney in front before removing Rhebeke Litchfield.

Wickets kept tumbling even as Gardner staged a fight. GG slid to 73 for five when Radha sent back Veda Krishnamurthy and Kathryn Bryce.

Giants couldn't make straight to Wolvaardt as

sen ended Gardner's resistance. Earlier, Meg Lanning's half-century took DC to 163 for eight despite a superb spell by Meghna Singh (4-0-37-4).

Meghna removed Shaifal Vorma, who flicked straight to Wolvaardt at square-leg.

The in-form Alice Capony did not let the tempo slip as she took just four deliveries to hit her first boundary.

The Englishwoman went to strike four more fours in her 17-ball cameo, adding a quick 38 for the second wicket with skipper Lanning before being

caught by Tanuja Kanwar who took her first wicket.

Lanning switched gears and dealt in boundaries, pushing DC past 100 in the 13th over and reaching her fifty off 39 deliveries with a four.

Just when Lanning looked on course to put the game beyond Giants'

reach, Meghna struck again, dismissing Rodrigues as the next to go, losing her wicket to Mannat Kashyap.

Meghna ended the innings with Radha's scalp, but the Giants dropped four catches and eventually slipped to their fourth straight loss.

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS

Meg Lanning 55 (41b, 6x4, 1x6), Shaifal Vorma c Wolvaardt b Gardner 27 (17b, 5x6), Jenimah Rodrigues c Taranum b Mannat 7 (10b), Annabel Sutherland c Gardner 11 (7b, 1x6), Anandhathi Reddy c Meghna b Gardner 9 (8b), Radha Yadav lbw b Meghna 5 (7b), Mooney 7 (10b), Extras (not out) 24 (lb, 2x6), Extras (w-6): 6; Total (for eight wickets in 20 overs): 163.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-20 (Shafal), 2-4 overs, 2-58 (Mooney), 3-36 (Litchfield, 12-4), 4-111 (Jenimah, 33-3), 5-138 (Jonassen, 15-3), 6-142 (Sutherland, 16-6), 7-146 (Anandhathi, 17-6), 8-163 (Radha, 19-6).

GIANTS BOWLING

Tanuja 4-0-31-1, Bryce 4-0-22-0, Meghna 4-0-37-4, Gardner 4-0-22-3, Mannat 3-0-16-1, Taranum 1-0-9-0.

GUJARAT GIANTS

Beth Mooney b Jonassen 12 (14b, 2x6), Laura Wolvaardt b

Shikha 0 (3b), Rhebeke Litchfield c Sutherland b Jonassen 15 (10b, 2x6, 1x6), Veda Krishnamurthy c Shikha b Radha 12 (13b, 2x6), Ashleigh Gardner st. Tanuja b Jonassen 40 (22b, 5x6, 1x6), Kathryn Bryce lbw b Radha 3 (6b), Tanuja Kanwar c Shaifal b Radha 13 (16b, 1x6), Taranum Pathan lbw b Anandhathi 12 (12b, 1x6), Meghna Singh (not out) 10 (10b), Savali Satishwar (not out) 14 (10b, 1x6), Extras (not out) 14 (lb, w-7, nb-1); 17; Total (for eight wickets in 20 overs): 138.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Wolvaardt), 1-30, 2-28 (Mooney), 3-36 (Litchfield, 4-5), 4-53 (Veda, 7-6), 5-73 (Bryce, 10-3), 6-105 (Gardner, 14-2), 7-113 (Tanuja, 16-1), 8-123 (Taranum, 17-5).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Titas 2-1-12-0, Shikha 4-1-28-1, Jonassen 4-0-22-3, Anandhathi 3-0-27-1, Sutherland 3-0-20-0, Radha 4-0-20-3.

Toss: Gujarat Giants.

Delhi Capitals won by 25 runs. **Monday's matches:** UP Warriors vs. Royal Challengers, 7.30 p.m.

Shardul swings it Mumbai's way, the host a big lead

RANJI TROPHY

Anmol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

"I won the bet." Shardul Thakur told R. Sai Kishore while exchanging a 'high-five' minutes after the end of the second day's play of the Ranji Trophy semifinal on Sunday.

While Sai Kishore reminded him that it was only by T20s, both had a heavy laugh over it. The bet, one was later informed, was that Shardul will "annihilate" him when I face him in a match."

