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SC ends immunity for legislators taking bribes

Seven-judge Bench overrules the judgment by a five-judge Bench in 25-year-old JMM bribery case

The Bench observes that corruption by elected members puts representative democracy at stake

The court dismisses fears of enhanced possibility for abuse of the law by political parties in power

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday declared that parliamentary privilege or immunity will not protect legislators who take bribes to vote or speak in Parliament or State Legislative Assemblies from criminal prosecution.

“Privileges and immunities are not gateways to claim exemptions from the general law of the land... Corruption and bribery of members of the legislature erode the foundation of Indian parliamentary democracy,” the Supreme Court observed.

The unanimous verdict authored by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud overruled a 25-year-old majority view of the Su-

preme Court, laid down in the JMM bribery case judgment of 1998, that lawmakers who took bribes were immune from prosecution for corruption if they go ahead and vote or speak in the House as agreed.

‘Majority erred’

The seven-judge Bench said the majority on the five-judge Bench in the JMM bribery case had erred. The court did not want to perpetuate the grave error. Representative democracy was at stake. Chief Justice Chandrachud clarified that the offence of bribery was complete the moment the corruption money was accepted.

“The legislator will face criminal prosecution whether or not he makes a speech or votes in favour of the bribe-giver. The offence of bribery is com-

plete on the acceptance of the money or on the agreement to accept money being concluded,” Chief Justice Chandrachud observed.

The Constitution Bench dismissed notions that whittling down parliamentary immunity would expose a vote or a speech made by Opposition lawmakers in the House to criminal investigation and thus enhance the possibility of abuse of the law by political parties in power.

Bribed lawmakers, the court said, were destructive to the “aspirational and deliberative ideals of the Constitution and create a polity which deprives citizens of a responsible, responsive and representative democracy”.

Chief Justice Chandrachud reasoned that the freedom of speech and ex-

Taking away privilege

A look at the observations made by the seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in its unanimous verdict:

- The JMM bribery case judgment of 1998, granting lawmakers immunity from prosecution for bribery, had wide ramifications on public interest, probity in public life and parliamentary democracy
- A claim of immunity should fulfil the twofold test that it is tethered to the collective functioning of the House and that it is necessary for the discharge of the essential duties of a legislator
- The offence of bribery is complete at the point when the legislator accepts the bribe

pression, which include voting in the House, and attendant immunities granted to legislators under Articles 105 and 194 did not extend to giving or taking bribes.

The judgment said parliamentary immunity would kick in only if a legislator acts in furtherance of

“fertilising a deliberate, critical and responsive democracy”.

Twofold test

The shield of immunity or parliamentary privilege could be claimed in two circumstances. One, if the actions of a legislator were meant to enhance the dig-

nity and authority of the House and its members as a collective body and, secondly, if they were in the exercise of his rights to free speech, protest and freedom from arrest, among others. A claim for immunity would not survive if it failed this two-fold test, the court said.

“An interpretation which enables an MP to claim immunity from prosecution for an offence of bribery would place them above the law. This would be repugnant to the healthy functioning of parliamentary democracy and subversive of the rule of law,” Chief Justice Chandrachud observed.

Criminal courts and Houses of the legislature have parallel jurisdiction over allegations of bribery. One cannot negate the jurisdiction of the other.

“The jurisdiction exercised by a competent court to prosecute a criminal offence and the authority of the House to take action for a breach of discipline in relation to the acceptance of a bribe by a member of the legislature exist in distinct spheres,” Chief Justice Chandrachud laid down.

The reference came in an appeal filed by JMM leader Sita Soren, who was accused of taking a bribe to vote for a particular candidate in the Rajya Sabha elections of 2012.

Though she later denied culpability on the ground that she voted for the official nominee of her own party, the CBI had filed a chargesheet in the case. The Jharkhand High Court had refused to quash the chargesheet, following which she had moved the apex court.

- As per a 1998 Supreme Court ruling, legal immunity granted to legislators under Articles 105(2) and 194(2) of the Constitution protects them against criminal prosecution on bribery charges for any speech or vote in Parliament. The SC has now decided to reconsider this precedent.

- Broadly, Article 105 of the Constitution deals with the “powers, privileges, etc. of the Houses of Parliament and of the members and committees thereof”.
- Article 105(2) states, “No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of any thing said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of either House of Parliament of any report, paper, votes or proceedings.”

₹1,500 monthly aid for Himachal women, says CM

Vikas Vasudeva

CHANDIGARH

Even as the political turmoil in Himachal Pradesh appears to be settling, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu on Monday announced that a monthly financial assistance of ₹1,500 will be given to women above 18 years during the ongoing financial year.

Pointing out that the contribution of women towards progress of the State is incomparable, Mr. Sukhu said that under 'Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi Yojana', all the women above 18 years of age of the State will be given ₹1,500 per month. "Our government is fully committed to your respect and your rights," he said at a press conference in Shimla.



CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu addressing a press conference in Shimla on Monday. ANI

men were expected to benefit from the scheme.

Rebels' concerns

Meanwhile, PWD Minister Vikramaditya Singh, who recently held a meeting with the disqualified Congress MLAs in Panchkula, met senior All India Congress Committee leaders in Delhi and has reportedly conveyed their (rebel MLAs) message and con-

Pre-poll guarantees

He said the decision has been taken as a part of the Congress's commitment to fulfil its pre-poll guarantees. The financial assistance will be given during the ongoing financial year, which will put an additional financial burden of about ₹800 crore annually on the State exchequer. He said around five lakh wo-

MLAs) message and concerns to the 'high command'. Some of the rebel MLAs have reportedly called up Mr. Singh and expressed their willingness to return to the party fold.

Speaking on the political situation in the State, Mr. Sukhu said he followed the guidelines of the party's central leadership and no one was upset in the party.

State



HPCA Stadium



Kinnaur Kailash



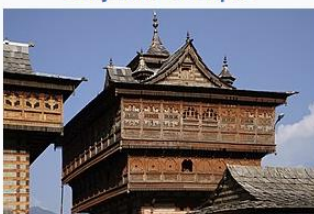
Parvati Valley near Tosh



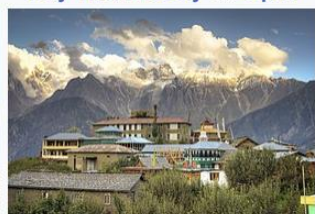
Baijnath Temple



Key Monastery at Spiti



Bhimakali Temple in Sarahan



Kalpa



Shimla at Night

Country	 India
Region	North India
Before was	Punjab States Agency
As state	25 January 1971
Formation	1 November 1956
Capital	Shimla Dharamshala (winter)
Largest city	Shimla
Districts	12
Government	
 • Body	Government of Himachal Pradesh
 • Governor	Shiv Pratap Shukla ^[1]
 • Chief minister	Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (INC)
State Legislature	Unicameral
 • Assembly	Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly ^[2] (68 seats)
National Parliament	Parliament of India
 • Rajya Sabha	3 seats
 • Lok Sabha	4 seats
High Court	Himachal Pradesh High Court
Area ^[3]	
 • Total	55,673 km ² (21,495 sq mi)
 • Rank	18th
Dimensions	
 • Length	300 km (200 mi)
 • Width	200 km (100 mi)
Elevation ^[4]	350 m (1,150 ft)
Highest elevation (Reo Purgyll)	6,813 m (22,352 ft)
Lowest elevation	232 m (761 ft)
Population (2011) ^[5]	
 • Total	▲ 6,864,602
 • Rank	21st
 • Density	123/km ² (320/sq mi)
 • Urban	10.03%
 • Rural	89.97%

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 • Urban	10.03%
 • Rural	89.97%
Demonym	Himachalis
Language	
 • Official	Hindi
 • Additional official	Sanskrit
 • Official script	Devanagari script
GDP	
 • Total (2024–2025)	▲ ₹2.27 lakh crore (US\$28 billion)
 • Rank	22nd
 • Per capita	▲ ₹286,401 (US\$3,600) (14th)
Time zone	UTC+05:30 (IST)
ISO 3166 code	IN-HP
Vehicle registration	HP
HDI (2021)	▲ 0.703 High ^[6] (7th)
Literacy (2011)	▲ 86.06% ^[7] (10th)
Sex ratio (2011)	972 ♀/1000 ♂ (32nd)

Symbols of Himachal Pradesh



Emblem of Himachal Pradesh

Bird

Western tragopan

Fish

Golden Mahseer^[8]

Flower

Pink rhododendron

Mammal

Snow leopard

Tree

Deodar cedar

State highway mark



Protest erupts after wild jumbo kills woman

Congress holds protest at Kothamangalam town in Kerala after the 70-year-old was attacked near Adimaly in Idukki district; she dies on way to the hospital. State govt. says ₹10 lakh was given to family members of victim; this is the fifth such death in Munnar forest division in the last two months

The Hindu Bureau

another resident, while he was tapping rubber. Meanwhile, the Congress launched a protest with the victim's body in Kothamangalam town around noon before an inquest and post-mortem examination could be conducted. Idukki MP Dean Karialkose, MLAs Mathew Kuzhalnadan and Eldhose Kunnapillil, and Ernakulam District Congress Committee president Muhammed Shiyas led the protest. The police resorted to cane charging around 2.30 p.m., pulled down the makeshift tents erected by the protesters, and shifted the

70-year-old woman was trampled to death by a wild elephant at Kanjaraveli near Adimaly in Idukki on Monday morning. The deceased was identified as Kanjaraveli resident Indira Ramakrishnan. According to officials, the incident occurred around 9.30 a.m. on Monday. Local residents rushed her to the hospital. But she died en route to the Kothamangalam tahak hospital. The elephant also charged at Kanisseri Shaji,



Tragic death: Body of elephant attack victim Indira being taken to hospital for autopsy. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

body back to the tahak hospital on an ambulance at Post Office Junction at 6 p.m., demanding compensation to the victim's family

and a permanent solution to man-wildlife conflict. Minister for Law P. Rajeev said the alleged forceful seizure of the mortal remains of the victim from the mortuary without the permission of the mourning family members and before the inquest and post-mortem was unheard of in the history of the State. He said the government has handed over a compensation of ₹10 lakh to the family of the victim. After a post-mortem examination, the body was handed over to the relatives. Indira is survived by husband, Ramakrishnan,

and children Shibu, Sindu, and Sheela. A senior Forest department official said that on Monday morning, a herd of wild elephants entered the Neendapara area. "Forest officials and Rapid Response Team (RRT) members chased the animals to the Neendapara range around 7 a.m. But one elephant crossed the Periyar dam and came under attack," said the official. Within two months, five people lost their lives in wild elephant attacks in the Munnar forest division.

Modi is neglecting genuine demands of T.N. govt.: Stalin

N. Sai Charan

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday accused the Union government of ignoring the genuine demands of the Tamil Nadu government and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was only frequenting the State as the Lok Sabha poll were around the corner.

"The Prime Minister can visit the State, but at the same time, he should consider the genuine demands put forth by the State government. They [the BJP government at the Centre] neglected our request to release ₹37,000 crore towards flood relief following the two disasters in December last year. Not even a single rupee was released, but they want the taxes and votes from Tamil Nadu in order to retain power," he said.

"But they cannot deceive the people of Tamil Nadu, who always vote for the 'Dravidian Model' government that seeks the rights and development of the State," he added, while inaugurating the integrated Collectorate complex in Mayiladuthural, built at a cost of ₹14.48 crore at Mannampandal. He also virtually inaugurated 70 other completed projects at a total cost of ₹308.88 crore and laid the foundation stone for 40 more projects at a cost of ₹80.62 crore in Mayiladuthural, Nagapattinam, and other districts. He distributed welfare assis-



M.K. Stalin

tance to 12,653 beneficiaries at a cost of ₹143.46 crore under various schemes.

"Neengal Nalama" The DMK government, Mr. Stalin said, had been implementing various schemes to benefit every family in the State.

"To ensure their proper implementation, a new initiative, 'Neengal Nalama', will be launched on March 6. Under the scheme, the Chief Minister, Ministers, Secretaries, and Collectors will interact with beneficiaries through phone calls to get their feedback on various schemes and services offered by the government for further improvement," he said. The State government had followed up on all its announcements by issuing Government Orders and ensuring their proper implementation, he said.

To ease the challenges faced by people living in rural areas in getting patta for their Grama Natham lands, the State government, for the first time, has launched the Natham Grama Patra Transfer Scheme. This will benefit 75 lakh people in the first phase, he said.

PM visits Kalpakkam nuclear power plant

The Hindu Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday witnessed the commencement of 'core loading' at India's first indigenous Fast Breeder Reactor (500 MW) at Kalpakkam near here. He took a tour of the reactor vault and the control room of the reactor. India has developed comprehensive capabilities spanning the entire spectrum of the nuclear fuel cycle. The government had approved in 2003 the creation of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) as the second country after Russia to have commercial operating Fast Breeder Reactor, it added.



Narendra Modi at the nuclear power plant.

clear reactor-Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR), said a statement. The PFBR has been fully designed and constructed indigenously by BHAVINI with contributions from 200 Indian industries. The PFBR will contribute to the nuclear fuel cycle. The government had approved in 2003 the creation of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) as the second country after Russia to have commercial operating Fast Breeder Reactor, it added.

Karnataka Police hand over Bengaluru cafe explosion case to Central agency

The Hindu Bureau

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the Bangalore cafe blast case. Director-General and Inspector-General of Police Alok Mehta confirmed the news and said a team of NIA officials met him on Monday to discuss the formalities. Meanwhile, the city police teams probing the case have some vital clues and are working on tracking down the suspect. They will continue the investigations along with NIA officials, a senior police officer said. The Bengaluru police



Under scanner: The Bengaluru city police say the suspect may have boarded multiple buses to reach the cafe.

of the CCTV camera footage from the restaurant revealed that the suspect stayed for 10 minutes at the cafe, after which he left. The IED fit-

tions. This minimised the damage and injuries. Had it spread around, the casualties could have been more," an officer added. CCTVs of Bengaluru city police, which analysed CCTV footage from hundreds of cameras, has said that the suspect may have boarded multiple buses and taken a circuitous route to reach the restaurant to plant the bomb. The police are probing the networks of at least 100 projects in the state of Karnataka, who have given security agencies the slip shrapnel at large in connection with the blast.

Three held in 'pro-Pak, slogan' case in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau

The Vidhana Soudha police in Karnataka on Monday arrested three people for allegedly raising "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans in the corridors of State Assembly during the victory celebrations of Rajya Sabha member Syed Naseer Hussain. Shekhar H.T., Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central division, confirmed that the arrest is based on FSL report, circumstantial evidence and statements of the witnesses gathered at the event. The accused have been identified as Itaj from Delhi, Munawar from R.T. Nagar in Bengaluru and Mohammed Shaif Naeem from Byadagi in Haveri district. The accused have been produced before the court for further probe. A video had gone viral soon after the election results were announced, claiming that a few Congress supporters had shouted "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans in the corridors of Assembly to celebrate the victory of Syed Naseer Hussain. Some Congress leaders had, however, denied the allegations saying supporters were cheering for Syed Naseer Hussain and shouting "Naseer saab zindabad". BJP MLAs had staged a protest inside and outside the Vidhana Soudha demanding the arrest of the accused.

Net-working



Golden waters: Fishermen venture out to the Bay of Bengal off the Visakhapatnam coast as the first rays of the sun spread golden hues on the water. V. RAJU

Three girls suffer burn injuries in acid attack

The Hindu Bureau

Three second year Pre-University girl students of science stream suffered burns following an acid attack at the Government PU College in Dakshina Kannada district on Monday. The Kadaba police arrested Abin, 23, an MBA student from Malappuram district of Kerala, for throwing the acid. The police said that the youth was accused as one of the girls had refused to love him. Abin entered the college premises in uniform at about 9 a.m. and threw acid on the 17-year-old girl who was with her classmates. She suffered burns on her face and hands. Acid fell on two other girls

who also suffered burns, the police said. All three students are undergoing treatment in a hospital in Mangaluru. Soon after the attack, five of their classmates chased and caught Abin and handed him over to the college principal. Following a complaint by the victim, the Kadaba police arrested Abin. Preliminary investigation revealed that Abin was angry with the girl for refusing his proposal. Deputy Director of PU Department C.D. Jayanna spoke to students who wrote the exam. Mr. Jayanna said the three students will be allowed to appear for the paper in the second attempt, the examination of which will be held soon.

