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***'If you want to see the  
brave and bold, look to  
those who can return love  
for hatred.'***

Bhagavad Gita







# Election Commissioner Arun Goel resigns ahead of Lok Sabha election

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

Days ahead of the announcement of the schedule for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, Election Commissioner Arun Goel resigned on Saturday. His tenure was till 2027.

According to a notification by the Law Ministry, his resignation has been accepted by President Droupadi Murmu with effect from March 9.

With the resignation, the Election Commission has been reduced to just one member - Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar. Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey retired in February.

Mr. Goel, a 1985-batch IAS officer of the Punjab cadre, joined the commission on November 21, 2022. His resignation comes two days before a crucial hearing of the Supreme Court on the electoral bonds issue.

Earlier, the Association for Democratic Reforms



Arun Goel, right, with CEC Rajiv Kumar. FILE PHOTO

(ADR), an NGO, had filed a public interest litigation petition in the Supreme Court challenging Mr. Goel's appointment claiming that due procedure had not been followed. The top court had refused to interfere with the appointment stating that a Constitution Bench had already examined the process and refrained from passing any adverse orders.

On Saturday, ADR chairman Trilochan Shastry told *The Hindu*: "We are happy that he has resigned."

The current vacancies in the commission would have to be filled in accor-

dance with the new Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, which was brought in by the government in December last year.

The Act provisions that a selection committee headed by the Prime Minister, which comprises the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a PM-nominated Union Minister, will select the members of the commission.

## Chief Election Commissioner of India



**Incumbent**

**Rajiv Kumar**

since 15 May 2022

### Election Commission of India

<b>Nominator</b>	<a href="#">Union Council of Ministers</a>
<b>Appointer</b>	<a href="#">President of India</a>
<b>Term length</b>	6 years or up to 65 years of age (whichever is prior)
<b>Inaugural holder</b>	<a href="#">Sukumar Sen</a>
<b>Deputy</b>	<a href="#">Election Commissioners of India</a> Deputy Election Commissioners of India
<b>Salary</b>	₹250,000 (US\$3,100) per month <sup>[1][2]</sup>

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग



The official logo of the Election Commission of India

### Constitutional Body overview

<b>Formed</b>	25 January 1950; 74 years ago (Later celebrated as <a href="#">National Voters' Day</a> )
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<a href="#">Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India</a>
<b>Headquarters</b>	Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, <a href="#">New Delhi</a> <sup>[1]</sup>  <a href="#">28°37′26″N</a> <a href="#">77°12′40″E</a>
<b>Employees</b>	Around 300 <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Constitutional Body executives</b>	<a href="#">Rajiv Kumar, IAS (Retd.)</a> , <a href="#">Chief Election Commissioner of India</a> <i>Vacant</i> , <a href="#">Election Commissioner of India</a> <i>Vacant</i> , <a href="#">Election Commissioner of India</a>



**IN BRIEF**

**Hit YouTuber for threatening my parents, me: Elvish Yadav**

Winner of reality show Bigg Boss OTT Elvish Yadav, who has been booked for allegedly assaulting a YouTuber in a shopping mall in Delhi, posted a clarification video on Saturday claiming that the latter had threatened to "burn him and his family alive". He alleged that the incident was "pre-planned", as the complainant, Sagar Thakur, had installed hidden cameras at the place of their meeting.

**BJP relying on ED, CBI as it has no faith in its leaders: RJD**

The Rashtriya Janata Dal on Saturday alleged that the ruling BJP is "unleashing central agencies" on the Opposition because the party has "lost trust in its own leaders". "BJP has realised that its own leaders will not be able to fetch votes, hence, it has roped in the ED, CBI and IT department," said party spokesperson Rishi Mishra, a day after the ED conducted raids against party leader Subhash Yadav.

**Pradeep Verma is Jharkhand BJP's candidate for RS polls**

Jharkhand BJP general secretary Pradeep Verma will be the party's candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls in the State, party spokesperson Pratul Shahdeo said in Ranchi on Saturday. Mr. Verma, 52, will file his nomination on March 11. The biennial elections to the two Rajya Sabha seats from the state will be held on March 21. The ruling JMM-Congress-RJD alliance is likely to declare its candidate on Sunday.

**ED action on Baramati Agro motivated: Rohit Pawar**

**Press Trust of India**  
MUMBAI  
Maharashtra MLA Rohit Pawar on Saturday described the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) move to attach assets of a sugar mill owned by his company, Baramati Agro Limited, as "politically motivated, wrong and illegal". A total of 161.30 acres of the Kannad Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Limited have been provisionally attached under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the ED said on Friday. Mr. Pawar, who belongs to Sharad Pawar's faction of the Nationalist Congress Party, has been questioned by the probe agency twice in the past after it searched the premises of Baramati Agro and some others in January.

**2 Chandigarh councillors return to AAP**

**Press Trust of India**  
CHANDIGARH  
Two Chandigarh municipal councillors - Poonam Kumari and Neha Musabhat - re-joined the Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday. They had joined the BJP on February 19, a day before the SC was scheduled to hear a plea alleging irregularities in the mayoral polls, which saw the defeat of the Congress-AAP alliance. On February 20, the court had named AAP councillor Kuldeep Kumar as mayor. Poonam Kumari and Neha Musabhat returned to the AAP fold on Saturday, a party statement said.

**After allies meet Shah in Delhi, Fadnavis assures Mahayuti LS seat sharing in the home stretch**

BJP leader and Deputy CM says 80% of the alliance deal for 48 seats done, rest of the issues will be ironed out soon; Shinde Sena's Ramdas Kadam continues to target Maharashtra BJP leaders over staking claim to seats in the Konkani region

**Shoshmolit Banerjee**  
PUNE

With tensions prevailing among the ruling Mahayuti allies over seat sharing in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday said 80% of the process has been completed and that talks between Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the three allies in Maharashtra (Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, the BJP and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party) have been positive.