On a day that was highlighted by the individual brilliance of both the all-rounders, Shardul overshadowed Sai Kishore at the Sharda Pawar Cricket Academy grounds with Mumbai's lower order taking the game away from the opposition.

Sai Kishore on song Shardul Thakur's (109, 105b, 13x4, 4x6) maiden First-Class hundred and his partnerships with Hardik Tamore (105 for the eighth wicket) and Tanush Korian (79 for the ninth) put Mumbai in command after R. Sai Kishore (6ix for 97) had Mumbai in trouble.

Korian (74) and Tushar Deshpande's unbroken 63-run stand rubbed salt into Tamil Nadu's wounds as Mumbai was 353 for nine at stumps, an advantage of 207 runs.

The star of the day was Shardul. He bailed Mumbai out of trouble with a fearless yet masterful knock. When he took guard, with just 13 minutes remaining



Reversing it: Shardul pulled Mumbai out of the woods with a brilliant century. DHANUJAL YOGINI

for lunch, Sai Kishore was on the rampage, having picked up four wickets in the morning to shatter another record. Mumbai, at that stage, was 105 for seven and in danger of conceding the lead.

Shardul did not waste time in showing his intent, hitting him for two fours. Even after lunch, he continued to go after the TN captain whose marathon spell was a treat to watch. While no other Mumbai batter was comfortable against him, Shardul scored 44 runs off the 37 balls he faced the lanky spinner.

He was dismissed after he reached his landmark with a one-bounced four as Jagadeesan - who had effected a brilliant stumping in the morning - took a lunging catch. While the last two sessions belonged to Mumbai, Tamil Nadu dominated the morning session.

Sai Kishore bowled unchanged from the clubhouse end. Despite an overcast morning, he used

Shardul revels in a dream knock

S. Dipak Bagav
MUMBAI

Every aspiring cricketer, at some point, dreams of single-handedly saving the team from precarious situations with their individual brilliance. Shardul Thakur made it a reality with his scintillating counter-attacking century in the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Tamil Nadu here on Sunday.

"I like these kinds of situations. When you play with passion, you wait for these moments," said Thakur, reveling at the fact that his knock took the game away from the opposition. "When the team is down, you want to lift them up with your performance; you want to do something in the middle that changes the game."

The 32-year-old did not hold himself back from going for his shots and felt his side's top order was a bit defensive in the morning. "At times, in big games, if you are scared, you tend to play safe. So, we might as well play with freedom. That was the idea when I started batting."

The all-rounder also hoped this knock would be the start of many more centuries to come in the future. "When I started, Bombay used to send me a number 10 and 11. So, I had to work my way up," said Thakur on his long wait for his maiden First-Class century. "Probably more hundreds will come, and it's a big opening that you should promote all-rounders in Mumbai cricket," he added.

MP rides on Mantri's ton to surge ahead against Vidarbha

Ablishek Saini
MUMBAI

Himanshu Mantri's century (126, 265b, 12x4, 1x6) served as the archetype of the steadily resolve often associated with the longest format and laid the platform for Madhya Pradesh to pull ahead against Vidarbha on the second day of the first Ranji Trophy semifinal at the VCA Stadium (Civil Lines) here on Sunday.

The southpaw was handed a reprieve on Thursday the most of it, forging an innings-steering partnerships with Sagar Solanki and Saransh Jain.

Vidarbha, chasing a deficit of 82 runs, lost Atharva Talde, who was given leg-before while he was out of arms to a delivery that seemed back in. Dhruv Shorey and Akshay Wakhare took the home side to 13 for one at stumps.

The day started with the defiance of Mantri and Harsh Gawali but turned on its head after Vidarbha doctors hoist Wakhare for four and six off consecutive deliveries before getting to his third First-Class century of the season in 220 balls.

Saransh stepped out against Wakhare to loft the off-spinner down the surface on the second was repetition of sorts for Vidarbha. Umesh and Yash Thakur combined in the final hour of the morning session to send MP to 81 for one to 93 for four.