GI recognition for Narasapur crochet lace craft revives hopes of struggling artisans

T. Appala Naidu

The famed Narasapur lace craft has received the Geographical Indications (GI) tag, giving a new lease of life to the dying craft in the Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh. The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPFIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry registered the craft in the Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) on March 1 certifying that the craft is geographically limited to 19 mandals in West Godavari and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Kotasaevu districts in the Godavari region. Narasapur and Palacore are the major trade points



An artisan knitting a lace product near Narasapur.

for lace products in West Godavari district. In Konaseema region, Rasole and Amalapuram are known for the craft. Nearly 15,000 women are directly involved in the craft, producing three ca-

New rules for plastic use in Odisha's parks

Press Trust of India

The Odisha government on Monday imposed a ban on the use of single-use plastic in parks, tiger reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and eco-tourism sites in the state from April 1. An order to this effect was issued by Chief Wildlife Warden Susanta Nanda. As the use of plastic water bottles will also be banned inside the protected forest areas, alternate drinking water facilities will be arranged for the tourists, said Mr. Nanda, who is also the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife). Visitors carrying food items in wraps will be advised to dispose of the wraps at designated garbage bins and not litter the protected areas, the order stated. All the garbage generated by visitors, nature camps and other places inside the protected areas will be disposed of in accordance with existing guidelines. Mr. Nanda, in a letter to all regional chief conservators of forests, divisional forest officers and deputy directors of Similipal Tiger Reserves (STR) and Nandakanan Zoo, said, "While this ban is necessary for protecting habitats of the last mile of our State, it is reiterated that the public at large should not be put to inconvenience."

KSU activists, Kerala police clash over student death

The Hindu Bureau

Chaos descended on the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU) headquarters at Pookode in Wayanad district on Monday with Kerala Students Union (KSU) activists clashing with the police at the entrance of the university. The violence unfolded when the KSU activists marched to the university headquarters raising a slew of demands, including handing over the case in connection with the death of Sidharthan J.S., a second-year Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry student, to Central agencies for an impartial investigation. The protesters also raised demands such as providing a solatium of ₹1 crore to the family of Sidharthan, adopting legal action against the university officials involved in the crime, dismissing the teachers who protected the accused, registering a murder case against the accused and the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Students from Kannur, Kasaragod, Kozhikode, Wayanad and Malappuram districts attempted to enter the university campus by pulling down the barricades set up at the entrance to block the march. The police responded by discharging truck-mounted water cannon several times. The pressurised jets of water felled several students, but the police officers did not disperse the protesters, giving a death blow to the Narasapur lace products, she explained.

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regories of products made of lace - garments, home furnishings and accessories. West Godavari District Alankriti Lace Manufacturers' Association and the Mahila Mutual Aid Co-operative Societies' Federation Limited (especially known as Alankriti Federation) supported All India Crochet Lace Exporters Association and Andhra Pradesh Crochet Lace Development Corporation Limited (APHLDC) jointly in Narasapur. Nearly 15,000 women are directly involved in the craft, producing three ca-

women are now active in the regular production. The crochet lace craft market here has remained paralysed since COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of new orders. We hope that the GI tag will help revive the craft and foreign trade," Alankriti Federation president M. Srinivas Mahalakshmi told The Hindu over the phone. Students from Kannur, Kasaragod, Kozhikode, Wayanad and Malappuram districts attempted to enter the university campus by pulling down the barricades set up at the entrance to block the march. The police responded by discharging truck-mounted water cannon several times. The pressurised jets of water felled several students, but the police officers did not disperse the protesters, giving a death blow to the Narasapur lace products, she explained.

"Finally, our craft has received the GI tag. More than 15,000 women are associated with our federation comprising 51 societies. However, barely 200

GI recognition for Narasapur crochet lace craft revives hopes of struggling artisans

T. Appala Naidu

WEST GODAVARI

The famed Narasapur crochet lace craft has received the Geographical Indications (GI) tag, giving a new lease of life to the dying craft in the Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh.

The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry registered the craft in the Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) on March 1 certifying that the craft is geographically limited to 19 mandals in West Godavari and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Konaseema districts in the Godavari region.

Narasapur and Palacole are the major trade points



An artisan knitting a lace product near Narasapur.

for lace products in West Godavari district. In Kona-seema region, Razole and Amalapuram are known for the craft.

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tegories of products made of lace – garments, home furnishings and accessories.

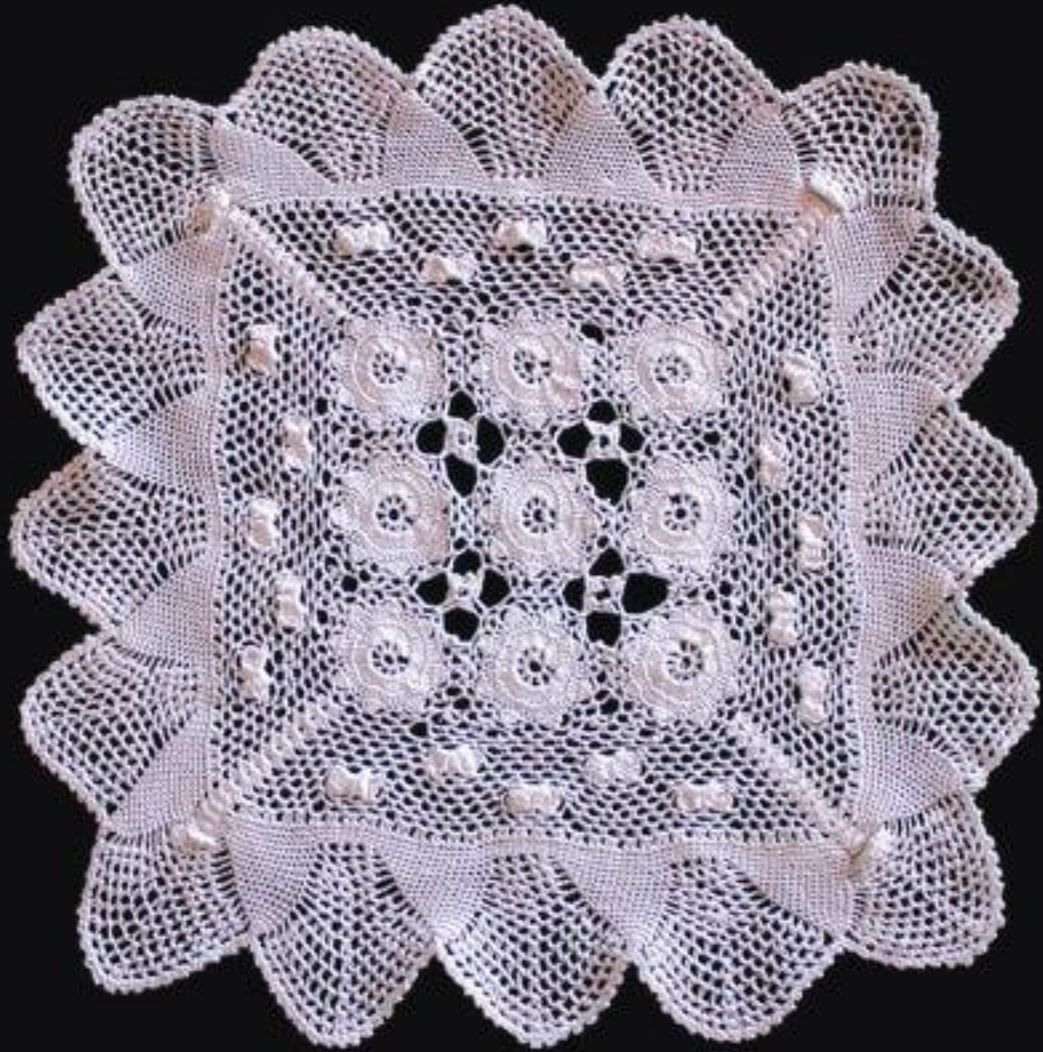
West Godavari District Alankriti Lace Manufacturing Mahila Mutual Aided Co-operative Societies' Federation Limited (popularly known as Alankriti Federation), Narasapur All India Crochet Lace Exporters Association and Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited (APHDC) jointly applied for the GI Tag for the crochet lace craft.

Bleak scenario

“Finally, our craft has received the GI tag. More than 15,000 women are associated with our federation comprising 51 societies. However, barely 200

women are now active in the regular production. The crochet lace craft market here has remained paralysed since COVID-19 pandemic due to a lack of new orders. We hope that the GI tag will help revive the craft and foreign trade,” Alankriti Federation president Pulaparathi Mahalakshmi told *The Hindu* over the phone.

An estimated 60% of the artisans involved in the craft are women. The State-run Alankriti Lace Park in Narasapur town resumed operations in May 2023 years after it was shut down. China's machine-made lace products are dictating the terms in the market, giving a death blow to the Narasapur lace products, she explained.



CROCHET

Narasapur, Palakollu,
Seetharampuram

IN BRIEF



Swedish defence major SAAB begins work on unit in India

Swedish defence major Saab on Monday started construction of its new manufacturing facility in India for its iconic Carl-Gustaf M4 weapons with a formal ground-breaking ceremony. The facility is being built at MET City in Haryana. The State has a strong industrial base of good potential partners and skilled employees, the company said. "Today is an important milestone for Sweden and India. Saab's factory will be the first foreign fully-owned defence production facility in India. It is a testament to the strong bilateral relationship between our countries," says Håkan Jevrell, State Secretary for Foreign Trade, Sweden.

Court seeks response from WFL govt. on wrestlers' plea

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response from the Union government and the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on a plea filed by wrestlers Bajrang Punia, Vireoh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, and Satyawart Kadian challenging a WFI circular for conducting the selection trials for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers and the World Olympic Qualifiers, 2024. The petitioners were at the forefront of the protest against former WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for allegedly molesting women grapplers. Justice Sachin Partha has put the matter for hearing on March 7 before which the ad-hoc committee has to reply to the plea.

Vacate party offices at Rouse Avenue by June 15: SC to AAP

The Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) time till June 15 to vacate its offices from a property at Rouse Avenue allotted to the Delhi High Court for expanding judicial infrastructure. "In view of the impending general elections, we grant time till June 15, 2024 to vacate the premises so that land allotted to expand the district judiciary's footprint can be utilised on an expeditious basis," a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud observed. The court asked the AAP to approach the Land and Development Office for allotment of land for its offices.

Arvind Kejriwal skips eighth summons by ED in excise case

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Monday skipped the eighth summons by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to appear before the agency. Mr. Kejriwal, however, agreed to appear before the agency virtually on any date after March 12. The ED had summoned Mr. Kejriwal on Monday in relation to a money laundering probe in the Delhi excise policy case. ED sources, however, said they had no provisions for doing a virtual hearing. Mr. Kejriwal has repeatedly skipped the summons by the agency stating that they were illegal, unfair, and politically motivated. AAP leaders have alleged that the Centre was using the ED as a political tool to intimidate the Opposition.

Govt. employees protest against promotion delay

They threaten to stage a 'non-cooperation movement' if an expedited decision is not taken regarding their promotions and the Union government does not 'wake up from its deep slumber'

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Employees of the Union government have threatened a "non-cooperation movement" if an expedited decision is not taken regarding their promotions and the government does not wake up from its deep slumber.

The officials said that many employees suffer stagnation in their careers and financial losses in pension as they retire without getting promoted.

Over 100 Central Secretariat Service (CSS) officials on Monday took out a peace march at Raisina Hill, where the Prime Minister's Office and several Ministries such as Home and Defence are located, to mark their protest.

A cadre review committee (CRC) constituted in 2022 is yet to submit its findings. The committee is headed by officials of the Department of Personnel



Mass protest: There is a stagnation in almost each grade of CSS due to which officers are distressed and dismayed. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and Training (DoPT). "The CSS forum has pursued the matter at every level, however, we are yet to receive any positive outcome from the government. Such kind of treatment with CSS officers who are considered as backbone of the government is very disappointing and frustrating," the official said in a letter sent to the Secretary, DoPT. It said the government had constituted a cadre review committee on October 27, 2022 to assess the rising demand for manpower across various Ministries and departments in view of a growing number of schemes and projects of the government in India and to suggest the steps for better cadre management and smooth career progression of CSS officials. A cadre review report is available with us, the deliberations of the committee have been completed long ago. However, the matter is still pending with the go-

vernment. As per information available with us, at least 100 government departments have sent requisitions for more than 2,500 additional posts. The number will be huge if the data of all the departments are to be considered. Due to the delay in the submission of the report of CSS, the departments are crippled due to shortage of manpower, which is also hampering official work. There is also stagnation in almost each grade of CSS due to which officers are distressed and dismayed," the forum said.

"We will start a non-cooperation movement if the government does not act. We will only work during the hours of 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., and will not put in any extra hours as we do on a usual basis," one of the members of the forum said.

Uttarakhand Cabinet nod for Ordinance to recover damage cost

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Uttarakhand Cabinet on Monday approved an Ordinance for the recovery of the cost of damage to public property during riots and protests from those involved.

The government has also formed a tribunal which will assess the cost of the damage. The damage caused to public property during the riots will be compensated by the rioters themselves. Those who disturb the peace of the State will have to pay a heavy price," Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami wrote on X.

A government communication said that in addition to the compensation, the rioters will also have to pay for the treatment of those injured in the violence. "The entire expense incurred during the riots on the police administration or other agencies for riot control will also be recovered from the people involved."

Hundreds of govt. officials to be mobilised for Modi's rally

Peorazada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The J&K Lieutenant-Governor's administration has made elaborate arrangements to mobilise hundreds of government employees to attend the public rally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Srinagar's Bakshi Stadium on March 7.

Top official sources said 13 departments have been directed to send their employees to the venue.

These departments are Education, National Rural Livelihood Mission, Agriculture, Rural Development Department, Handicrafts, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Integrated Child Development Services, Directorate of Youth Services & Sports, Nehru Yuva Kendra, J&K Khadi Bureau, J&K State Board, Social Welfare, and Jal Shakti.

The Food Safety Department has been directed to ensure the presence of representatives from 62 bakery shops across the city. "All Dept. employees were mobilised for the rally. We will also be recovering from the people involved."



On alert: Sachastra Seema (S58) personnel monitoring vehicle movement in Srinagar on Monday. ANI

strictly ensure that vehicles allotted to their respective sectors shall only be utilised at respective identified pickup locations, keeping in view of the security measures. No alteration shall be entertained in the list of participants, allotted vehicles," an official circular read.

One list, accessed by The Hindu, suggested that around 7,000 employees from 13 departments will attend the Prime Minister's rally. A massive security clearance initiative has been launched to carry out a background check of these government employees at

Tired of spam or fraud calls? File a complaint on Chakshu

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Monday launched Chakshu, a platform for telecom users to report fraud or spam callers. The facility, available at samhara-saathi.gov.in/sfc, will allow citizens to "proactively report suspected fraud communication", the DoT said in its announcement.

The platform will allow users to report frauds related to bank account, payment wallet, SIM, gas connection, electricity connection, KYC update, expiry, deactivation, impersonation as government official or relative, and sextortion.

The Digital Intelligence Platform was also launched, which would be a non-public data-sharing resource for "Telecom Service Providers, law enforcement agencies, banks and financial institutions, social media platforms, identity document issuing authorities, and so on", the DoT said.

Minister for Communi-



Ashwini Vaishnav

cations and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav also supported Caller Name Presentation (CNAP), a feature that would allow telecom users who opt for the service to view the registered name of everyone calling them. Telecom firms and some civil society groups had warned that it would adversely impact people's privacy rights.

Mr. Vaishnav likened the feature to the right to know who was knocking at the door but added that recommendations favouring CNAP's introduction by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India would be reviewed in detail before further steps are taken.