A late-night meeting on Friday to resolve seat-sharing differences between the ruling allies saw Chief Minister Shinde, along with his Deputy Chief Ministers - Mr. Fadnavis and Mr. Pawar - meet Mr. Shah at the latter's residence in Delhi. Also present were NCP (Ajit Pawar faction) leader Sanil Patil and Rajya Sabha MP Pratul Patel. "The outcome of the Delhi meeting was positive. 80% of the seat-sharing deal is completed. We [the leadership of all three ruling parties] are talking to each other and the issues will be resolved soon," Mr. Fadnavis said.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar. File photo

According to sources, the BJP wants to contest on as many as 32 to 34 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra, leaving 10 for Mr. Shinde's Sena faction and a mere four, or even less, for Mr. Pawar's NCP. Eknath Shinde Sena camp leader Sanjay Shirsat said the announcement of candidates for Maharashtra was expected in the next two days, remarking

that all would be clear soon. "Sena feels the pinch yet, despite Mr. Fadnavis's assurance that the talks would be wrapped up soon, senior leader from the Shinde-led Shiv Sena camp, Ramdas Kadam, continued to vent spleen on the BJP's interference in the Konkani region. Mr. Kadam, speaking during an event at which CGP Shinde was present, openly voiced his grievances against the BJP staking claim on seats which had sitting MPs from Mr. Shinde's faction. "Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant comes to Dapoli and stakes BJP's claim on places that rightfully belong to us. The local BJP leaders do the same. Are they [BJP] trying to finish their alliance with us?" Mr. Kadam said, taking care to add, however, that his criticism was directed specifically at Maharashtra BJP leaders.

**Raj Thackeray targets BJP amid talks of poll alliance**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
PUNE

Amid talk of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and the ruling BJP coming together for a possible pre-poll alliance, MNS chief Raj Thackeray continued to distance himself from both the ruling and Opposition coalitions, targeting both the BJP as well as Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party and Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT). Addressing party workers in Nashik on Saturday at an event to mark the party's 18th foundation day, Mr. Thackeray said that the real credit for building the BJP ought to go to ordinary party workers instead of Mr. Narendra Modi. "There is a lot of credit being given to the PM for building the BJP. The full credit goes to the workers who expended their sweat in creating the party and who came well before Modi," he said.

**ED probes money trail involving contractors in T.N. sand mining scam**

**S. Vijay Kumar**  
CHENNAI

Special teams of the Enforcement Directorate searched multiple locations across Tamil Nadu in connection with the alleged ₹4,700-crore sand mining scam in the State. Sources in the probe agency said that investigators were verifying huge money transfers involving certain individuals, contractors and prime suspects. The ED, in its investigation that began in September last year, is looking into money-laundering offences in the State, according to sources. After registering a case

**Sources said the probe agency is scrutinising the source and flow of funds in the scam**

under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. ED teams conducted simultaneous searches at sand mining sites in more than six districts on September 12, 2023, and claimed to have seized incriminating documents such as fake bills and counterfeit QR codes that pointed to GST losses to the Central and State governments. Premises of contractors of their associates, including S. Ramachandran, K. Rathinam, P. Karikalan and officials of the Water Re-

sources Department, were searched. The ED had also sent summons to four collectors to appear before the investigation officer. The Tamil Nadu government moved the Madras High Court challenging the summons, and got a stay order. However, the ED appealed against the stay order in the Supreme Court, stating that they were bound to provide information to the ED. As part of the probe, the ED also attached over 200 accounts allegedly used for mining sand illegally in the State, and froze the business bank accounts of sand lifting contractors, the sources added.

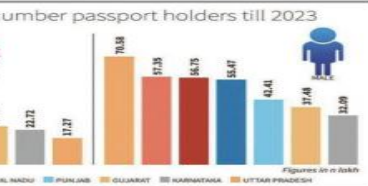
**Eleven MLAs shift to Uttarakhand hotel as H.P. crisis deepens**

**Press Trust of India**  
RISHIKESH  
The six Himachal Pradesh Congress MLAs who voted against party nominee Abhishek Mann Singhvi in the Rajya Sabha polls, along with three independent legislators, have shifted to a hotel in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand amid an on-going rebellion against Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhla. Two BJP MLAs accompanied the lawmakers, who arrived in Rishikesh from Haryana's Panchkula by a chartered flight late on Friday. Security around the Taj Hotel has been tightened, and no one is being allowed to enter its premises, except those who have the premises of Baramati Agro and some others in January.

**Kerala top Indian State in issuing passports to women**

**Dhinesh Kallungal**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In line with the visible shift in the migration pattern from the southern State, Kerala holds the highest number of passports issued in the country till 2023 followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Gujarat. Though Kerala has the highest number of total passport holders in the country at 98.92 lakh (including male and female), Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of male passport holders at 70.58 lakh. The number of female passport holders in Kerala stands at 42.17 lakh. The highest number of female passport holders



especially female students, heading to various countries for higher education. A survey on "Youth Student Fellowship, found that

**Solution to Gorkha issue soon, says PM at fourth rally in Bengal in 10 days**

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

Accusing the parties in the Opposition INDIA alliance of depriving the people of north Bengal and creating a divide among several communities in the region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the BJP has been sensitive to the issue of Gorkhas. "The BJP is continuously striving to address your concerns. Now, we are very close to finding a solution," he said, addressing a gathering at Siliguri in Darjeeling district. The demand for a permanent political solution for the Darjeeling hills persisted for several decades, with locals demanding a separate State comprising Darjeeling and parts of north Bengal. The BJP has been winning the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat since 2019. The Prime Minister referred to the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the abrogation of Article 370, and said that there are several issues which people never imagined will