MP's resistance was cracked when Thakur's length ball skidded on and trapped Gawali in front. Umesh cleaned up Shub-



Leading from the front: Mantri's century gave MP a decisive edge against Vidarbha. B. JOTHI RAMANUNJAM

THE SCORES

Vidarbha - 1st innings: 170. **Madhya Pradesh - 1st innings:** Himanshu Mantri c Wadkar b Wakhare 100, Anubhav Agrawal b Sarwate 6, Kumar Kartikeya b Thakur 6, Ansh Khan (not out) 7, Kulwant Khejroliya c (sub) Wadh b Umesh 4, Extras (lb-1b-1); Total (in 54.3 overs): 252.

Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-81, 3-86, 4-83, 5-146, 6-218, 7-231, 8-239, 9-246.

Vidarbha bowling: Umesh 19-3-40-3, Thakur 19-6-38-0, Thakur 20-3-19-3, Sarwate 15-3-48-1, Wakhare 21-6-58-2.

Vidarbha - 2nd innings: Atharva Talde lbw b Ansh 2, Dhruv Shorey (batting 10), Akshay Wakhare (batting 1), Extras 0; Total (for one wicket in 10 overs): 1-12.

Madhya Pradesh bowling: Ansh 2-0-2-1, Venkatesh 1-0-11-1, Anubhav 1-1-0-0.

Shardul and Sai Kishore call for better scheduling

S. Dipak Bagav
MUMBAI

At a time when the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) wants to ensure players do not skip domestic cricket, especially the Ranji Trophy, India all-rounder Shardul Thakur has called for better scheduling and gaps between games for the well-being of the players.

"It's difficult because we are playing First-Class matches with three-day gaps," said Shardul when asked about how he is managing workloads. "When I started playing Ranji Trophy, the first three games used to have a three-day break and then four days."

"Now we have seen all matches played with a three-day gap. So it is extremely tough to expect domestic players to play 10 games in a row with a three-day gap if a team reaches the final."

The 32-year-old felt the short gap is tough on batsmen and cited the example of his Mumbai teammate Anmol Karhadkar playing up an injury.

"I think they will have to relook at it next year and give more breaks," he added.

TN skipper Sai Kishore echoed similar views. "A few players feel the same thing. We travel for one day and because of that, we don't train much. The overs 1 am bowling are in the matches, and I manage myself that way, but it should be more challenging for the faster bowlers," said Sai Kishore.

INCREDIBLE FEAT

James becomes first NBA player to score 40,000 career points



REUTERS

LeBron James on Saturday became the first NBA player to reach 40,000 career regular-season points, when scoring nine against Denver Nuggets. James, who last year overtook Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the all-time scoring mark, is a four-time NBA champion, four-time NBA MVP as well as the oldest active player.

Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee Means Guarantee of Ease of Living

Pucca houses for over 4 crore families



Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETS LAST TIME BEFORE ELECTION

Confident of return, Govt readies 100-day action plan after polls

PM Modi chairs day-long meeting, will tour five states over next three days



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the meeting of the Council of Ministers in New Delhi on Sunday. **ANI**

HARIKISHAN SHARMA & LIZ MATHIEW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

MEETING IN New Delhi for the last time before the announcement of the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections, the Union Council of Ministers, confident

that the ruling alliance would be voted to power for a third consecutive term, discussed Sunday a 100-day action plan to be implemented by the new government after the polls.

The day-long meeting of the Union Council of Ministers, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saw presenta-

tions by Secretaries on a vision document for Viksit Bharat 2047 and a detailed action plan for the next five years.

In these presentations, the Prime Minister's vision for Viksit Bharat was outlined, sources said, underlining that these included zero poverty, skill to every youth, and 100 per cent

saturation of welfare schemes. Modi was quoted as having told the officers to continue their work on government projects and schemes and not treat the election period as a vacation when the political leadership will be busy with the electoral process.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Justice Gangopadhyay of Calcutta HC says quitting to join politics, slams TMC

BJP, Cong say he is welcome; TMC calls him political party worker

SWEETY MISHRA & AJURVA VISHWANATH
KOLKATA, NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED move, Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay, a sitting judge of the Calcutta High Court, said Sunday that he will resign Tuesday as a judge and join politics.

The judge, who is due to retire in August, has been at the centre of controversy for his frequent remarks against some of his own colleagues, the ruling TMC and its leader Akhilesh Banerjee.

"I will enter the field of politics. I am not telling you today which party I will start with. I want to first finish the little work that is still left in court. Tomorrow, I will wrap that up. I will verbally inform the Chief Justice. And the day-after morning, I will send my resignation to the President." Justice Gangopadhyay said in an interview with Bengali TV news channel ABP Ananda.