Submit report on gang rape of Spanish woman: HC

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

The Jharkhand High Court on Monday took suo motu cognisance of the gang rape of a Spanish woman in the State on Friday night at Division Bench led by Acting Chief Justice S. Chandrasekhar sought a report from Jharkhand's Chief Secretary and Director-General of Police (DGP), as well as the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Dumka district, where the incident took place.

The hearing is scheduled on Thursday. The court said, "The incident of crime of any kind against a foreign national may have serious national and international repercussions including impact on the tourism economy of the country. A sex-related crime against a foreign woman is bound to bring adverse publicity against the country and thereby tarnishing the image of India across the globe."

The police said three people had been arrested. "We have been asked to arrive at school premises around 4 a.m. Except phones, no bags will be allowed. There is no further direction to us," another teacher said.

THE CROSSWORD 14114
(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site, at <http://www.puzz-ink.com>

Across

- 1 Live coverage of breaking IPL, is it New York? (3,5)
- 2 American central bank admitted the statute is defective (6)
- 3 Jesus! I enjoy being outside (7)
- 4 Time consuming, it's about a country in Africa (7)

Down

- 1 Stop supporting bus conductor (6)
- 2 26 ms alternative to rule (6)
- 3 Increase pressure and work on stone (9)
- 4 Testing ground for holy bishops (5,9)
- 5 Placed right inside for a land owner (5)
- 6 Defect is met with the make up (3,5)
- 7 Departs, having taken a chance with disease (8)
- 8 Repeated refusal to come down from paradise (3,4)
- 9 Bird modulates voice (5)
- 10 Countrymen face terrorists hiding real bomb (8)
- 11 Cat creates some problem in the shop (8)
- 12 Man follows law, I suffer gain (6)
- 13 Select range, erect on all sides of the road (6)
- 14 Hot stuff comes up during a team game (5)

SUDOKU

6		9	8					
	5	3	8	2			3	8
			7					1
							9	2
9	4		1		9	3		
1						4	9	8
4	8						5	4
				3				

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

3	1	7	8	5	2	4	9	6
4	5	9	6	3	7	1	2	8
2	8	4	3	1	5	6	9	7
9	6	8	5	7	3	2	1	4
5	4	1	2	9	6	8	7	3
1	2	4	3	6	5	9	8	7
6	9	8	3	7	1	3	4	2
8	7	3	4	2	9	5	6	1

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	1	7	8	5	2	4	9	6
4	5	9	6	3	7	1	2	8
2	8	4	3	1	5	6	9	7
9	6	8	5	7	3	2	1	4
5	4	1	2	9	6	8	7	3
1	2	4	3	6	5	9	8	7
6	9	8	3	7	1	3	4	2
8	7	3	4	2	9	5	6	1

FAITH

Unique actions of God

Human beings are born in this world, which is not permanent, but the magnum opus of Acharya is considered as 'Aprakrutham' or 'Divyan' or permanent. How can it be? Hindu Sri Krishnan Swamy said in his discourse that the divine works of Acharya show us the way to eternal bliss, which is permanent; hence, they are called 'Aprakrutham'.

Sri Koorathazhwan, an ardent disciple of Sri Ramana, in his work 'Arthi Manusha Shivam', praises the superhuman deeds of God.

God is the custodian of the entire universe. How could He beg King Mahabali for just three feet of space?

Sri Rama says 'Aatmanam Maanusham Manya Ramam Dasarathahyanam' - 'I am the son of Dasaratha'.

But His deeds were not so.

While everyone in the forest knew Ravana abducting Sri Sita, how did Lord Rama not know and was in search of Her? The bird Jatayu didn't know karma, jnana or bhakti yoga. How did the Lord grant moksha to Jatayu? When Rama's arrow can pierce through seven trees and hit Valmiki would it take seven days for Rama to fight with Ravana? Would anyone let his arch-rival go off granting a chance? Why did Rama ask Ravana to come the next day? As a young child, Sri Krishna feigned to be tied up by the rope tethered with a mortar by Yasodha.

How could a seven-year-old boy lift the Govardhana hills?

Sri Koorathazhwan says whatever God undertakes will be unique, and the Acharya prays and pays his obeisance.

Tired of spam or fraud calls? File a complaint on *Chakshu*

The Hindu Bureau

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Mr. Vaishnaw likened the feature to the right to know who was knocking at the door but added that recommendations favouring CNAP’s introduction by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India would be reviewed in detail before further steps are taken.

A vaccine that prevents six cancers

January was observed as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Additionally, every year, March 4 is observed as International HPV Awareness Day.

Protecting women's health includes protecting the cervix, the lower-most part of the uterus. With HPV vaccination, we can prevent cervical cancers that can seriously affect a woman's health. As the fourth most common cancer among women worldwide, cervical cancer claims the lives of more than 3,00,000 women every year, or one life every two minutes. Nine out of 10 women dying of cervical cancer live in lower- and middle-income countries. In India, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer after breast cancer. Given the country's population size, about 500 million women above the age of 15 are at risk of cervical cancer. If there is no action taken, the number of cases and deaths from cervical cancer are projected to rise significantly in the future. With the current population growth rate, the absolute number of new cases of cervical cancer for all ages in India in 2040 is estimated to be 1,29,347, an increase of 54% over the number of new cases reported in 2020.

Strategies for prevention

It was in 1983 that German scientist Harald zur Hausen demonstrated that cervical cancer in humans is caused by certain types of papilloma viruses (wart viruses). Knowledge of HPV epidemiology and its role in causation of cancer has resulted in the development of two major strategies for prevention and early detection: HPV vaccination and screening for precancerous lesions. Although elimination of cervical cancers is a real possibility, the tragedy is that even today, many low- and middle-income communities lack effective intervention programmes for elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem. The World Health Organization's strategy



Hrishikesh Pai
is President, FOGSI 2023



Vipendra S. Misra
is President, IAP 2023

outlines a 90-70-90 triple pillar intervention to be implemented by 2030 with an additional focus on high-quality health care and equitable health care services. The 90% target is that 90% of girls must be fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15; 70% of women must be screened using a high-performance screening test by the age of 35 and again by 45; and 90% of women detected with cervical pre-cancer and cancer lesions must receive treatment and care.

A recent report titled "Accelerating global health pathways: to health equity for the G20" highlighted the commitment of India's G20 presidency to promoting equitable access to vaccines, particularly for lower- and middle-income countries. The report also noted that India in 2008. After sufficient country-level studies and successful State-level roll-outs, it was recommended for inclusion in the Universal Immunization Programme in 2023. An initial announcement was made in this regard by the Health Ministry in early 2023 and, recently, by the Finance Minister in her interim budget. The vaccine now awaits a national launch.

Research indicates that the HPV vaccine is not widely accessible to all girls across India. Currently, it is available in the private market at a significant out-of-pocket cost. Many physicians underestimate the incidence and risk of cervical cancer and the HPV infection. Physicians also underestimate the safety and effectiveness of HPV vaccines. The lack of trust in vaccine safety and effectiveness leads to hesitation in accepting the HPV vaccine to parents of age-eligible adolescents. Physicians may also hesitate to recommend this cancer prevention vaccination because HPV infections are primarily transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin contact. They may also feel it might be time-consuming to answer parents' questions regarding

myths and misinformation about the HPV vaccine.

Facts and best practices

In support of the widely anticipated national roll-out of the HPV vaccine, the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) and the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), with a combined membership of over 80,000 physicians, have joined hands to remind member obstetricians-gynecologists and pediatricians about the facts of HPV vaccination and share best practices for effectively communicating with parents about this cancer-preventing vaccine. This safe and effective vaccine can help prevent six HPV cancers. Five of these occur in women: vulvar, anal, vaginal, throat, and cervical. Recommending the HPV vaccine to all adolescents starting at age 9 years is part of completing the IAP immunization schedule. Recently, the FOGSI Good Clinical Practice Recommendations, upon review by the body of evidence, reinforced its recommendation for HPV vaccination to the primary age group of 9-14 years as well as regular screening for every woman above the age of 30 years. As apex national medical societies with a track record of promoting health and well-being in the population, the FOGSI and IAP seek to ensure that every girl grows up protected from cervical cancer through HPV vaccination and every woman is protected through regular cervical screening. In doing so, they are creating at least 20,000 HPV physician champions in their cadres by mid-2024. These member physicians will share the importance of HPV vaccination among their peers and the community at large.

Physicians are the most respected leaders in society and the trusted source for health-related information. Their leadership is needed to eliminate cervical cancer in India.

In Karnataka, Congress on the defensive

But it hopes to shift focus to 'guarantee schemes' and the issue of devolution of funds

STATE OF PLAY

S. Bageshree

In the heels of the Budget session in the Karnataka Legislature ending on a raucous note, an IED blast at the Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru's IT hub has set off a predictable narrative ahead of Lok Sabha elections. During the Budget session, the BJP alleged that supporters of the Congress's Rajya Sabha winner Syed Naseer Hussain raised "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans in the corridors of the State Secretariat. On Monday three people were arrested in connection with the case. BJP State party president B.V. Vijayendra criticised the blast in the cafe as an "extension" of the incident involving the alleged slogans in the corridors. "My brother" policy of the Congress government for reinforced its recommendation for HPV vaccination to the primary age group of 9-14 years as well as regular screening for every woman above the age of 30 years. As apex national medical societies with a track record of promoting health and well-being in the population, the FOGSI and IAP seek to ensure that every girl grows up protected from cervical cancer through HPV vaccination and every woman is protected through regular cervical screening. In doing so, they are creating at least 20,000 HPV physician champions in their cadres by mid-2024. These member physicians will share the importance of HPV vaccination among their peers and the community at large.

Physicians are the most respected leaders in society and the trusted source for health-related information. Their leadership is needed to eliminate cervical cancer in India.

The Opposition brought up the question of drought or funding for works, the Chief Minister laid the blame squarely at the door of the Centre. In early February, the State government's leadership, led by Mr. Siddaramaiah, staged a protest in New Delhi, calling it a "movement to protect the interests of Karnataka and set off a predictable narrative against the "gross injustice" of the Centre. Mr. Siddaramaiah wrote a letter to all the MPs of the BJP and the Janata Dal (Secular), the BJP party's ally for the Lok Sabha polls, asking them to participate in this agitation "in the interest of Karnataka". Devolution of funds has remained a hot issue, with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's brother and Lok Sabha member D.K. Suresh going as far as to argue that "South Indian states may be forced to demand a separate country if the Centre does not provide the guarantee funds." While this was dubbed "anti-national" by the BJP, the Congress government has continued to make overtures related to federalism. Regional identity, also evident in the passage in the Budget session of the Karnataka Language Comprehension Development (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which mandates 60% of text on the name boards of all businesses and institutions to be in Kannada in the top half. The Congress has made similar attempts in the past, including demanding that the Centre grant official status to the "Kannada flag".

The Lok Sabha polls are going to be held in Karnataka. The Centre for decreasing the State's share of devolved taxes, and gradually decreasing the grant-in-aid allocation for centrally sponsored schemes and forcing the State to increase its share. Every time

Over 1,000 Indians crossed into U.K. illegally in 2023

The number of Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. crossed the 5,000-mark for the first time in 2023

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan & Jasmin Nihal

In 2023, more than 1,000 Indians risked their lives to reach the U.K. by crossing the English Channel from Europe in inflatable small boats, searching for jobs and seeking asylum. The number of Indians who took this dangerous journey has surged in recent years. In 2023, the number more than doubled from the previous year. The share of illegal migrants from India aged 18-29 has shot up in recent years; they formed close to 60% of the total number of illegal Indian migrants in 2023. In parallel, the number of Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. has also surged in recent years, crossing the 5,000-mark for the first time in 2023. Notably, the number of Indians crossing into the U.K. illegally has also surged recently, with close to 1 lakh people doing so in 2023.

The U.K. has been grappling with the problem of a sudden surge in the inflow of illegal migrants in recent years. There has been a notable rise in the number of asylum-seekers arriving in the U.K. by small boats from the European mainland. Through most of 2021 and 2022, daily crossings of the perilous English Channel by thousands of migrants were recorded. Although the number of these crossings decreased in 2023 compared with the previous two years, the incidence of such events remained substantially higher than what was observed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend continues in 2024, with over 2,000 people crossing into the U.K. until February 27 this year.

Chart 1 shows the number of Indians who arrived in small boats between 2018 and 2023. In 2023, most of those who crossed into the U.K. were from Afghanistan (5,545 people), Iran (3,562), and Turkey (3,060). Indians featured ninth on

the list with 1,192 crossings, similar to the number of people from Albania and Egypt. In 2022, Albania recorded 12,600 crossings, the highest that year, as its economy had turned anemic, impacting jobs and wages.

Chart 2 shows the number of U.K. asylum applications raised by Indians over the years. The number skyrocketed post-pandemic, with 5,253 Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. in 2023. In total, close to 84,500 people from around the world applied for asylum last year. Close to 9,300 were from Afghanistan, the highest, followed by Iran (7,397), Pakistan (5,273), and India (5,253).

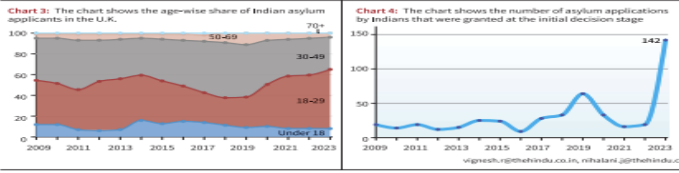
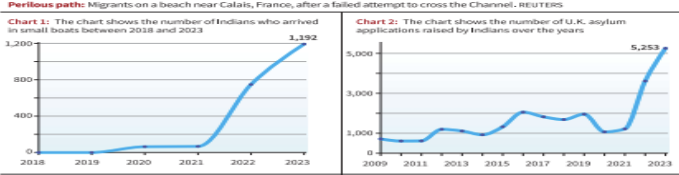
Chart 3 shows the age-wise share of Indian asylum applicants in the U.K. After the pandemic, the share of people aged 18-29 formed more than 50% in all the years. In 2023, 57% of the asylum-seekers were from this age group.

Chart 4 shows the number of asylum applications by Indians that were granted at the initial stage. In 2023, over 140 Indian asylum applicants were granted either protection or leave to remain (those who do not qualify for refugee status but are given permission to stay for various other reasons). It is important to note that most Indian asylum applications were rejected. They themselves withdrew after some time.

This rising tide of asylum-seekers is now a political issue in the U.K. as the country may go to the polls later this year or in early January next year. The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, has long been pledging to "stop the boats" — a reference to the recent surge in illegal migrants crossing the English Channel. Given that the Conservative Party has been trailing in the opinion polls until now, Mr. Sunak has been pushing a Bill to send asylum-seekers in the U.K. to Rwanda, the opposition may have an impact on his and his party's success in the polls.

A dangerous journey far from home

The data for the charts were sourced from the U.K. Home Office's immigration system statistics and irregular migration statistics



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1974

Speaker threatens to "walk out"

New Delhi, March 4: The Lok Sabha to-day witnessed an unusual protest. The Speaker, Mr. C.S. Dhillon, threatened to withdraw from the House, taking exception to the disrespectful remarks against the Chair made by a senior opposition member, Mr. S.N. Mishra (C).

It happened when the House was discussing the Government action in announcing outside the House the price hike of petrol, kerosene and other petroleum products, decided by the Cabinet last Friday. The Speaker, while listing the points raised by the Opposition, chastised the Government for not taking the House into confidence on the price rise as the House had been in session till 6 p.m. that day. Mr. Mishra was not present when the Speaker announced the points raised by some Opposition members, observed that the Government action was "improper". A few Congress members joined the Opposition in cheering the Speaker's observations. As the discussion was on, Mr. Mishra entered the House, so that the sitting senior Minister, Mr. D.K. Barooah, apparently unaware of the anger of the Speaker, Mr. Barooah, who was coming after answering similar protests in the Rajya Sabha, exclaimed that the price hike was to compensate for increased food prices. The Cabinet had taken the decision at 7 p.m. and it was only announced before midnight for administrative reasons. Opposition members again rose up to protest and the Speaker tried to end the discussion by pointing out that under the rules they could not have an immediate discussion on the Minister's statement. An angry Mr. Mishra, who had asked to when the increase in price of crude was effective, indicated his intention to his point. Mr. Mishra went on to charge the Speaker with trying to protect the Government.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 5, 1924

Davis tennis cup

Washington, March 3: The draw for the Davis cup will be held at the White House on the 17th. Mr. Coolidge will draw the first number. 15 nations besides the United States will participate. Ambassadors and Ministers will draw for their respective countries. Mr. Collidge will draw for the United States. The 15th challenger round will be played in Philadelphia early in September.