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing an event in Siliguri on Saturday. AP

be resolved, but "Modi has resolved these issues". The rally at Siliguri was the fourth public event addressed by the Prime Minister in a short span of 10 days and he continued to target the Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders, saying that the campaign to oust their corrupt government from West Bengal will begin with the Lok Sabha poll. "Their leaders and Ministers are in jail in the rafter scam case. The party is looting the people of Bengal," Mr. Modi said. He also raised the issue of wala and Ayushman Bharat and said that the State government is not allowing the people to avail of the health services of these Central schemes. **Ex-judge on stage** Former Calcutta High Court Judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who resigned days ago to join the BJP, will be on the stage at the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the abrogation of Article 370, and said that there are several issues which people never imagined will



# Kerala top Indian State in issuing passports to women

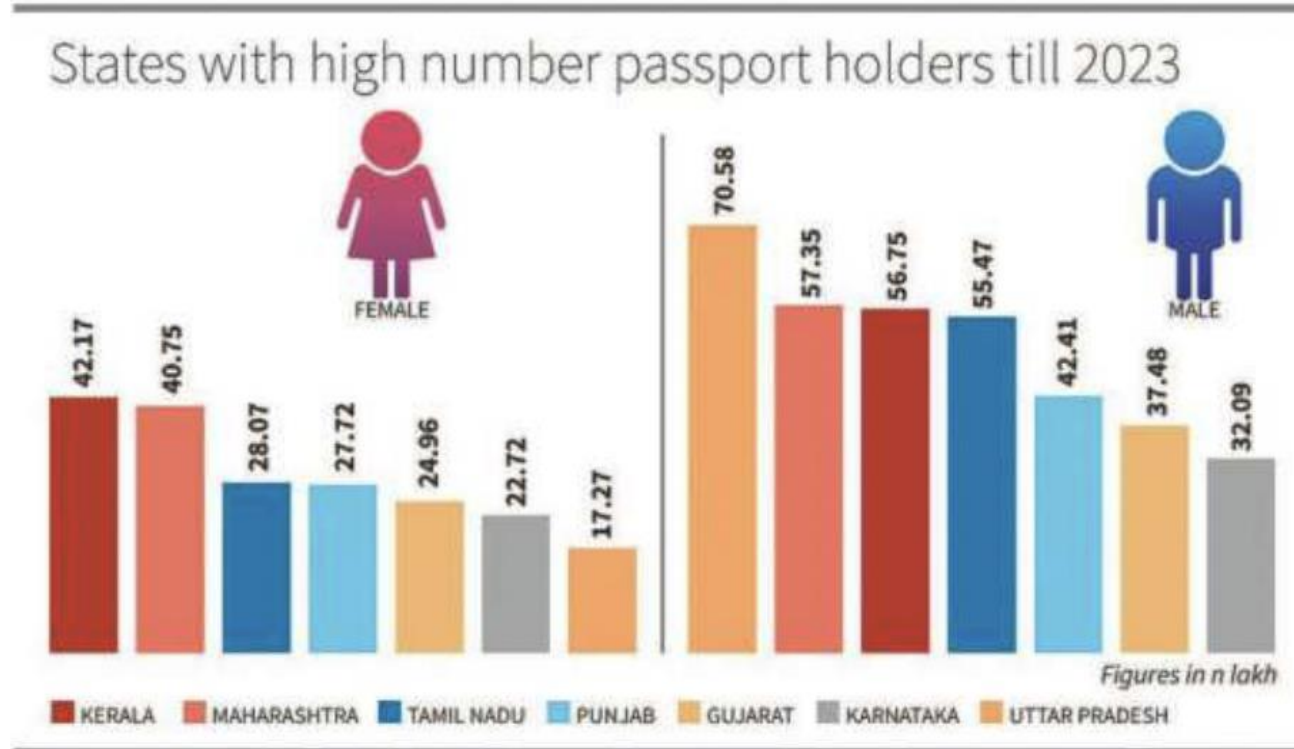
**Dhinesh Kallungal**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In line with the visible shift in the migration pattern from Kerala of late, women from the southern State hold the highest number of passports issued in the country till 2023, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Gujarat.

Though Kerala has the highest number of total passport holders in the country at 98.92 lakh (including male and female), Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of male passport holders at 70.58 lakh. The number of female passport holders in Kerala stands at 42.17 lakh.

The highest number of female passport holders



underscores the recent shift in the migration pattern from the State, characterised by a notable increase in Kerala's youth,

especially female students, heading to various countries for higher education. A survey on "Youth Student Migration from Kerala", conducted in 2023 as part of the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) Youth Leadership Fellowship, found that

more women from Kerala are pursuing overseas education. Though the 2018 Kerala Migration Survey put women's participation in migration at 15.8%, the latest study found that females represented 32% of the survey respondents, aligning with the data which showed that nearly half of over 7,200 students who recently secured Canadian visas from one facilitator were female.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, K. Harikrishnan Nambuthiri, former CEO of NoRKA Roots, a field agency of the Department of Non-Resident Keralites (NoRKA), said the uptick in female students enrolling in foreign universities is one of the reasons.







# Kozhikode to get first cooperatives museum

**Aabha Raveendran**

KOZHIKODE

Amul, Indian Coffee House, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO), Kerala Dinesh Beedi: these are brands from diverse sectors with one unifying factor – they are all cooperatives. These and many others will be showcased at the almost-ready 14-storey International Cooperative Museum (ICM) in the heart of Kozhikode, Kerala. It will be a destination to learn about India's cooperative movement that has a history of more than a century.