His announcement came a

few days after he had announced his resignation to join politics as a Congress candidate.

Former Chief Justice of India Koka Subba Rao in 1967 had resigned three months before his retirement to contest Presidential elections as the Opposition candi-



Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay in Kolkata on Sunday. **PTI**

In a divided Bar, judge's move raises questions on independence of judiciary

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

A SITTING judge of a Constitutional court resigning to join politics is not new.

Former Chief Justice of India Koka Subba Rao in 1967 had resigned three months before his retirement to contest Presidential elections as the Opposition candi-

date against Congress's Zakir Husain.

But only six weeks before his retirement, former SC Judge Baharul Islam resigned in 1983 to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Barpeta, Assam, as a Congress candidate.

Yet, Calcutta High Court Judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay's announcement of his resignation and that he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL



IDEA EXCHANGE

'India will outgrow the rest of the world if it continues on the path of inclusion'

JOHN CHAMBERS
CHAIRMAN, INDIAN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP FORUM

PAGE 20

BENGALURU BLAST

Looking to join dots, probe agencies speak to accused in 2022 cases

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, MARCH 3

A BUNCH of cases lodged in Karnataka in 2022 involving a group of 10 youths, aged between 20 and 26 years, has come back into focus in the backdrop of the March 1 lunch-hour bomb blast at the popular Rameshwara Cafe in Whitefield area of Bengaluru which left nine persons injured.

Investigators from multiple agencies are trying to establish the identity of a young man caught on CCTV footage at the restaurant wearing a cap, glasses and a mask — who is being treated as a suspect — by talking to the 10 youths arrested in the 2022 cases. Police sources said the probe agencies have spoken to some of the accused who are currently lodged in Bengaluru Central Prison.

The three cases from 2022, including two related to terrorism, registered in Mangaluru and Shivamogga, have gained prominence in the aftermath of the Rameshwara Cafe blast as the IID used is similar to the IEDs and materials found in the 2022 cases. There are similarities (with the Mangaluru and Shivamogga cases) in the sense that they have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TO CONNECT WITH YOUTH

On Cong manifesto table: Germany-style apprenticeship, paper leak compensation

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

HAVING DECIDED to frame unemployment as one of its major talking points against the BJP government during the Lok Sabha poll campaign, the Congress is set to come up with some 'out of the box' promises in its manifesto to ease joblessness and soften the blow of repeated exam paper leaks, hoping they would strike a chord with the youth.

The Congress think tank is said to be looking at the much-

praised apprenticeship model of Germany and tailoring it for Indian conditions.

The German dual education model (vocational education and training system) allows smooth education-to-work transitions with young people getting on-the-job training at a company while studying at a vocational school.

The model, Congress leaders believe, offers the youth an attractive way to enter the job market. The challenge is to tailor the model to suit Indian conditions since the private sector as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



INDIA bloc leaders at the rally in Patna on Sunday. **PTI**

Lalu to Tejashwi, Rahul to Akhilesh: Opposition targets PM at Patna rally

INDIA bloc leaders raise BJP's 'divisive politics' and Nitish Kumar's flip-flop

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, MARCH 3

THE INDIA bloc Sunday held its first joint rally since Nitish Kumar's exit as top leaders, including Congress's Rahul Gandhi, SP's Akhilesh Yadav and RJD's Lalu Prasad and Tejashwi Yadav, converged in the Bihar capital to target Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'divisive politics' ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

All the leaders touched on the key talking points upon which

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Under fire from TMC for 'vulgar' songs, BJP's Asansol pick opts out

SANTANU CHOWDHURY
KOLKATA, MARCH 3

A DAY after the BJP announced his name as its candidate for Asansol for the Lok Sabha polls, Bhajpur singer-actor Pawan Singh Sunday said he will not contest from the constituency in West Bengal. Although he did not give a reason, Singh's candidature had drawn criticism from TMC leaders, who claimed some of his songs had vulgar refer-

After student death that rocked Kerala, college remains on edge

KHALP PHILIP
SHALPETTA (WAYANAD), MAR 3

POSTERS OF Che Guevara and images of Maoism run the corridors along the walls on the first floor of the men's hostel at College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Pookode, in Kerala's Wayanad district.