Over 1,000 Indians crossed into U.K. illegally in 2023

The number of Indians applying for asylum in the U.K. crossed the 5,000-mark for the first time in 2023

the list with 1,102 crossings, similar

A dangerous journey far from home

The data for the charts were sourced from the U.K. Home Office's immigration system statistics and irregular migration statistics



Perilous path: Migrants on a beach near Calais, France, after a failed attempt to cross the Channel. REUTERS

Chart 1: The chart shows the number of Indians who arrived in small boats between 2018 and 2023

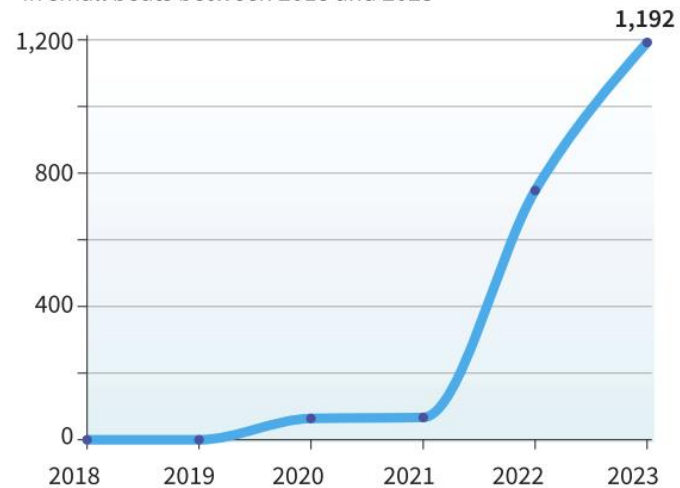


Chart 2: The chart shows the number of U.K. asylum applications raised by Indians over the years



Chart 3: The chart shows the age-wise share of Indian asylum applicants in the U.K.

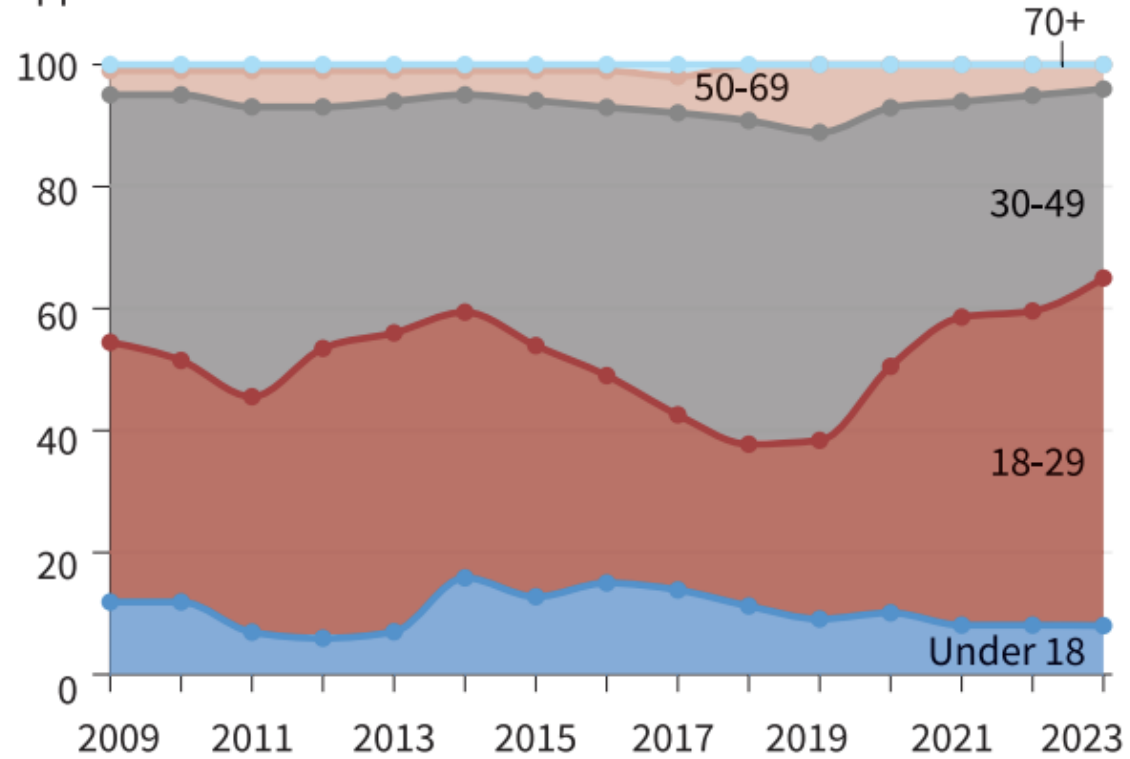
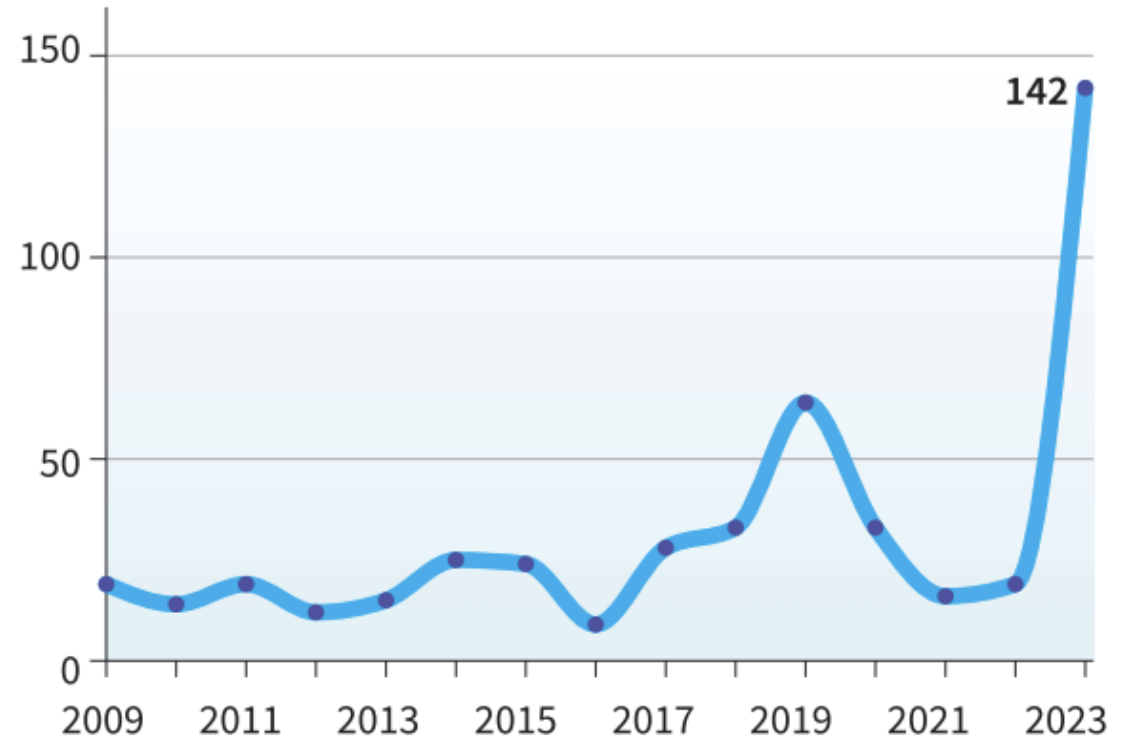


Chart 4: The chart shows the number of asylum applications by Indians that were granted at the initial decision stage



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REFUGE AWAY FROM HOME

Most Indians seeking asylum were either students asking for visa extensions, low-skilled workers and refugees seeking resettlement



PREFERRED DESTINATIONS

COUNTRIES WHERE INDIANS SOUGHT ASYLUM IN 2016

COUNTRY	Rank of Indians	No. of requests received
New Zealand	2	31
Latvia	4	20
Australia	8	1,117
Finland	6	181
Japan	8	470
Slovak Republic	8	5
United Kingdom	6	2,008

WHO IS AN ASYLUM SEEKER?

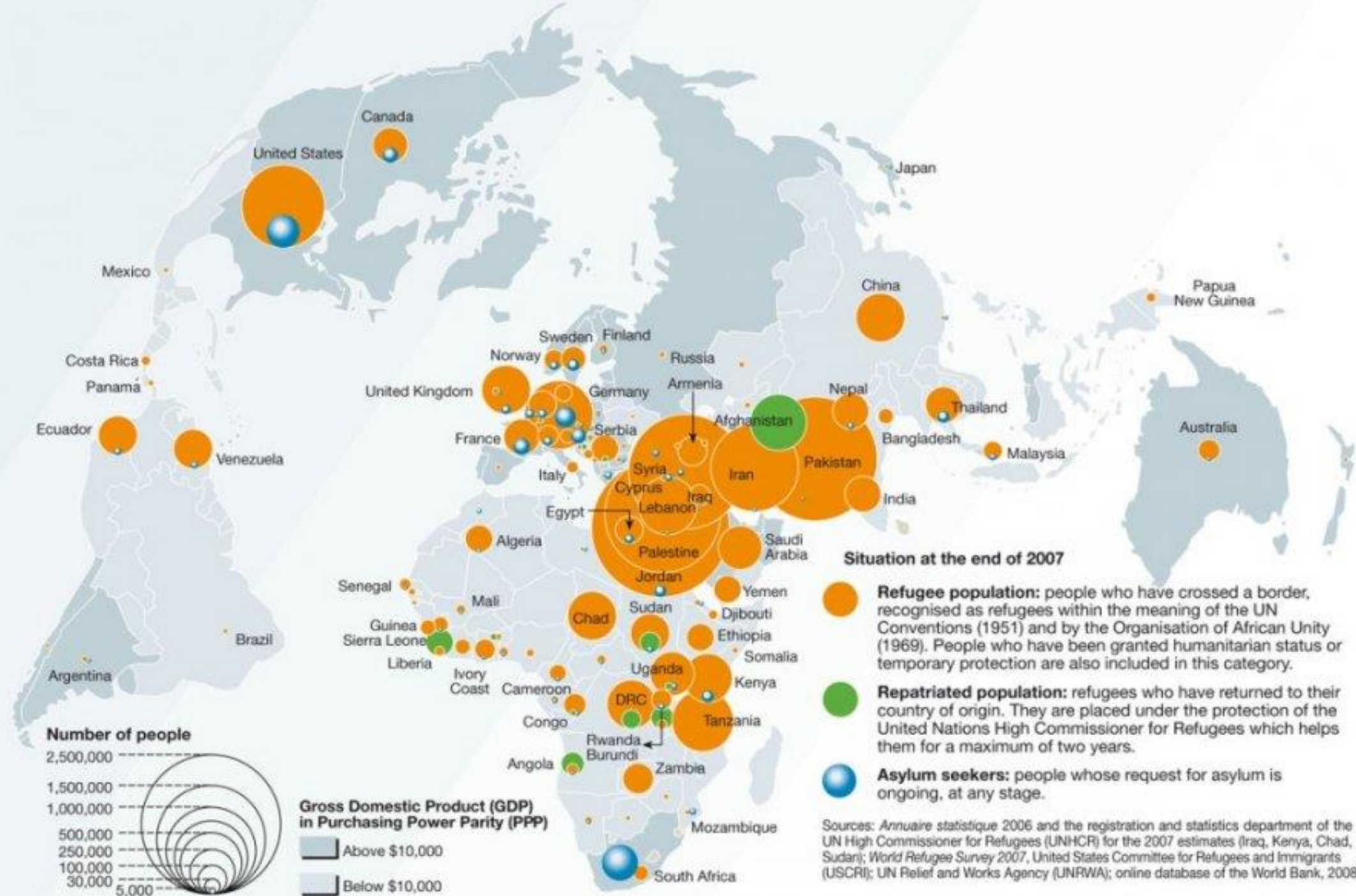
> US Citizenship and Immigration Services says refugee status or asylum may be granted to people who have been persecuted or fear they will be persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality, and/or membership in a particular social group or political opinion

> UNHCR defines an asylum-seeker as someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed

> Amnesty International describes an asylum seeker as an individual seeking international protection

> In 2015 and 2016, OECD countries recorded the greatest number of asylum applications (1.66 million and 1.64 million respectively) since World War II

> Half of the asylum seekers in 2016 originated from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Other applicants came from Pakistan, Iran and Sub-Saharan Africa



PARIS

French parliament votes to make abortion constitutional right



The French parliament on Monday voted to anchor the right to abortion in the country's constitution, making France the first country in the world to offer protection for terminating a pregnancy. A congress of both the lower and upper houses easily obtained the three-fifths supermajority needed for the change. AFP

PORT-AU-PRINCE

Haiti government declares state of emergency after huge prison break



Haiti's government on Sunday declared a state of emergency and night-time curfew after a deadly gang assault on the capital's main prison that allowed thousands of inmates to escape. The curfew will be enforced in the Ouest region, which includes the capital, through Wednesday, the government said in a statement. AFP

SEOUL

South Korea to start legal action against doctors over walkout



South Korea's Health Minister said on Monday that authorities will start inspecting hospitals to take legal action against doctors who have ignored an ultimatum to end a walkout over plans to increase medical school admissions. Around 9,000 resident and intern doctors have walked off the job since February 20. REUTERS

BANGKOK

Thailand's top court clears former PM Yingluck in corruption case



In the latest legal success for Thailand's powerful Shinawatra family, the country's Supreme Court on Monday cleared former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra — who ruled from 2011 until she was ousted in a 2014 military coup — of corruption in awarding a government contract during her time in office. AFP

Joe Biden, Donald Trump set to win primary races on Super Tuesday

Sriram Lakshman

WASHINGTON DC

Presidential candidates criss-crossed the country in the run up to Super Tuesday this year, when 17 U.S. States and territories hold their primaries and caucuses to pick their contenders for November's general election. The support of more than a third of each party's delegates (i.e., representatives who vote in the parties' conventions to select the candidate) is up for grabs on Tuesday.



Donald Trump is expected to sweep the Republican contests on Tuesday, with Nikki Haley having won just one race thus far. AFP

Former U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to sweep the Republican contests on Tuesday, with Nikki Haley, the former American Ambassador to the U.N. having won other contests on them, such as self-help author Marianne Williamson and Minnesota's Congressman Dean Phillips.

Democratic (renomination in many of the States, while some States will have other contestants on them, such as self-help author Marianne Williamson and Minnesota's Congressman Dean Phillips. Challenging days Mr. Biden is therefore expected to win the day on Tuesday but the process has revealed that the ultimate path to the White House — when the primaries are completed and Mr. Biden presumably faces Mr. Trump — will be far more challenging for Mr. Biden, than is often the case for a sitting President.

Supreme Court restores Donald Trump to ballot

Associated Press

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday unanimously restored Donald Trump to 2024 presidential primary ballots, rejecting State attempts to ban the Republican former

president over the Capitol riot. The justices ruled States cannot invoke a post-Civil War constitutional provision to keep presidential candidates from appearing on ballots. That power resides with Congress, the court wrote.

Some 10% of those who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020 were planning to vote for Mr. Trump in 2024.

Democratic primary voters were more or less evenly split on Mr. Biden should be their party's candidate, as per the poll, with the strongest opposition to the idea from those aged 45 years and over. This was more than the target of 10,000 uncommitted voters and some five times the number of such voters in support of presidential elections and is being seen as a warning

to Mr. Biden to change his accommodative stance towards Israel.