A ₹150-crore project of Karassery Service Co-operative Bank that began operations in 1994, the museum will be the second of its kind in the world (the first is in Toad Lane, the



The International Cooperative Museum building is expected to be a major tourist attraction in the State. K. RAGESH

U.K., set up in 1844). There are more than 8 lakh cooperatives in India today, with a collective membership of 29 crore. Maharashtra has the maximum number of cooperative

societies, at 2.3 lakh, with 5 crore members. The museum will showcase the success and achievements of cooperative movements in India, especially Kerala. The building will also

house a wax museum and an art gallery.

The ICM is the brainchild of N.K. Abdurrahiman, the chairperson of Karassery Bank. The initial work for the project began in 2016. The construction is being carried out by Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society, another giant in Kerala's cooperative sector.

The initial plan was to complete the work in five years, but COVID-19 played spoilsport. With the change in technology over the last eight years, plans changed too.

“We are planning to incorporate the latest technology, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality for the displays,” said Mubasheer Ali Tahir, director (IT and Infrastructure) of Karassery Bank,

who is in-charge of the work.

Meanwhile, the bank has approached the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the International Cooperative Alliance for support to make the project even bigger. “We have already contacted cooperatives in some countries in Europe and Japan for information and display materials,” he said.

With its opening in less than six months, the ICM is expected to be a major tourist attraction in Kozhikode. “Our aim is to make the museum a great learning experience for people, especially students and researchers. We hope to do this with the support of experts and research scholars in the field,” Mr. Abdurrahiman said.







# 'Canal Man' picks up his shovel again to help farmers

**Amit Bhelari**

GAYA

Laungi Bhuiya, 71, also known as the 'Canal Man', is single-handedly digging a second canal of 5 km so that rainwater cascading down the Bangetha hills in Bihar, can be diverted to the fields for the farming.

Mr. Bhuiya, who lives in Kothilwa village, 80 km away from the Gaya district headquarters, began the process three years ago, having carved out 3.5 km so far.

He hopes to complete another 1.5 km in the next year-and-a-half, using nothing more than an axe and spade. The canal is 5 feet wide and 3 feet deep.

The first canal he constructed was finished in October 2020, and took him 30 years to cut through 3 km of stone. "It helped the villagers of only three villages. However, this one will provide water



Laungi Bhuiya says the canals that he digs will not only aid irrigation but also offer fishing opportunities. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to another five. About 10,000 to 12,000 people will benefit from it," Mr. Bhuiya said.

Impressed by his work, Anand Mahindra, Chairperson of the Mahindra Group, had gifted him a tractor after he had completed the first canal. This

is now Mr. Bhuiya's only source of income.

## Daily routine

Every morning, Mr. Bhuiya, who owns less than half an acre of land, rises, and leaving his mud-and-straw home, walks about 2 km to his work spot. "Farmers

## **Laungi Bhuiya of Kothilwa spent 30 years cutting through 3 km of stone to finish his first canal in October 2020**

are not able to utilise rainwater adequately because there is no proper channel for it," he said.

He understands the local rainfall and irrigation patterns, as three of his four sons, ranging in ages from 25 to 40, are farmers. A fourth works as a helper in a sweet shop in Chennai.

"The second canal will not only help in providing water for irrigation, but also give people the opportunity to fish. I have created four small ponds as well, through its course," Mr. Bhuiya said. The previous canal took rainwater to an existing village pond, from where people use water for irrigation.

Farmers in this area mostly grew maize and gram, but once water became available, they began to grow wheat and rice too, resulting in a higher income.

Rinku Kumar, a primary school teacher in Kothilwa village, praised Mr. Bhuiya's work and said: "The youth of the village was migrating to other places in search of jobs. Laungi Bhuiya, who used to go to the forest daily to graze goats, thought about the future of the village."

Another villager, Kesariya Devi, said the water crisis will end once the second canal is operational. "Earlier water in the area was available at a depth of 100 feet; now, we hit water at 20 feet," she said, indicating that the groundwater levels have risen.

"Hardly anyone could afford a borewell here, but now many people have them, since the depth they

have to bore to is less than before."

## Initial scepticism

When Mr. Bhuiya began to carve out the first canal, villagers called him *Pagla Bhuiya* (Mad Bhuiya). His wife Ram Rati Devi threw him out of the house briefly. His second son Brahmdeo said family members would earlier hide his axe and spade, so he could not work. But Mr. Bhuiya devised a way of hiding his own tools near the canal, returning home empty-handed.

"However, after seeing the impact of his work, now all the villagers praise him. I am proud that my father has done something for humanity. Though he is ageing, he still works for six to seven hours a day," said Mr. Brahmdeo.

Mr. Bhuiya's only wish now is to get an earth-moving machine to quicken the pace of his work.













## Krystyna Pyszkova of Czech Republic becomes Miss World

Czech Republic's Krystyna Pyszkova on Saturday won the coveted Miss World 2024 title at a grand event in Mumbai. Lebanon Yasmina Zaytoun was named the first runner-up. Reigning Miss World Karolina Bielawska from Poland crowned Ms. Pyszkova successor at the star-studded finale here. India, which hosted the event after 28 years, was represented by 22-year-old Sini Shetty, who could not make it to the top four of the contest. India has won the title six times – Reita Faria (1966), Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (1994), Diana Hayden (1997), Yukta Mookhey (1999), Priyanka Chopra Jonas (2000), and Manushi Chhillar (2017). PTI



### DUBLIN

#### Iran referendum on family and women's roles defeated: Varadkar



A dual referendum in Ireland on redefining family and women's roles in the constitution has been defeated, Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said. The government supported the proposed changes, which would have widened the definition of the family and clarified out-dated language about the duties of women in society. AFP

### TEHRAN

#### Iran slams Meta's removal of Khamenei's social media accounts



Iran denounced Meta's decision to remove the Facebook and Instagram accounts of its supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, calling it a "violation of freedom of expression". Meta said last month it removed his accounts for having "repeatedly violated" its policy on "dangerous organisations and individuals". AFP