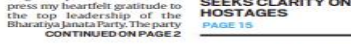
It was in the inner courtyard of

Asansol for the Lok Sabha polls, Bhajpur singer-actor Pawan Singh Sunday said he will not contest from the constituency in West Bengal. Although he did not give a reason, Singh's candidature had drawn criticism from TMC leaders, who claimed some of his songs had vulgar refer-

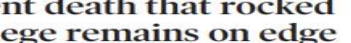
ences to Bengali women.

As the BJP came under attack, Singh in a post on X said: "I express my heartfelt gratitude to the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The party

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Bhajpur singer-actor Pawan Singh



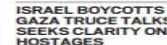
J S Sidharthan, 20, was assaulted by SH members

THE WORLD

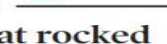
SHEHBAZ BECOMES PAK PM, VOWS TO BUILD, IMPROVE TIES WITH NEIGHBOURS

ISRAEL BOYCOTTS GAZA TRUCE TALKS, SEEKS CLARITY ON HOSTAGES

PAGE 15



Shehbaz Sharif



J S Sidharthan

Where clean air funds allotted to states went: Drains, fountains, roads

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

ABHINAVYA HARGOVIND
NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

A FOOTBALL ground, fountains, roads; underground drains. These are among the items listed by states when questioned by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) about how they utilised funds meant for tackling air pollution.

These funds were allocated under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and the 15th Finance Commission (FC) be-

tween the financial years (FY) 2019-20 and 2023-2024. According to an Environment Ministry submission to the NGT last month, 19 cities flagged by the tribunal for their deteriorating air quality received ₹1544.40 crore in this period.

But records show that a number of states underutilised the funds and some of them spent a notable chunk on projects whose connection to air pollution may not seem readily apparent — a point brought up by the tribunal itself.

The NGT, in November 2023, had flagged the deteriorating air quality of 53 towns and cities, in-

cluding the 19 mentioned above. It told the respective states to take "remedial measures" and submit details of how they utilised the funds they received under the NCAP and 15th FC.

A month later, the tribunal noted that the states which had filed the reports until then had not fully utilised the funds and that "only few states have used it for setting up AQI monitoring stations". It said: "In some states, we have found that the funds have been utilised under the heads which may not have direct connection with improving air quality. In fact, funds are required to be utilised as per the approved

CITIES THAT GOT MOST FUNDS

City	Funds utilised (₹ cr)	Funds released (₹ cr)
Lucknow	385.83	385.83
Patna	298.92	298.6
Bhopal	178.60	183.85
Chennai	112.71	136.25
Coimbatore	102.64	(utilisation amount not available)
Kota	64.57	101.25
Ludhiana	71.59	97.75

* Allocation amount ₹1752.4. Utilisation amount ₹1752.3
Source: Environment Ministry, reports submitted by states to NGT

action plan..."

So far, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Meghalaya and Delhi have submitted reports to the green tribunal.

Here is an overview of how the funds were utilised in various cities.

Bihar's report on activities in Dhanbad, submitted last month, included construction of four playgrounds (allotment of ₹47 crore), ₹5.1 crore spent on air including a football ground. It also included the purchase of a desludging machine for ₹3.03 crore. The largest chunk of expen-

diture, ₹1727 crore, was for "end-to-end pavement", followed by ₹9.12 crore for bituminous roads and "development of parks".

The Bihar government, too, submitted its report on Patna to the NGT last month. It says the funds were utilised in various ways.

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RAKES UP KASHMIR ISSUE, AIMS AT G20 MEMBERSHIP BY 2030

Shehbaz becomes Pak PM, vows to build, improve ties with neighbours

Focus on rebuilding economy amid huge budgetary deficit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, MARCH 3

PAKISTAN'S NEWLY-ELECTED Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday raked up the Kashmir issue in his maiden address but pledged to improve ties with all leading nations, including the country's neighbours.

Shehbaz said that Pakistan would not become part of any "great game" and his government would increase the number of friends. He pledged to build and improve ties with all leading nations, including neighbours.

"We will keep ties with neighbours on the basis of equality," Shehbaz, 72, said as he easily won the election in the National Assembly to become Pakistan's prime minister for a second time.

He said that his government would work hard and set a goal to become a member of G20 coun-



Shehbaz Sharif. File

tries by 2030. The G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies.