A growing number of voters, not just Muslim Americans but also younger voters across the board, could sit at home on election day if the administration continues with the status quo. A few thousand voters could make a huge difference: Mr. Trump beat former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in Michigan by less than 11,000 votes in 2016 and Mr. Biden won the State from Mr. Trump in 2020 by a margin of 2.4% (just over 1.54 million votes).

Call for ceasefire On Sunday, Vice President Kamala Harris called for an immediate ceasefire in the region and a return of hostages taken by Hamas. On Monday, she was scheduled to visit Israel with War Cabinet Member Benny Gantz.

Mr. Trump has so far won 247 delegates — more than any other candidate — tally. So far his legal troubles have not prevented

Mr. Trump from moving forward and he has used them in his campaign rallies to portray himself as the victim of a political witch-hunt.

Ms. Haley, who served on the Trump Cabinet, has said she will remain in the race as long as she is "competitive" but declined to define this term. She has shown some traction among college graduates and independent voters as well those who consider themselves moderate.

While she has claimed she is not anti-Trump, Ms. Haley's attacks on her former boss have become sharper in the run up to Super Tuesday. She has suggested that both lead candidates are too old for the fiscal deficit and spending particularly during Mr. Trump's time in the White House and criticised his isolationist foreign policy and admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Significantly, Ms. Haley did not commit to supporting Mr. Trump if he is the chosen GOP candidate,

when questioned about a pledge all GOP candidates had to take before an intra-party debate that they would support the eventual nominee. She cited changes in the party organisation, specifically Mr. Trump's daughter-in-law Lara Trump's bid for the position of Co-Chair of the Republican National Committee (RNC). "The RNC is now not the same RNC, now it's Trump's daughter in law," she told NBC's Meet the Press on Sunday. She also said she did not know if Mr. Trump would abide by the country's constitution if elected.

Other contests There are also a number of 'down ballot' primaries on Super Tuesday — such as a primary contest for the post of Governor (North Carolina), several for the U.S. House of Representatives, where the Republicans have a four-seat majority, and the U.S. Senate including a primary contest in the crucially important Senator Diane Feinstein's Senate seat.

Prachanda quits Congress alliance, joins hands with Oli

Communist coalition back at the helm in Nepal after little more than a year: CPN (Maoist-Centre)'s demand for the post of the National Assembly chair had caused a rift with Nepali Congress

Sanjeev Satralynya

KATHMANDU

Nepal's ruling alliance broke down after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) switched sides from the Nepali Congress and joined with the K.P. Sharma Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) on Monday.



Musical chair: Pushpa Kamal Dahal shakes hand with K.P. Sharma Oli in Kathmandu on Monday. ANI

The latest development puts the Nepali Congress, the largest party in parliament with 188 seats, in the Opposition seat. Leaders from both the CPN (Maoist-Centre) and the CPN-UML said that they have reached a new deal to form the government, once again bringing a communist coalition to the helm in Kathmandu after little more than a year.

The second largest party with 78 seats, on December 25, 2022, after the Nepali Congress refused to oblige his demand to lead the government. Later in February 2023, the CPN-UML pulled out of the government after the CPN (Maoist-Centre) decided to back Ram Chandra Poudel, a Congress leader, for the post of President. The Nepali Congress subsequently joined the government.

Cracks in coalition Hari Sharma, a writer and political analyst, says the Maoist-Congress coalition had become untenable, especially after some Nepali Congress leaders began questioning Mr. Prachanda's style of governance and the relevance of the alliance. "There is nothing to be surprised about the change. This Maoist-UML coalition was not a matter of if but when," Mr. Sharma said.

Cracks began to appear in the Maoist-Congress coalition later in 2022 on various issues. But the post of the National Assembly chair had become the major bone of contention. The Maoist-Centre's demand that it be given the National Assembly chair post had rattled the Nepali Congress. The National Assembly chair post is crucial, for he is a member of the Constitutional Council which recommends members to constitutional bodies. Nepal is electing the new National Assembly chair on March 12. Frequent government changes are not new in Nepal, and it has seen 11 governments since it abolished the monarchy in 2008. Nepal's electoral system is such that it is almost impossible for any party to secure a majority in the 275-strong House of Representatives to form a go-

vernment on its own. Of the 275 members, 165 are elected under the direct election system, or first-past-the-post system, and the remaining 110 are elected under the proportional representation system. It was because of that Mr. Prachanda found room to manoeuvre and managed to wrest the post of the Prime Minister from the first and second largest parties despite his party coming third with just 32 seats in parliament.

The CPN-UML and the Maoists merged in 2018 to form the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) in a bid to form a large Left force in Nepal. However, a power struggle between Mr. Prachanda and CPN-UML Chairman K.P. Sharma Oli led to the implosion of the NCP in 2021.

A Maoist-UML unity in Nepal is something Beijing has always wanted. It is unclear how India, which has traditionally enjoyed its role in Nepal, will react to a suddenly evolved left-dominated dispensation in Kathmandu. Mr. Prachanda, a vocal critic of India in the past, in recent years has made peace with the south, and New Delhi's good books, if recent high-level bilateral exchange and some forward-looking deals under his prime ministership are anything to go by. (Sanjeev Satralynya is an independent journalist based in Kathmandu)

Lessons from a conflict



Samal Wahba, director of the UNRWA Taf School in Rafah, teaches at a school housing displaced Palestinians, in Rafah on Monday. AFP

Shehbaz Sharif takes oath as Pakistan's PM

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s Shehbaz Sharif on Monday took the oath as Prime Minister of Pakistan, assuming the cash-strapped country's reins for a second time, as he does appear to be in a conclusive election marred by allegations of vote rigging. President Arif Alvi administered the oath to Mr. Shehbaz, the 24th elected Prime Minister, in a ceremony held at the Alwani-Sadr, the presidential palace.

China eliminates Premier's annual news conference

Associated Press

BEIJING

China's government said on Monday that it is eliminating an annual news conference by the Prime Minister that was one of the rare times a top Chinese leader took questions from journalists. Liu Qiang, the spokesman for the National People's Congress, said on the eve of the opening of the legislature's annual session that Premier Li Qiang would not hold a news conference at its conclusion, as Premiers have

Moscow summons German Ambassador

Associated Press

MOSCOW

Moscow summoned German Ambassador Alexander Graf Lambdorff to Russia's Foreign Ministry on Monday, local media reported, days after the release of an audio recording on social media purporting to show German officers discussing support for Ukraine. The 38-minute recording features military officers discussing in German how Taurus long-range cruise missiles could be used by Kyiv against invading Russian forces.

PARIS

French parliament votes to make abortion constitutional right



REUTERS

▲ The French parliament on Monday voted to anchor the right to abortion in the country's constitution, making France the first country in the world to offer protection for terminating a pregnancy. A congress of both the lower and upper houses easily obtained the three-fifths supermajority needed for the change. AFP

The MTP Act 1971 and The MTP Act Amendments 2021

	MTP Act 1971	The MTP Amendment Act 2021
Indications (Contraceptive failure)	Only applies to married women	Unmarried women are also covered
Gestational Age Limit	20 weeks for all indications	24 weeks for rape survivors Beyond 24 weeks for substantial fetal abnormalities
Medical practitioner opinions required before termination	One RMP till 12 weeks Two RMPs till 20 weeks	One RMP till 20 weeks Two RMPs 20-24 weeks Medical Board approval after 24 weeks
Breach of the woman's confidentiality	Fine up to Rs 1000	Fine and/or Imprisonment of 1 year

<WEEK
10



78%
of abortions
performed by
this stage

<WEEK
13



91%
of abortions
performed by
this stage

<WEEK
20



98%
of abortions
performed by
this stage

<WEEK
24



DEADLINE
Legal dead-
line for most
abortions

<WEEK
24+



ILLEGAL
Abortion
generally
illegal

OPERATION SAFE

7 million abortions are conducted a year in India

Only 50% of these operations are legal

8% of women opting for abortion die due to complications arising from unsafe procedures

22 million unsafe abortions are reported globally every year



The names of the people onboard the missing Malaysian flight MH370 displayed in Subang Jaya. REUTERS

'Will reopen MH370 search if compelling evidence emerges'

Agence France-Press
MELBOURNE

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Monday that he would be "happy to reopen" the search for flight MH370 if "compelling" evidence emerged, opening the door to a renewed hunt a decade after the plane disappeared.

"If there is compelling evidence that it needs to be reopened, we will certainly be happy to reopen it," he said when asked about the matter during a visit to Melbourne. His comments came as the families marked 10 years since the plane vanished in the Indian Ocean with 239 people aboard.

"I don't think it's a technical issue. It's an issue affecting the lives of people and whatever needs to be done must be done," he said.

Malaysia Airlines flight 370, a Boeing 777 aircraft, disappeared from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. Despite the largest search in aviation history, the plane has never been found and the operation was suspended in January 2017.

About 500 relatives and their supporters gathered on Sunday at a shopping centre near the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur for a "remembrance day", with many visibly overcome with grief.

Some of the relatives came from China, where almost two-thirds of the passengers of the doomed plane were from.

Speaking to the crowd, Grace Nathan, a Malaysian lawyer whose mother was on the flight, called on the government to conduct a new search.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke told presspersons that "as far Malaysia is concerned, it is committed to finding the plane... cost is not the issue".

After Amnesty's criticism, Cambodia defends relocations from Angkor wat

Responding to UNESCO following a scathing report from Amnesty International which said thousands of families were forcibly evicted from around the World Heritage Site, Cambodia rejects the allegations saying it was only relocating 'squatters' and not the residents living there for 'generations'

Associated Press
BANGKOK

Cambodia is rejecting allegations that it violated international law by evicting people living around its famous Angkor Wat temple complex, saying in a report to UNESCO released on Monday that it was only relocating squatters and not residents of more than 100 traditional villages.

The UN cultural agency had demanded a response from Cambodian authorities in November after a scathing report from Amnesty International claimed that thousands of families, some that had lived in the area for "several generations", were being forcibly evicted from around the World Heritage Site as Cambodia seeks to develop the area for tourism.

Amnesty questioned Cambodia's assertion that the families were being voluntarily relocated, citing interviews with people who said they had been forced out, while maintaining that resettlement sites lacked adequate water, sanitation and other facilities, and criticising UNESCO for failing to challenge Cambodian authorities.

Paris-based UNESCO responded that it was "deeply concerned about the allegations" and ordered Cambodia to report on the state of conservation at the Angkor Wat site



Rich culture: The Angkor Wat site sprawls across some 400 square kilometers, containing the ruins of Khmer Empire capitals from the 9th to the 15th centuries, including the temple of Angkor Wat. FILE PHOTO

about a year earlier than previously planned, while urging them to "ensure that any relocation is voluntary."

The Angkor Wat site sprawls across some 400 square kilometers, containing the ruins of Khmer Empire capitals from the 9th to the 15th centuries, including the temple of Angkor Wat. UNESCO calls it one of the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia, and it is critical to Cambodia's tourism industry.

"The people in the villages are part of our heritage, that is why we call Angkor a living heritage site."

Amnesty said, however, that it appears Cambodian authorities have decided to "cherry-pick" what details were included in their new report, and that it remained extremely unclear who could be considered

part of the 112 villages. "It was never made clear to the families who those families were... and therefore who would ultimately have to leave and who would get to stay," said Montse Ferrer, the head of Amnesty's research team investigating the Angkor Wat resettlements.

"So fast forward to now, that confusion remains on the books," she said, speaking from Geneva. She said several families relocated told Amnesty that they had been living around the Angkor Wat site for generations, and had not wanted to leave their homes. She added that their research found that very few people had been resettled "voluntarily," as Amnesty would define it, with many being threatened or otherwise coerced.

Amnesty said the threats

came from the highest levels, noting in its November report a speech from former Prime Minister Hun Sen in which he said people "must either leave the Angkor site soon and receive some form of compensation or be evicted at a later time and receive nothing."

Conditions have improved as authorities have added much of the necessary infrastructure to support the settlement, Ms. Ferrer said, but they still have not addressed the debt incurred by many in building their new homes nor the loss of income suffered by moving them.

"They were given a plot of land, that's great, but what about everything else they lost?" she said.

During a visit to Hun Ta Ek in December, Prime Minister Hun Manet reaffirmed that Cambodia was responsible for "human rights abuses," saying that improvements were being made rapidly and that should come and see for yourself within a year.

In its report to UNESCO, Cambodia authorities highlighted that the people relocated were now landowners.

"They now have the status of villagers, equal to those of the traditional indigenous population settled in the Angkor zone for generations," the report said.

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Status at risk

Mr. Hun Sen's son, Hun Manet, was elected to succeed him last year and has continued the policies, reiterating the official Cambodian government line that Angkor Wat risked losing its World Heritage status if the families were not relocated.

UNESCO in November, however, emphasised that it has "always categorically rejected the use of forced evictions," and "that at no point did it request, support or participate in the programme."

The agency refused to comment on Cambodia's new submission, saying that it still needed to be analysed by its experts, but that it "stands by its pre-made rapidly and that should come and see for yourself within a year."

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Bloom and gloom



An almond tree blossoms near the Acropolis in Athens in Greece on Monday. This winter was the hottest on record for Greece, according to data analysed by Greek scientists, threatening the visibility of crops and raising fears of another summer of devastating wildfires. REUTERS

Monday. The group of 143 fruit women say Danish health authorities violated their human rights when they fitted them with the devices, commonly known as "cherry-pick" what details were included in their new report, and that it remained extremely unclear who could be considered

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Half a world away, four-year-old Gaza boy gets a new lease of life after losing an arm

Associated Press
NEW YORK

Omar Abu Kuwaik is far from his home in Gaza. The four-year-old's parents and sister were killed by an Israeli airstrike, when he lost part of his arm.

He's one of the "lucky" ones.

Through the efforts of family and strangers, Omar was brought out of Gaza and to the U.S., where he received treatment including a prosthetic arm. He spent his days in a house run by a medical charity in New York City, accompanied by his aunt.

It was a small measure of grace in a sea of turmoil of grief, but he might never see his arm and his aunt, Maha Abu Kuwaik, as they

looked up an uncertain future. The grief and despair for those still trapped in Gaza is never far away.

Ms. Abu Kuwaik is glad she could do this for her beloved brother's son, whom she now considers her fourth child.

"Difficult choice But it was a terrible choice. Going with Omar meant leaving her husband and three teenage children behind in a sprawling tent camp in Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah. With Israel carrying out strikes in areas where it told civilians were safe, including Rafah, Ms. Abu Kuwaik knew she might never see her family again.

"My kids love Omar so much," she said. "They told me, 'We are not children anymore. Go, let Omar get treated. It's what is best for him. It's his only chance.'"

Ms. Abu Kuwaik said she was not aware of what happened or did not consent to the intervention.

Last year, 67 women had filed an initial lawsuit against Denmark over

Indigenous Greenland women sue Denmark over forced contraception

Associated Press
COPENHAGEN

A group of Indigenous women in Greenland has sued Denmark for forcing them to be fitted with intrauterine contraceptive devices in the 1960s and 70s, and demanded total compensation of nearly 43 million kroner (\$6.3 million), Danish media reported on Monday.

The group of 143 Inuit women say Danish health authorities violated their human rights when they fitted them with the devices, commonly known as "cherry-pick" what details were included in their new report, and that it remained extremely unclear who could be considered

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Last year, 67 women had filed an initial lawsuit against Denmark over



An Inuit village in Greenland. 143 Inuit women have accused Danish health authority of violating their human rights. FILE PHOTO

forced contraception.

The purpose was allegedly to limit population growth in Greenland by preventing pregnancy. The population on the Arctic island was rapidly increasing at the time because of better living conditions and better health care.

The small T-shaped device, made from plastic and

copper, and fitted in the uterus, prevents sperm from fertilizing an egg.

Danish authorities say that as many as 4,500 women and girls – reportedly half of the fertile women in Greenland – received coil implants between the 1960s and mid-1970s.

Greenland, which is part of the Danish realm,

was a colony under Denmark's crown until 1953, when it became a province in the Scandinavian country.