### FLORIDA

#### Hungary's PM Orban supports Trump after Florida meeting



Hungary's right-wing nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban lent his support to his long-time ally Donald Trump's bid to return to White House after meeting the former U.S. President in Florida late on Friday. Orban has said only the return of Republican candidate Trump to the White House could bring peace in Ukraine. REUTERS

### ANKARA

#### Turkey openly talks to Hamas leaders and backs them: Erdogan



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday Ankara "firmly backs" Palestinian militant group Hamas. "No one can make us qualify Hamas as a terrorist organisation," he said in a speech in Istanbul. "Turkey is a country that speaks openly with Hamas leaders and firmly backs them," he added. AFP

## Asif Ali Zardari becomes Pakistan's 14th President

The PPP leader secured 225 votes from the newly anointed electoral college; he becomes the only civilian leader of the country to win a second term; he is husband of slain PM Benazir Bhutto

### Press Trust of India

#### ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Asif Ali Zardari was overwhelmingly elected as the 14th President of Pakistan on Saturday, becoming the only civilian President of the coup-prone country for a second time.



Newswatch: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, left, meets with Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad on Saturday. AP

Mr. Zardari, the co-chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party, was the joint candidate of the ruling alliance of the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

His rival, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, is the head of his Pashoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP). He was held by jailed former Prime Minister Imran

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and a three-year civil war broke out in the National Assembly and the Senate. The new President was elected by the

electoral college of the newly elected members of the National Assembly and the four provincial Assemblies, which formed the electoral college.

A businessman-turned-politician, Mr. Zardari is the husband of slain Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Mr. Zardari has been haunted by his shady past due to his alleged involvement in cases of mega corruption during the two terms of his wife as Prime Minister. He was implicated in many cases of corruption, but he was neither convicted nor lost his trademark smile, and, ultimately, he was cleared in all cases.

## Israel strikes landmark residential tower in Rafah

### Reuters

#### CAIRO/RAFAH

Israel struck one of the largest residential towers in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on March 9, residents said, stepping up pressure on the last area of the enclave it has not yet invaded and where over a million displaced Palestinians are sheltering.



Battered building: Debris is seen around a damaged Al-Masry Tower after Israeli air strikes in Rafah on Saturday. GETTY IMAGES

The 12-floor building, located some 500m from the border with Egypt, was damaged in the strike. Dozens of families were made homeless though no casualties were reported, according to residents.

One of the tower's 300 residents said that Israeli forces said nearly 31,000 Palestinians had been killed, over 72,000 were wounded and thousands were trapped under rubble.

Nearly 31,000 dead: Five months into Israel's war on Gaza, health authorities said nearly 31,000 Palestinians had been killed, over 72,000 were wounded and thousands were trapped under rubble.

A Rafah-based official with the Fatah party said he feared that hitting the

## Red Cross chief decries 'lack of humanity'

### Agence France-Presse

#### GENEVA

The war in Gaza has "ruptured any sense of a shared humanity," the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Saturday. ICRC head Mirjana Spoljaric called for an urgent ceasefire in Gaza, saying Israel and Hamas must respect international law and protect civilians caught up in their conflict.

She said that getting a steady, substantial flow of desperately needed aid into the besieged Palestinian territory — where the UN says more than 90% of the population is on the brink of famine — was "only part of the solution".

"Preserving civilian life and health is the rule, not the exception," she said.

## Four police officers among six dead in Nigerian attack

### Agence France-Presse

#### LAGOS

Armed men accused of belonging to a separatist group killed six persons, including four police officers, in southeastern Nigeria's Eboriyi state, the police said on Saturday.

The attack occurred early on Friday near a police checkpoint on a road near the city of Abakaliki, state police spokesman Joshua Ukandu said.

A shootout began in which four officers died and two civilians were killed in the crossfire, he added.

The attackers were still on the run. They are alleged to be members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement, which advocates a separate State

### Suspects are members of IPOB, which advocates a separate state for the Igbo ethnic group

Fearful the Igbo ethnic group. Attacks in the southeast are often blamed on IPOB, which systematically denies any involvement.

A separatist is a sensitive topic in Nigeria, where a dispute will war broke out in 1967 after Igbo Army officers declared an independent Biafra state.

More than a million people died. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is also grappling with violence by armed groups in the northwest, known locally as "bandits", and jihadist insurgents in the northeast.

## Fiery and feisty



A demonstrator lights a spray on fire during clashes with police officers during a protest to mark International Women's Day in Mexico City, on Friday. People around the world marked International Women's Day Friday with protests and celebrations. AFP

## 'Presence of NATO troops in Ukraine is not unthinkable'

### Associated Press

#### WARSAW

Poland's Foreign Minister says the presence of NATO forces "is not unthinkable" and that he appreciates the President for not ruling out that idea.

Radek Sikorski made the observation during a discussion marking the 25th anniversary of Poland's accession to NATO in the Polish parliament on Friday, and for Foreign Ministry posted the comments on X.

They reflect a larger European debate over how to help Ukraine as Russia has gained some momentum on the battlefield and Kyiv is running low on ammunition.

Last month French President Emmanuel Macron said the possibility of West-



Radek Sikorski  
ern troops in Ukraine could not be ruled out.

Tusk's remark  
Donald Tusk was among those European leaders who initially ruled out sending troops to Ukraine after Macron's remarks, saying, "Poland does not plan to send its troops to the territory of Ukraine."

But less than two weeks later Mr. Sikorski struck a different tone.

## Residents seek shelter as gunfire and gang violence bring Haiti to 'standstill'

### Agence France-Presse

#### PORT-AU-PRINCE

Sporadic gunfire rang out in Port-au-Prince on Friday night, as residents desperately sought shelter amid the recent explosion of gang violence in the Haitian capital.