He, however, raked up the Kashmir issue and equated it with Palestine. "Let's all come together [...] and the National Assembly should pass a resolution for the freedom of Kashmiris and Palestinians," he added.

Shehbaz, who was the consensus candidate of the PML-N

and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), received 201 votes in the 336-member house.

Shehbaz said that the country was facing challenges primarily due to the fragile economy. He said that he was starting his tenure when the country was facing a budgetary deficit of more than one trillion rupees.

"How we will pay the salaries for armed forces and how to pay the civil servants," he wondered and added that reforming the economy was the biggest challenge faced by the country. He promised to bring investment into the country and create economic conditions that would spur economic growth. He highlighted that the energy sector was crumbling due to the accumulating debt owed by the country to the power-producing companies.

The session of the new parliament was convened amid ruckus and sloganeering by PTI-backed lawmakers.

Police crackdown on Imran party workers protesting 'rigged' polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE, MARCH 3

MORE THAN 100 supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party have been arrested from different parts of Punjab province of Pakistan for staging rallies against alleged vote rigging, police said on Sunday.

On the call of party founder Imran Khan, supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party held protests across Pakistan on Saturday against the alleged "massive rigging" in the February 8 general elections.

Most arrests took place in Lahore where newly elected CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz ordered

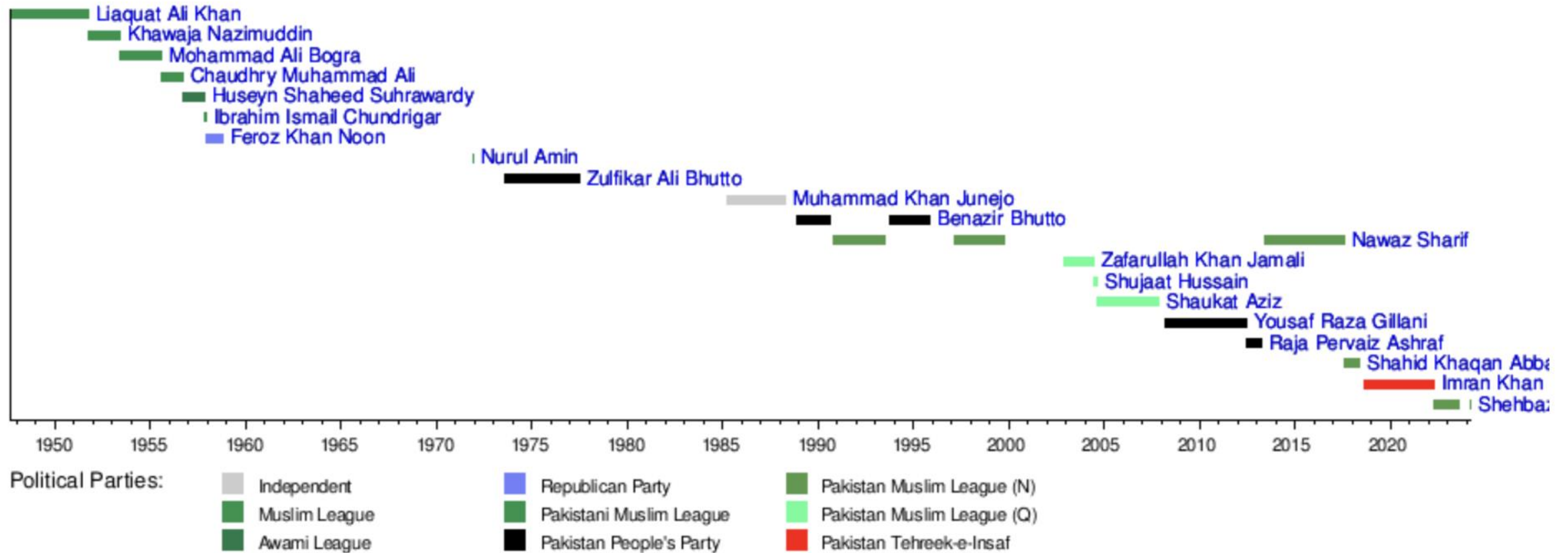
PTI RE-ELECTS GOHAR KHAN AS CHAIRMAN

Islamabad: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Sunday announced that Barrister Gohar Ali Khan was elected as its chairman in fresh intra-party polls. It was forced by the poll body to hold new party polls after last year's polls were deemed illegal. **REUTERS**

a clamp down on the protesters.