Probe ongoing

In September 2022, the governments of Denmark and Greenland launched an investigation into the programme. The outcome of the probe is due next year. But the women's lawyer, Mads Pramming, said they will not wait until then, adding that the only option for the women is to seek justice through the court. "The oldest of us are over 80 years old, and therefore we cannot wait any longer," Naja Lyberth, who was 14 when she had a coil fitted, told Greenland public broadcaster KNR. "As long as we live, we want to regain our self-respect and respect for our wombs."

Greenland and Denmark Map





Modi sarkar ki Guarantee Means ensuring well being of the poor Over 4 crore houses constructed

Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

BUSINESS AS USUAL
By UNNY
Lok Sabha caught up with the momentum. Member's business, that secretary still has after nearly...

'Abuse of rights': SC pulls up Udhayanidhi on his Sanatan Dharma remark

DMK leader made the remarks in September 2023

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

REBUKING Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin for his "eradicate Sanatan Dharma" remark, the Supreme Court on Monday said he had abused his right to free speech.

The two-judge bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta was hearing Udhayanidhi's plea to curb the FIRs filed in different states over his remarks.

You abuse your Article 19(1A) right (freedom of speech and expression). You abuse your Article 25 right (freedom of conscience, freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion). Now, you are exercising your Article 32 right (to file plea in the Supreme Court directly)? Do you not know the consequences of what you said? Justice Datta said.

You are not a layman. You are a minister. You should know the consequences," he said.

Appearing for the DMK leader, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi said he was not arguing on the merits of the matter, but only seeking to curb the FIRs filed in six states. "I will suffer my...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE WORLD

TRUMP WINS COLORADO BALLOT DISQUALIFICATION CASE AT TOP COURT

SHEHBAZ TAKES OATH AS PAK PM FOR SECOND TIME

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

R RADHIKA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

MOVING AWAY from traditional evaluation methods that rely on marks and grades awarded by school teachers, the National Council for Educational and Research Training (NCERT) has introduced a new "holistic" report card that incorporates feedback from parents, classmates, and even self-evaluation by students to track their overall progress regularly.

PMARAR, a standard-setting body under the NCERT, has devised the Holistic Progress Card

'BRIBERY IS NOT PROTECTED BY PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE' SC: No immunity for MPs & MLAs who take bribe for vote, speech in House

7-Judge Constitution Bench overrules 5-Judge Bench's majority verdict in JMM bribery case; PM hails order

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

MEMBERS of Parliament and state legislatures who take bribes to vote or speak in a certain manner in the House are not immune from prosecution, the Supreme Court said in a landmark order on Monday, overruling its 1998 judgment (JMM bribery case) which granted immunity to such lawmakers.

"Bribery is not protected by parliamentary privilege," the seven-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D V Chandrachud pronounced the verdict, Monday. (PTI)



The seven-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D V Chandrachud pronounces the verdict, Monday. (PTI)

envisions probity in public life," it said. "We disagree with and overrule the judgment of the majority (in the JMM bribery case),"

legislature is not the sole judge of what privileges it enjoys and secondly, Parliament and Legislature may only claim privileges which are essential and necessary for the functioning of the House," the ruling stated. The ruling focuses only on the scope of immunity from prosecution when CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WHEN LAWMAKERS TAKE BRIBES PAGE 12

KASHMIR, TELANGANA, GUJARAT, KARNATAKA: A COMMON THREAD Job hunt, YouTube channel: How Indian youths landed in Russia-Ukraine war

MEA says working to bring men back; families say contact erratic, fear the worst

SREENIVAS JANYALA & BASHARAT MASOOD HYDERABAD, SRINAGAR, MARCH 4

FROM KASHMIR to Karnataka, Gujarat to Telangana, a thread connects the Indian youths trapped fighting Russia's war with Ukraine — desperation for a job, a YouTube channel that provided hope, and a lie that became clear only after landing in Moscow.

The families of men The Indian Express spoke to detailed how they were tricked into believing they were applying for jobs as helpers in Russian government offices, but were forced to head to the frontlines, putting their lives in danger.

From Telangana, Mohammed Afsan (30) of Hyderabad and



Clockwise from above: Gurpreet Singh and others from India who were promised jobs as helpers in Russia government offices; Mohammed Samir Ahmed; Mohammed Sufiyan

Mohammed Sufiyan (23) of Narayanpet district went to Moscow in November and

December, respectively. "They were duped. The agent who recruited them said they would

work in Moscow only; instead, they were given IS-6 training and dropped in Ukraine, where they are being forced to stay alongside Russian troops fighting the war," said Afsan's brother Mohammed Imran.

Afsan was working as a salesman at a clothing showroom when he chanced on the job opportunity in Moscow. "He like the other youths, was promised a salary of Rs 45,000 per month for the initial three months, which would gradually increase to Rs 1.5 lakh. After working for a year, he could apply for Russian passport offer and unfortunately they fell for it. Afsan left for Moscow on November 5," Imran said.

Afsan's last video call from the Russia-Ukraine border was on December 31. "After that, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS NETWORK

DELHI BUDGET INSPIRED BY RAM RAJYA: CM PAGE 4

SET TO RESIGN TODAY, JUSTICE GANGOPADHYAY SAYS WORK DONE PAGE 6

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

WHAT IS HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARD

■ New form of student evaluation based on recommendations of NEP 2020
■ Doesn't depend on marks or grades to evaluate a student's academic performance
■ Instead, it gives greater role to parents in tracking a student's achievements in class



epaper.indianexpress.com

'ANONYMITY MAKES TASK TOUGH' Poll bond details: Will comply, SBI tells SC, but need time until June 30

Says can't meet March 6 deadline due to challenge of matching donation to donor

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

CALLING IT a "time consuming exercise", the State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday asked the Supreme Court to extend the deadline for submitting details on the scope of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to June 30. The Lok Sabha election process would be over by then.

Last month, a five-judge Constitution Bench had struck down the electoral bonds scheme and directed the SBI the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit by March 6 the details of electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019 to the ECI, which would publish the information on its official website by March 13.

In its application to the SC on

Monday, the SBI said it "intends to comply in full, with the directions issued" by the court. "However, there are certain practical difficulties with the ongoing exercise and the timeline fixed for it, due to the stringent measures undertaken to ensure that the identity of the donors was kept anonymous," it said, adding that "matching of the donors to the donations made would be a complex process".

The bank said that "as per the gazette notification" of January 2, 2024, "whereby the central government framed the Electoral Bond Scheme 2024, it was categorically provided under Clause 7 (4) that "the information furnished by the buyer shall be treated as confidential by the authorised bank and shall not be disclosed to any authority for any purpose, except when demanded CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Blow to Cong in Gujarat, its ex-state chief quits, cites 'insult to Ram'

Arjun Modhwadia has not announced his next move yet

ADITIRAJA VADDIARA, MARCH 4

ARJUN MODHWADIA was conspicuous by his absence at the media interaction of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) on Monday, which shared the itinerary of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which enters the state on March 5. Although the Porbandar MLA was already on his way to hand over his resignation to the Speaker, Congress leaders remained in denial when asked about the turnout that Modhwadia had quit.

Within a couple of hours, Modhwadia, 67, confirmed he felt "suffocated" and that ending his 40-year association with the Congress was a relief. "If there is any leader who has travelled most extensively for the Congress or helped the party, it is me. If I have had to quit the party, it is for the Congress to introspect why I was forced to do so," he said.

In his resignation letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Modhwadia said, "since my dissent, I have met scores of people who were offended by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in Adilabad on Monday. (PTI)

'PM matlab bada bhai': Revanth seeks Modi's help for Telangana

Revanth seeks Modi's help for Telangana

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Revanth seeks Modi's help for Telangana

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In new school report card, role of parents, classmates, self-evaluation

R RADHIKA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

MOVING AWAY from traditional evaluation methods that rely on marks and grades awarded by school teachers, the National Council for Educational and Research Training (NCERT) has introduced a new “holistic” report card that incorporates feedback from parents, classmates, and even self-evaluation by students to track their overall progress regularly.

PARAKH, a standard-setting body under the NCERT, has devised the Holistic Progress Card

(HPC) for foundational stage (Classes 1 and 2), preparatory stage (Classes 3 to 5) and middle stage (Classes 6 to 8) and is currently working on developing one for the secondary stage.

The NCERT has asked all states to either adopt the HPC or adapt it according to their requirements.

Traditionally, assessment in schools has been primarily focused on year-end examinations, with the responsibility solely placed on teachers. The HPC, aligned with the recommendations of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) to make evaluation

more “learner-centric”, marks a departure from this approach by considering various aspects of learning, including diverse skills and competencies, rather than solely relying on marks obtained in periodic tests. Its aim is to track not only students' academic performance but also their cognitive, socio-emotional abilities, and creativity during class activities.

To achieve this, the HPC emphasises on a descriptive form of evaluation where students are active participants. Each child will be able to evaluate not only their own performance but also of their classmates. According to the NEP 2020, the HPC is a

WHAT IS HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARD

■ New form of student evaluation based on recommendations of NEP 2020

■ Doesn't depend on marks or grades to evaluate a student's academic performance

■ Instead, it gives greater role to parents in tracking a student's achievements in class



■ Students' own perception of their performance and what they wish to achieve in school included for the first time

means to build on self-awareness and self-esteem of students by communicating the strengths and areas of improvement.

At all stages, going beyond academic learning, students are assessed on self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving, emotional quotient and creative skills. Each student has to reflect on their own progress at the end of an activity by circling statements such as — “I was able to learn something new” or “I was able to express my creativity” or “I was able to help others in some way”.

For example, at the end of an activity, a student of Class 1 will

circle what they were able to do and not do. A child can self-evaluate her performance through descriptive remarks such as “I liked doing this work”, “I could ask my friends for help”, “I followed my teacher's instructions” by colouring smileys that say ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘not sure’. This “student's self-reflection” is part of the HPC for all students from Class 1 to Class 8.

At middle stage (Class 6 to Class 8), students are encouraged to set their own academic and personal goals and a definite timeline by which they wish to achieve these goals at the beginning of the year. Students are also required to fill in their expecta-

tions from a teacher with respect to areas where they need help.

The HPC for middle stage also includes an “ambition card” where a student can fill in her ambitions for the year and mention areas where she must improve, skills and habits she must develop to achieve her ambitions.

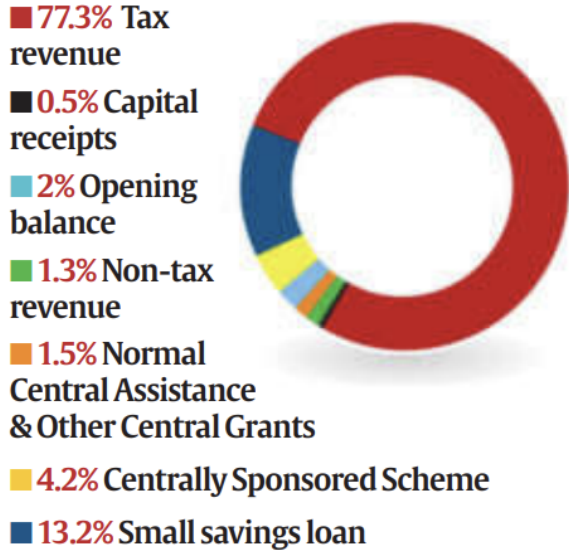
The HPC will also link home and school by making parents an integral part of a child's learning process. It will include inputs of parents like ability to do homework, following lessons in the classroom and even student's ability to balance screen time with extra-curricular activities at home.

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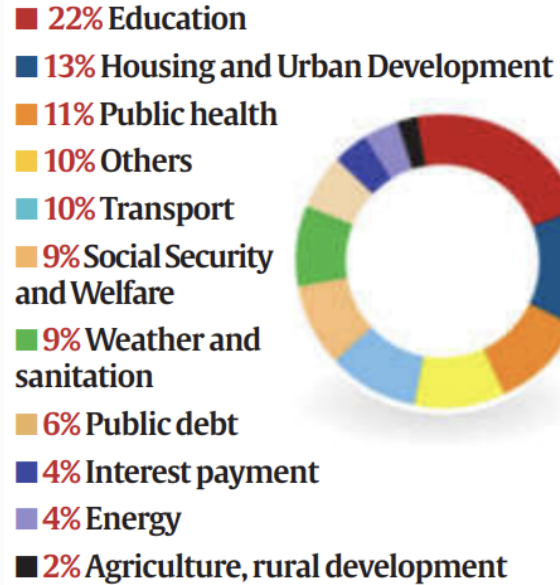
BUDGET ESTIMATES

RUPEE COMES FROM

Total receipts **Rs 76,000 cr**



RUPEE GOES TO



**app percentages are approximate values*

CUTS AND INCREASES

Sectors	2024-25	2023-24	Difference
Medical and Public Health	3,423 cr	4,830 cr	-1,407 cr
Education	5,476 cr	7,565 cr	-2,089 cr
Transport (total)	6,731 cr	9,048 cr	-2,317 cr
PWD (total)	1,218 cr	3,061 cr	-1,843 cr
Social Security and Welfare	5,980 cr	4,333 cr	+1,647 cr
Rural Development, Agriculture	1,029 cr	435 cr	+767 cr
Housing & Urban Development	4,395 cr	5,462 cr	-1,067 cr
Water Supply & Sanitation	7,195 cr	6,342 cr	+853 cr

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUKHYAMANTRI MAHILA SAMMAN YOJANA

Rs 1,000 financial assistance per month for women

Who will benefit: All women aged above 18 years (excluding taxpayers, beneficiaries of government pension schemes and govt employees)

Budget: Rs 2,000 crore

BUSINESS BLASTERS SENIOR

After a successful launch in schools, the Delhi govt has proposed this scheme for universities and ITIs to promote entrepreneurship among college students

Who will benefit: Any student wishing to begin a startup will be given seed money. Currently for school students, the seed money is Rs 2,000

Budget: Rs 15 crore

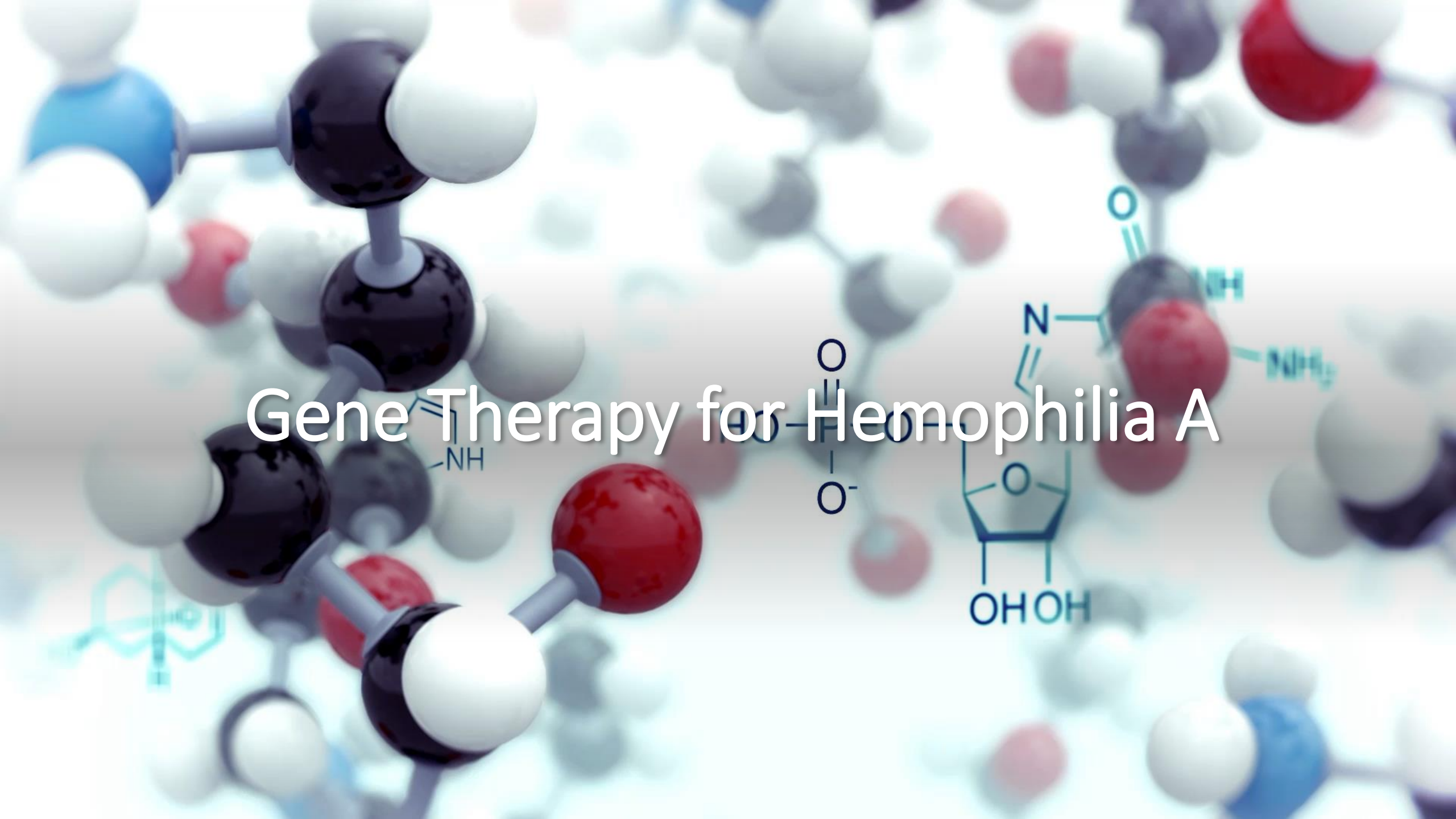
DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGE ROADS