Humanitarian conditions continued to deteriorate, and aid groups and NGOs have warned of a shortage of medical resources and food supplies after armed groups unleashed widespread chaos on the long-trobled Caribbean nation last week.

Gunshots were heard throughout the capital late on Friday, especially concentrated in the southwest-

ern districts of Turgeau, Jacot, Lalue and Cap-Haitien.

Fearful residents scrambled to take shelter, with witnesses saying they had seen clashes "between police officers and bandits" as gangs apparently tried to commandeer police stations in the city center.

Criminal groups, which already control much of Port-au-Prince as well as roads leading to the rest of the country, have attacked their infrastructure in recent days. This also includes attacks on two prisons, allowing the majority of their 3,800 inmates to escape.

The gangs, along with some ordinary Haitians, are seeking the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who was due to leave office in February but instead agreed to a power-sharing deal with the opposition until new elections are held.

"Urgent reform  
On Thursday, the government issued a month-long state of emergency for the western region, which includes the capital, and decreed a nighttime curfew until Monday.

Port-au-Prince resident Fabiola Sanon said that her 32-year-old husband James was killed in the unrest. He used to wake up early to earn money for the son's main port — a key source for food imports — cited in conflict with anyone," Ms. Sanon said. "He's a simple cigarette salesman."

Haiti's airport remained closed on Friday, while the



Impending death: A man transports a coffin using a wheelbarrow in Port-au-Prince in Haiti on Friday. AFP

him to school, she said. "James has never been in conflict with anyone," Ms. Sanon said. "He's a simple cigarette salesman."

Haiti's airport remained closed on Friday, while the

"If we cannot access those containers (full of food), Haiti will go hungry soon," the NGO Mercy Corps warned in a statement.

An alliance of Caribbean nations, CARICOM, on Friday summoned envoys from the United States, France, Canada and the United Nations to a meeting on Monday in Jamaica to discuss the outbreak of violence.

Guyana's President Irfaan Ali said the meeting will take up "critical issues for the stabilisation of security and the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance."

The crisis has drawn concern from the United

States, which has told the absent Henry to enact "urgent" political reform to prevent further escalation.

Mr. Henry was in Kenya when the violence broke out and has since been unable to return to Haiti. He is reportedly stranded in Puerto Rico.

Pregnant women at risk  
The UN warned on Friday that thousands of people, especially pregnant women, are in danger of losing vital health care as the crisis drags on.

"If greater Port-au-Prince remains a standstill in the coming weeks, almost 3,000 pregnant women could be denied access to essential health

care, and almost 450 could face life-threatening obstetric complications if they do not receive medical assistance," the UN's office in Haiti said in a statement.

The body also warned that more than 800 sexual violence survivors could be without medical care by the end of March if conditions do not improve.

"Today, too many women and girls in Haiti are victims of intimate violence committed by armed gangs. The United Nations stands by them and is committed to continuing to provide the assistance they need," said the UN's Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Liza Richardson.



# Asif Ali Zardari becomes Pakistan's 14th President

The PPP leader secured 225 votes from the newly anointed electoral college; he becomes the only civilian leader of the country to win a second term; he is husband of slain PM Benazir Bhutto

## **Press Trust of India**

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

**A**sif Ali Zardari was overwhelmingly elected as the 14th President of Pakistan on Saturday, becoming the only civilian President of the coup-prone country for a second time.

Mr. Zardari, the co-chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party, was the joint candidate of the ruling alliance of the PPP and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

His rival, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, is the head of his Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP). He was fielded by jailed former Prime Minister Imran



**New innings:** Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, left, meets with Asif Ali Zardari in Islamabad on Saturday. AP

Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and backed by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

Mr. Zardari is expected to be sworn in on Sunday.

Mr. Zardari, 68, received 255 votes while his opponent got 119 votes in the National Assembly and the Senate. The new President was elected by the

electoral college of the newly elected members of the National Assembly and the four provincial Assemblies, which formed the electoral college.

A businessman-turned-politician, Mr. Zardari is the husband of slain Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Mr. Zardari has been haunted by his shady past due to his alleged involvement in cases of mega corruption during the two terms of his wife as Prime Minister. He was implicated in many cases of corruption, but he was neither convicted nor lost his trademark smile, and, ultimately, he was cleared in all cases.







# Correction

The report 'India four-nation EFTA bloc likely to ink FTA on March 10' published in the March 9 edition erroneously referred to Finland as a member of EFTA. It should instead have read as Iceland. The error is regretted.

• i





# EFTA to invest \$100 bn in 15 yrs

## India inks trade pact with four-nation bloc

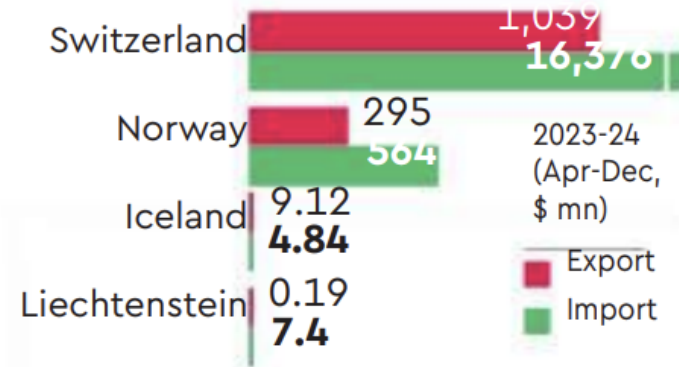
**MUKESH JAGOTA**  
New Delhi, March 10

**INDIA ON SUNDAY** signed a trade and economic partnership agreement (TEPA) with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes a first-of-its-kind binding investment commitment of \$100 billion from the four-nation bloc over 15 years.

No major tariff reduction for goods by the European side are built into the pact, as these countries — Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein — already maintain very low tariffs.