"Mian Shahzad Farooq and Afzaal Azeem Pahat, who contested... against Maryam Nawaz and Shehbaz Sharif, were also arrested," a party spokesperson said.

Timeline



THIS WORD MEANS

GREY ZONE WARFARE

The term was recently used by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan at the Raisina Dialogue

RISHIKA SINGH

NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

ON THE last day of the 2024 Raisina Dialogue (on February 24), India's Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan said "grey-zone warfare" was the latest in informal warfare.

During a discussion titled 'The New Wars: Policies, Practices, and Preparation', he gave an example of the situation in the South China Sea, where several countries have extended competing territorial claims, and where occasional confrontations involving small boats have been reported.

In commentaries on China and Taiwan too, the term crops up in descriptions of Chinese actions around the island that it claims as its own.



Taiwan's Lion Islet, with China's Xiamen in the background. China's actions around Taiwan have been termed grey zone warfare. Reuters

Chinese actions of late as examples of grey zone warfare.

This includes the Chinese military's

Apple's India output: \$10 bn in 10 months

RISHI RAJ

New Delhi, March 3

APPLE'S PRODUCTION OF iPhones in India crossed the \$10-billion mark during the 10-month period of April-January of the current fiscal. This

INSIDE

Why Apple veered away from the EV highway

PAGE 6

is nearly 30% higher than the \$7-billion production by the tech giant in FY23. According to sources, over 70% of

the total production has been exported across countries in Europe, the US and Asia.

The current fiscal is also the first year where Apple is averaging over \$1 billion of production each month, compared to \$620 million per month in FY23. This produc-

BIG BITE

70%

of total India-made iPhones exported to European, Asian and US markets

Nearly 30% higher than **\$7 bn** production by Apple in FY23



\$1 billion

of production on average each month vs **\$620 million a month in FY23**

70% of the total production has been contributed by Foxconn Hon Hai

30% of the total output from Pegatron and Wistron

tion has been achieved by Apple's three vendors — Foxconn Hon Hai, Pegatron, both in Tamil Nadu, and Wistron, now owned by the Tata Group, located in Karnataka.

According to industry data and information filed by the vendors, a

lion's share — over 70% — of the total production has been contributed by Foxconn Hon Hai. Pegatron and Wistron have together contributed the remaining 30%.

Continued on Page 2



NITI Aayog GROW Report and Portal

27.1
11.6
18.8
Water

price



Recently, the Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal was launched by NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India).



What are the Key Highlights of the GROW Report?



GROW Report



Objective: The GROW report aims to facilitate restoration projects for achieving national commitments of Land Degradation Neutrality and restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, as well as creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.



- **Extent of Wastelands in India:**

- **The report highlights that India possesses approximately 55.76 million hectares of wastelands, comprising 16.96% of the total geographical area (TGA) of the country.**
- **These degraded lands have suffered from reduced productivity and biodiversity due to various natural and human-induced factors. However, the report suggests greening and restoring these wastelands through agroforestry.**

-



- What is the GROW Portal?
- The GROW portal is hosted on the Bhuvan platform, ensuring universal access to state and district-level data related to agroforestry suitability. Through the portal, users can access detailed maps and assessments of agroforestry suitability across different regions of India.



A laboratory setting with a pipette and a multi-well plate. The background is blurred, showing a person in a lab coat. The text is overlaid in the center.

Belgium Recognises Ecocide as a Crime



The Federal Parliament of Belgium has made history by becoming the first country in the European Continent to recognise 'ecocide' as a national as well as an international crime.



The law targets individuals in positions of decision-making power and corporations, aiming to prevent and punish severe environmental degradation such as extensive oil spills.



DENMARK

*NORTH
SEA*

**UNITED
KINGDOM**

NETHERLANDS

GERMANY

★ **BRUSSELS**

BELGIUM

LUXEMBOURG

FRANCE

SWITZERLAND

ITALY

- **Consider the following statements: (2019)**
The Environment Protection Act, 1986 empowers the Government of India to
- 1. state the requirement of public participation in the process of environmental protection, and the procedure and manner in which it is sought**
 - 2. lay down the standards for emission or discharge of environmental pollutants from various sources**
- **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**
 - **(a) 1 only**
 - **(b) 2 only**
 - **(c) Both 1 and 2**
 - **(d) Neither 1 nor 2**





Shri Morarji Desai Birth Anniversary
PIB

The Prime Minister paid tributes to Shri Morarji Desai on his birth anniversary.