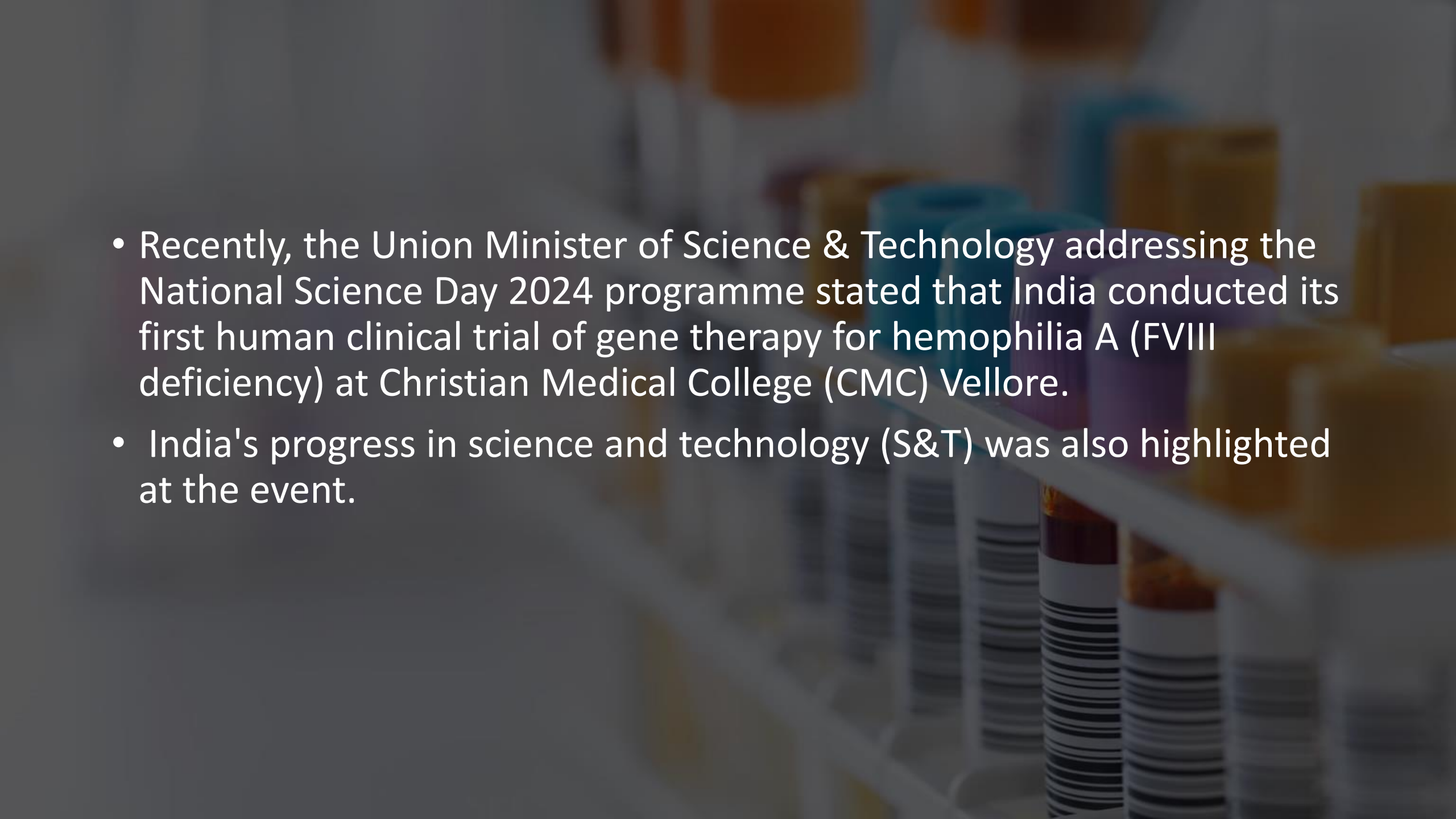
Redevelopment and upgradation of 1,000 km of roads in villages to provide a better commuting experience

Who will benefit: 360 villages

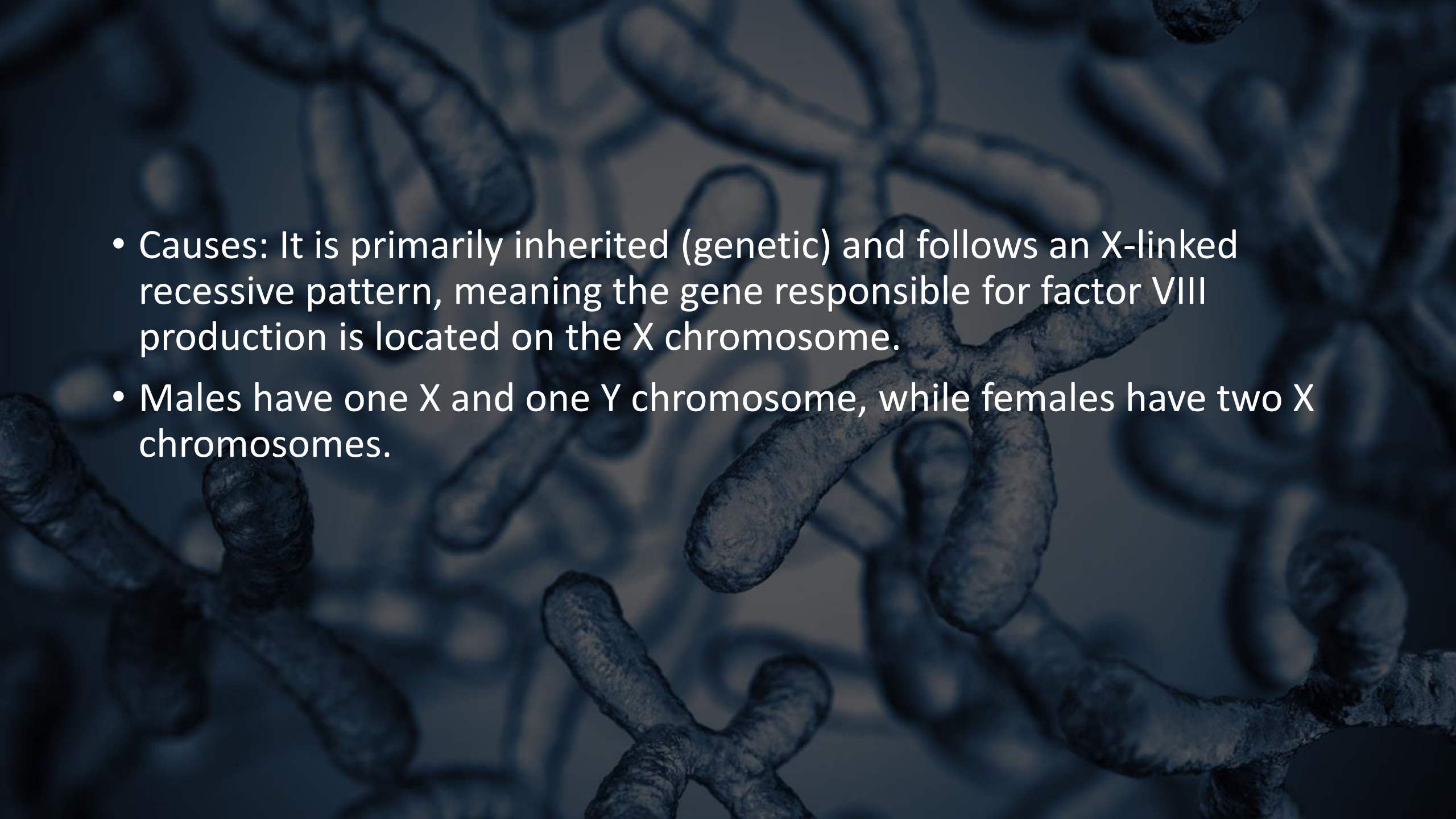
Budget: Rs 900 crore

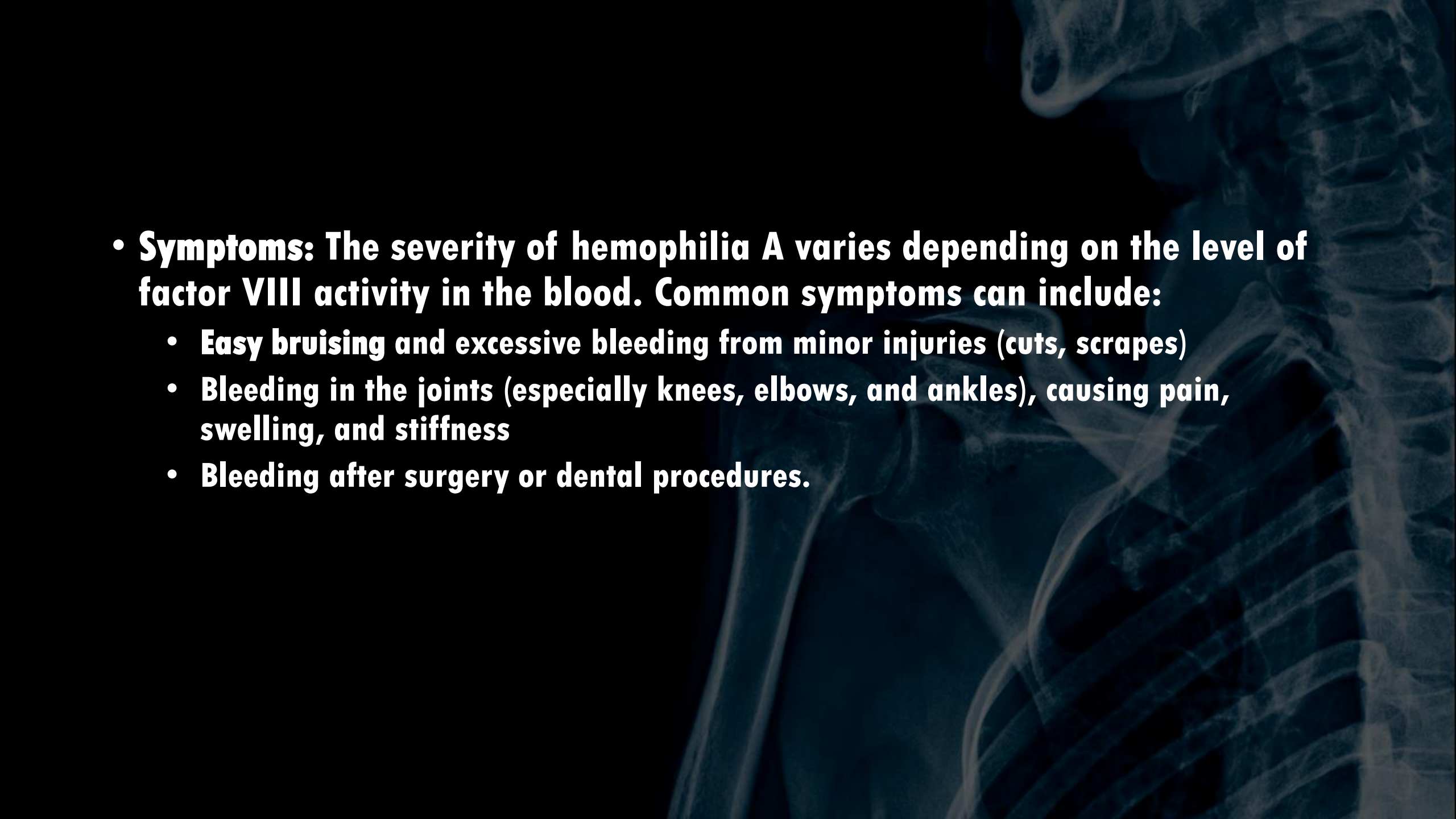
Gene Therapy for Hemophilia A



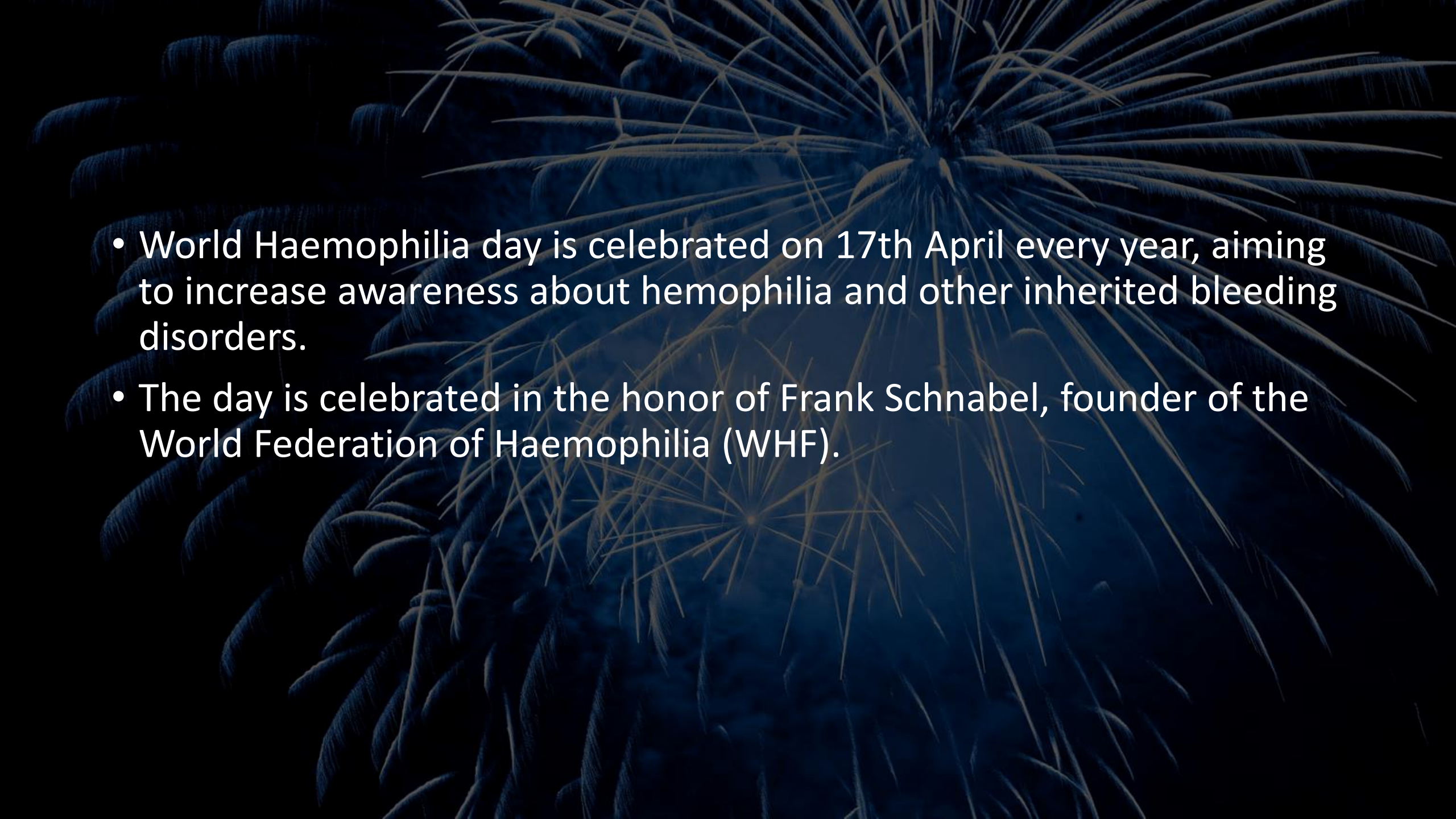
- 
- Recently, the Union Minister of Science & Technology addressing the National Science Day 2024 programme stated that India conducted its first human clinical trial of gene therapy for hemophilia A (FVIII deficiency) at Christian Medical College (CMC) Vellore.
 - India's progress in science and technology (S&T) was also highlighted at the event.