However, the agreement, according to a senior official, has a provision for

## INDIA'S TRADE WITH EFTA



FDI from EFTA countries in (\$ mn, since Apr 2000)	Switzerland	9,946
	Norway	721
	Liechtenstein	105.2
	Iceland	29.26



suspension of tariff concessions by India if the promised investments do not materialise.

Most of the tariff lines from both sides

are included in the pact, while a few “sensitive” items like dairy, soya, coal and certain agricultural products are excluded.

The tariff reductions would be carried out in phases over many years. It will thus take anywhere between seven and 10 years for Swiss watches and chocolates to be cheaper in India. For wines, the concessions are similar to those given to Australia.

Among the four EFTA members, Switzerland is India’s largest trading partner, and India runs a large trade deficit with it. The investment from the four rich European countries is seen as a precursor to a much larger deal with the European Union.

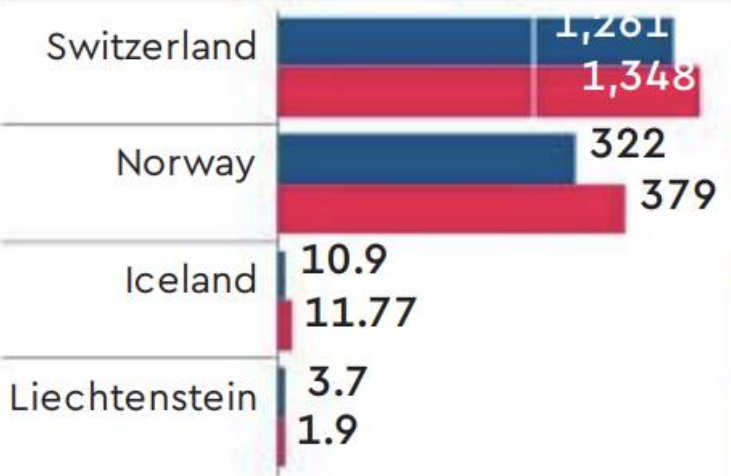


**Continued on Page 12**

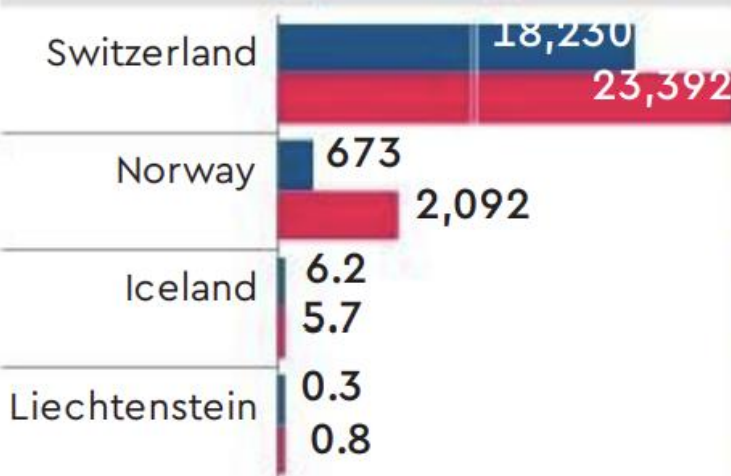


# INDIA'S TRADE WITH EFTA

Export (\$ mn) 2020-21 2021-22



Import (\$ mn) 2020-21 2021-22



## India's main imports from Switzerland (\$ mn)

Category	(2022-23)
Gold	12,600
Machinery	409
Pharmaceuticals	309
Coking & steam coal	380
Optical instruments and orthopaedic appliances	296
Watches	211.4

## India's key exports to Switzerland

Organic chemicals	536
Gems and jewellery	376

\*Switzerland is the biggest trading partner of India in EFTA

\* India runs a large trade deficit with Switzerland







# Wicket No. 700... and Anderson is not done yet

**Rakesh Rao**

DHARAMSHALA

With the snow-capped Dhauladhar mountain ranges providing a stunning backdrop here, James Anderson, 41, scaled 'Mount 700' to permanently etch his name among the greats of the game.

Precisely 15 minutes into the third day's play on Saturday, the dismissal of Kuldeep Yadav signalled the end of Anderson's wait. The ball kissed the outside edge of Kuldeep's bat and wicketkeeper Ben Foakes completed the dismissal. This was the moment of the day for Anderson, England and their supporters.

On his debut against Zimbabwe in May 2003, Anderson began his wicket-tally by bowling Mark



## Anderson's path to Mount 700

James Anderson became the first fast bowler in the history of Test cricket to reach 700 wickets. Here is the list of his milestones along the way starting from his first wicket

**1st wkt.:** 1st Test, Mark Vermeulen (Zim), Lord's, May 2003

**100th:** 29th, Jacques Kallis (SA), The Oval, Aug. 2008

**200th:** 55th, Peter Siddle (Aus), Perth, Dec. 2010

**300th:** 81st, Peter Fulton (NZ), Lord's, May 2013

**400th:** 104th, Martin Gupthill (NZ), Headingley, May 2015

**500th:** 129th, Kraigg Brathwaite (WI), Lord's, Sept. 2017

**600th:** 156th, Azhar Ali (Pak), Southampton, Aug. 2020.

**700th:** 187th, Kuldeep Yadav (Ind), Dharamshala, March 2024

On his debut against Zimbabwe in May 2003, Anderson began his wicket-tally by bowling Mark Vermeulen at Lord's and gradually became the most reliable new-ball weapon in the English armoury.

**Third to reach the mark**  
Playing his 187th Test, Anderson became only the third bowler – following spinners Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Shane Warne (708) – to take 700 Test wickets.

Since surpassing Australian Glenn McGrath's career-tally of 563 wickets when he dismissed Mohammad Shami at The Oval in September 2018, Anderson remains the highest Test wicket-taker among fast bowlers.