Born on 29th February 1896 in Bhadeli village, Gujarat.

Graduated from Wilson Civil Service in Bombay and served as a Deputy Collector for twelve years.

Morarji Desai was an Indian politician and activist who served as the fourth Prime Minister of India from 1977 to 1979.

The Forty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution of India was enacted during his tenure as Prime Minister.



Morarji Desai joined Congress during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Imprisoned thrice and actively participated in individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement.



He became Chief Minister of Bombay in 1952 and also served as Minister for Commerce and Industry, then Finance Minister.



Resigned under the Kamraj Plan and led the Administrative Reforms Commission. Became Prime Minister in 1977.





PM-JANMAN



The implementation of **PM Janjati Adivasi Nyay Maha Abhiyaan (PM-JANMAN)** has been slowing down due to simultaneous data collection of beneficiaries under the scheme.

About the PM-JANMAN

The Union Cabinet approved the scheme in **2023** and the scheme is implemented during **FY 2023-24 to 2025-26**.

The Mission would provide **PVTG families and communities (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups)** essential services.



‘Vikramaditya Vedic Clock’

- The world's first Vedic clock, the 'Vikramaditya Vedic Clock,' based on Indian 'panchang' calculations, was inaugurated at Jantar Mantar in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.
- Ujjain is located at the precise point of interaction with the zero meridian and the Tropic of Cancer. According to Hindu astronomical belief, Ujjain was once considered India's central meridian, determining the country's time zones and time differences.

-



- **Jantar Mantar, an astronomical observatory (a UNESCO World Heritage site) constructed by Maharaja Jai Singh II, can be found in the following cities in India:**

1. Delhi

2. Mathura

3. Varanasi

4. Jaipur

5. Ujjain

-


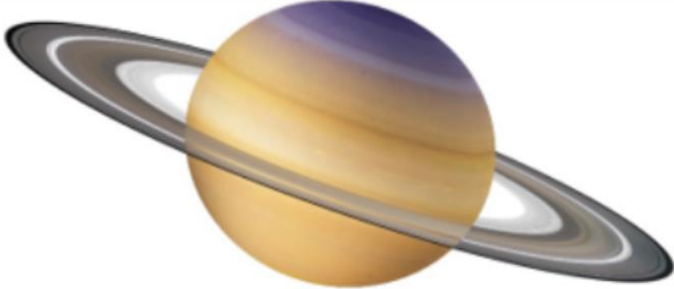


3 new moons discovered around
Uranus and Neptune

- Three new moons, one around Uranus and two around Neptune, have been confirmed by the International Astronomical Union.
- Uranus' moon, S/2023 U1, is about 5 miles across making it one of the smallest known moons around any of the eight planets in the solar system, and will be named after a Shakespeare character,
- Neptune's moons, S/2002 N5 and S/2021 N1, will be named after the Nereids — the daughters of the sea god Nereus from Greek mythology.

Saturn

Context: Saturn has regained its title as the planet with the most moons in the solar system. The discovery of **62 new moons** brings Saturn's total to **145**, surpassing Jupiter, which has **95 officially recognized moons**.

	Jupiter	Saturn
		
Diameter	Largest Planet. More than twice as massive as all other planets combined	Second largest planet in the solar system
Orbital Period	11.9 Earth years	29.5 Earth years
Number of Moons	95	145
Why do they have so many moons?	Saturn and Jupiter have many moons due to their large size, gravitational influence, and the presence of debris and material in their respective regions of the solar system.	
Notable Features	Great Red Spot (giant storm), Galilean satellites (Io, Europa, Ganymede, Callisto)	Spectacular ring system with seven rings, including the moon Titan
Composition	Thick atmosphere of helium and hydrogen	
Exploration	Galileo (1989); Juno (2011); Europa Clipper (2024)	Visited by Pioneer 11, Voyagers 1 and 2, and Cassini (orbited Saturn)

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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, with some wearing suits. The background is blurred, showing more people and a window. An orange horizontal bar is located in the top left corner.

Thank you
guys.