- **What is Hemophilia A?**
- **About: Hemophilia is a group of rare bleeding disorders caused by a congenital deficiency in specific clotting factors. The most prevalent form is Hemophilia A.**
 - **Hemophilia A results from a deficiency in a crucial blood clotting protein known as factor VIII.**
 - **Due to this deficiency, individuals experience prolonged bleeding after injuries, as their blood takes longer to clot than usual.**

- 
- A microscopic view of numerous chromosomes, appearing as dark, X-shaped structures against a lighter background. The chromosomes are arranged in a somewhat chaotic pattern, with some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background. The overall color palette is dark blue and black.
- Causes: It is primarily inherited (genetic) and follows an X-linked recessive pattern, meaning the gene responsible for factor VIII production is located on the X chromosome.
 - Males have one X and one Y chromosome, while females have two X chromosomes.

- 
- **Symptoms: The severity of hemophilia A varies depending on the level of factor VIII activity in the blood. Common symptoms can include:**
 - **Easy bruising and excessive bleeding from minor injuries (cuts, scrapes)**
 - **Bleeding in the joints (especially knees, elbows, and ankles), causing pain, swelling, and stiffness**
 - **Bleeding after surgery or dental procedures.**

- **Treatment:**
- **The treatment involves replacing the missing blood clotting factor so that the blood can clot properly. This is typically done by injecting treatment products, called clotting factor concentrates, into a person's vein.**
- **The two main types of clotting factor concentrates available are:**
- **Plasma-derived Factor Concentrates: Derived from human plasma, which is the liquid component of blood containing various proteins, including clotting factors.**
- **Recombinant Factor Concentrates: Introduced in 1992, recombinant factor concentrates are genetically engineered using DNA technology and do not rely on human plasma.**

- 
- World Haemophilia day is celebrated on 17th April every year, aiming to increase awareness about hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders.
 - The day is celebrated in the honor of Frank Schnabel, founder of the World Federation of Haemophilia (WHF).

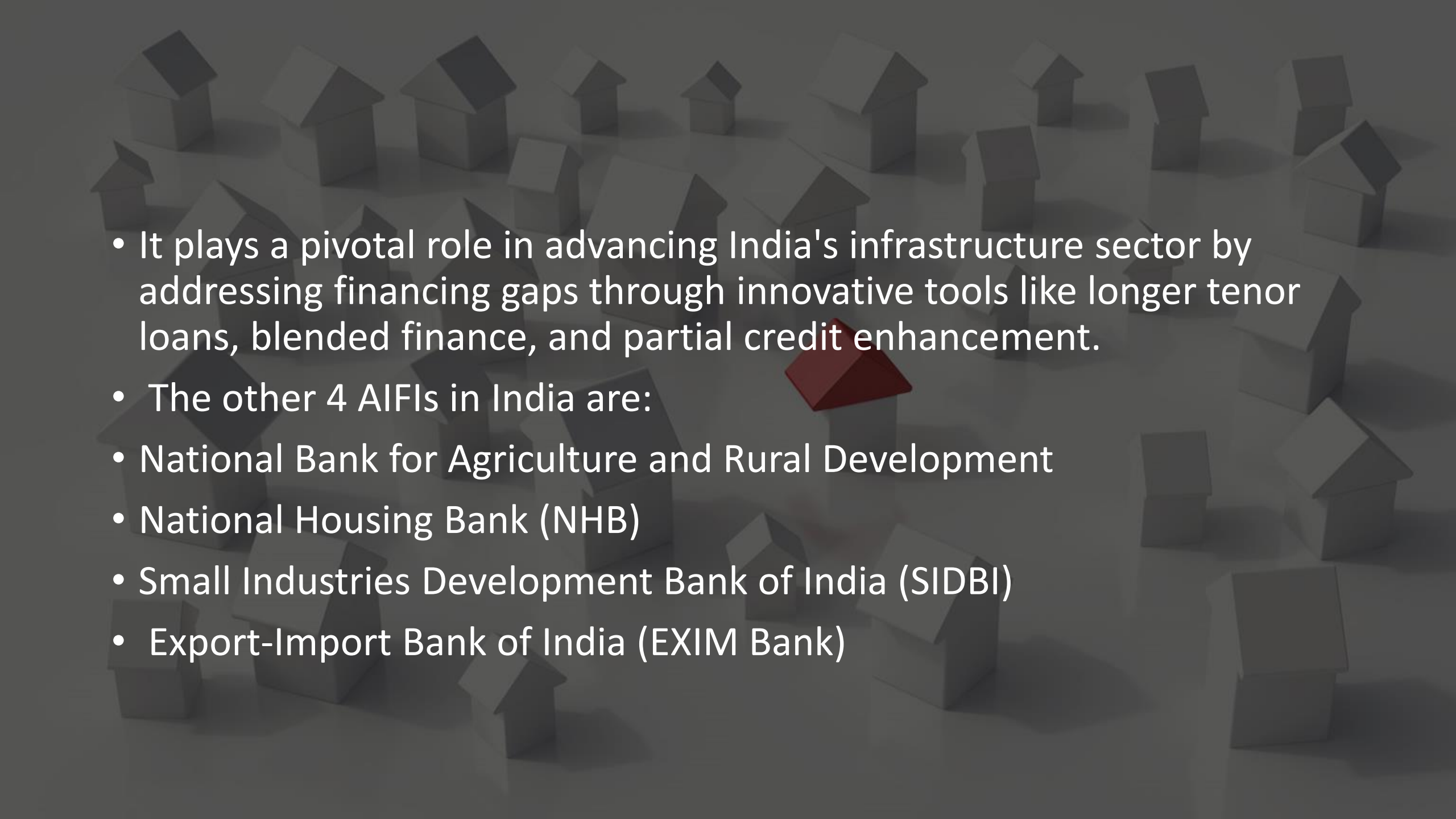


National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

Recently, the Union Finance Minister chaired a meeting to evaluate the performance of National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

(NaBFID), NaBFID, established by the Government of India in April 2021, is the nation's 5th All India Financial Institution (AIFI), aimed at fostering long-term non-recourse infrastructure financing.

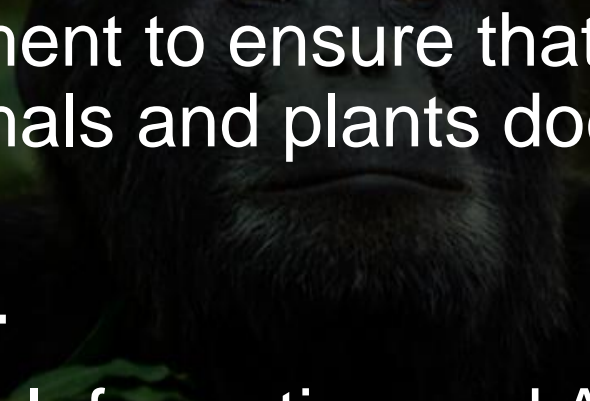
NaBFID serves both developmental and financial objectives, facilitating credit flow and enhancing infrastructure finance accessibility.

- 
- It plays a pivotal role in advancing India's infrastructure sector by addressing financing gaps through innovative tools like longer tenor loans, blended finance, and partial credit enhancement.
 - The other 4 AIFIs in India are:
 - National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
 - National Housing Bank (NHB)
 - Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)
 - Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank)

World Wildlife Day



- 
- The background of the slide features a warm, golden-brown sunset sky. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of a large flock of birds, likely geese or swans, on the ground. Several birds are also shown in flight, their wings spread wide against the bright sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural, emphasizing the theme of wildlife.
- Every year on 3rd of March, the entire world celebrates World Wildlife Day to spread awareness regarding sustainable practices for conserving biodiversity.
 - **History**
 - The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in December 2013 and designated March 3 as World Wildlife Day in **2014**.
 - The **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, was signed on this day in **1973**.

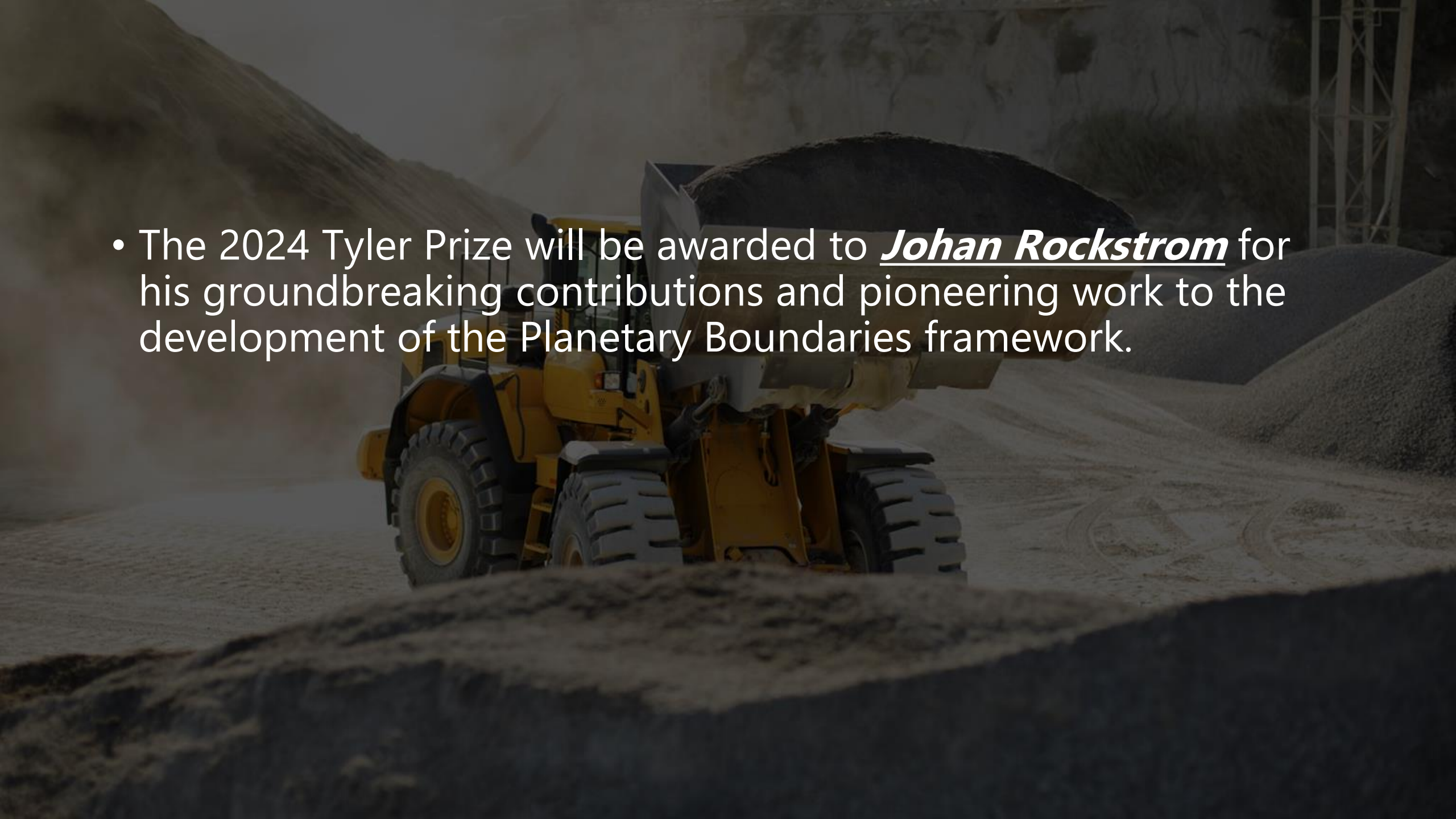
- 
- CITES is a global agreement to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
 - **World Wildlife Day 2024**
 - The WWF Environmental Information and Assessment Center Program (EIACP PC-RP), operating under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, marked the day at the **Okhla Bird Sanctuary**.

-
- **Theme:** “Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation”.
 -

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a gold medal. The medal is circular with a laurel wreath border and a central emblem. A red ribbon is attached to the top. The background is a bright, hazy sky. The text "Tyler Prize" is overlaid in white on the medal.

Tyler Prize

- The Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is an *annual award established in 1973 by John and Alice Tyler* for scientific work on the environment, energy, and health.
- It is considered one of the *world's most prestigious awards* for these fields and the Tyler Laureates receive a \$250,000 cash prize and a medallion.

- 
- A yellow wheel loader is positioned in the center of the frame, facing right. It is situated in a large, open area filled with piles of light-colored material, likely sand or gravel. The background shows more of these piles and a tall, white metal structure on the right side. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a dark, overcast sky.
- The 2024 Tyler Prize will be awarded to *Johan Rockstrom* for his groundbreaking contributions and pioneering work to the development of the Planetary Boundaries framework.

A close-up photograph of a cheetah with a white collar around its neck and striking blue eyes. The cheetah is looking slightly to the right. The background is a dark, out-of-focus natural environment with green foliage. The text "Cheetah Conservation Breeding Centre" is overlaid in white, centered on the image.

Cheetah Conservation Breeding Centre

- Gujarat is setting up *India's 1st cheetah conservation breeding centre in Banni Grasslands Reserve.*
- The centre will have open-to-air isolation enclosures and aims to bring cheetahs to Gujarat early next year.
- The **Banni Grasslands Reserve** is an arid grassland ecosystem in the Kutch district of Gujarat.
- It's one of the *largest grasslands in India and the largest in Asia.*



BHARAT TEX 2024

- : Bharat Tex 2024, India's largest textile event, concluded after four days of showcasing over 100 product announcements, international Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), investment decisions, and research collaborations.

About IndiaTEX:



The project 'Accelerating the Transition of the Indian Textile Sector towards Circularity' (IndiaTex) is a four-year initiative funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and implemented in collaboration with the Government of India's Ministry of Textiles.



BioTRIG

A recent study introduces a waste management technology called 'BioTRIG,' utilizing pyrolysis at the community level in rural India.



This process converts organic waste into useful products like bio-oil, syngas, and biochar fertilizer.



The BioTRIG system aims to address various rural challenges, including indoor air pollution, soil degradation, and lack of reliable electricity.



Samudra Laksamana

-
- India and Malaysia conducted the bilateral maritime exercise Samudra Laksamana from February 28 to March 2, 2024, in Visakhapatnam. The exercise involves the **Indian Naval Ship Kiltan and the Royal Malaysian Ship KD Lekir.**
 -
 - **Other exercises between India and Malaysia:**
 - **Exercise Harimau Shakti:** This is a bilateral military exercise between the **Indian Army and the Malaysian Army**, aimed at enhancing cooperation and interoperability in counter-terrorism and jungle warfare.

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By Bhunesh Sir

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Data Science Course

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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 watches. The background is blurred, showing more people and a window. An orange horizontal bar is located in the top left corner.

Thank you
guys.