The main reason for Anderson's longevity in Tests is his decision to stay



Southampton, Aug. 2020.

**700th:** 187th, Kuldeep Yadav (Ind), Dharamshala, March 2024



700 test wickets is a stellar achievement. A fast bowler playing for 22 years and performing so consistently to be able to take 700 wickets would have sounded like fiction until Anderson actually made it happen. Simply magnificent!  
TENDULKAR



Jimmy coming up to 700 wickets, it's phenomenal to think about, especially as a seam bowler. Amazing career to date, and I can't see him stopping. I have played with Jimmy for a long time and I've never seen him as physically fit as he does right now. Being 41, showing that hunger and desire to get better every single day is testament to his attitude and commitment to the game  
STOKES

focused on red-ball cricket.

He played the last of his 194 ODIs against Afghanistan in March 2015 and finished with 269 wickets.

In fact, his T20 career lasted just 19 matches for

18 wickets and ended in 2009. In Test cricket, Anderson has three 10-wicket match-hauls and 32 five-wicket performances.

These numbers could change since Anderson is not done yet.

## Most wickets



Player	Span	Mat	Inns	Balls	Overs	Mdns	Runs	<b>Wkts</b>	BBI	Ave	Econ	SR	4	5
<a href="#">M Muralidaran (ICC/SL)</a>	1992-2010	133	230	44039	7339.5	1794	18180	<b>800</b>	9/51	22.72	2.47	55.04	45	67
<a href="#">SK Warne (AUS)</a>	1992-2007	145	273	40705	6784.1	1761	17995	<b>708</b>	8/71	25.41	2.65	57.49	48	37
<a href="#">JM Anderson (ENG)</a>	2003-2024	187	348	39877	6646.1	1720	18569	<b>700</b>	7/42	26.52	2.79	56.96	32	32
<a href="#">A Kumble (IND)</a>	1990-2008	132	236	40850	6808.2	1576	18355	<b>619</b>	10/74	29.65	2.69	65.99	31	35
<a href="#">SCJ Broad (ENG)</a>	2007-2023	167	309	33698	5616.2	1304	16719	<b>604</b>	8/15	27.68	2.97	55.79	28	20
<a href="#">GD McGrath (AUS)</a>	1993-2007	124	243	29248	4874.4	1470	12186	<b>563</b>	8/24	21.64	2.49	51.95	28	29
<a href="#">NM Lyon (AUS)</a>	2011-2024	129*	242	32761	5460.1	1044	16052	<b>530</b>	8/50	30.28	2.93	61.81	24	24
<a href="#">CA Walsh (WI)</a>	1984-2001	132	242	30019	5003.1	1144	12688	<b>519</b>	7/37	24.44	2.53	57.84	32	22



# Shafeel fires Services to a seventh Santosh Trophy title



**Job well done:** The Services team celebrates after beating Goa in the final. RITU RAJ KONWAR

## Amitabha Das Sharma

YUPIA (ARUNACHAL)

P.P. Shafeel scored with a spectacular pile-driver to help Services beat a strong Goa by a solitary goal in the final to lift the Santosh Trophy for the seventh time in the history of the premier inter-state senior men's football competition.

The opening session at the Golden Jubilee Stadium ended goalless as the attackers failed at both ends. There was no dearth of action though as both sides adopted an open approach. They produced some nice raids that were either neutralised in the box or went wide for want

of precision.

The second session came alive with more concentrated efforts from Services, which started probing the Goa box with more purpose. Goa goalkeeper Antonio Da Silva made a crucial save in the 50th minute to make up for the mistake of his defensive colleague Deeshank Kulkaliker, who miscued a clearance to let Services right-half Subham Rana have a crack.

Services kept pressing for the lead and found it in the 67th minute when midfielder Rahul Ramakrishnan set up Saheel outside the Goa box. The Services right-back answered with a

powerful grounder that went through Da Silva's defences.

Goa went in the hunt for the equaliser and came close to finding it on at least three occasions. But Services' defence stuck to its task and found the clearances at the right moment.

The best chance came in injury-time (90+3 minute) when Deeshank put in a nice cross for substitute Joshua D'Silva. The latter's header beat the Services goalkeeper Abdul Kadir but Pradeep Kumar cleared from the line to save the day for Services.

**The result:** Services 1 (P.P. Shafeel 67) bt Goa 0.

## Santosh Trophy



<b>Organising body</b>	<a href="#">AIFF</a> <a href="#">FIFA</a>
<b>Founded</b>	1941; 83 years ago
<b>Region</b>	India
<b>Number of teams</b>	Group stage: 36 Final round: 10+2
<b>Related competitions</b>	<a href="#">National Games</a>
<b>International cup(s)</b>	<a href="#">Asian Champion Club Tournament</a> (1967–70)
<b>Current champions</b>	<a href="#">Services</a> (7th title)
<b>Most successful team(s)</b>	<a href="#">West Bengal</a> (32 titles)
<b>Television broadcasters</b>	<a href="#">FIFA+</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="#">Senior NFC</a> ↗





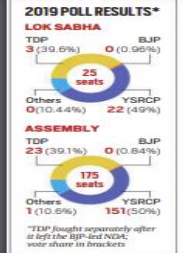
**Portrait of an Artist**  
 As he turns 90, a look at the journey of artist and photographer Jyoti Bhatt  
**FOUR-PAGE PULLOUT**



**Modi Sarkar Ki Guarantee**  
**Free treatment for poor**  
**30 crore Ayushman cards created**  
**Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat**

**TDP, BJP, JSP announce pact, seat wrinkles ironed out**

**LIZ MATHEW & SREENIVAS JANAYALA**  
 NEW DELHI, HYDERABAD, MARCH 9  
 AFTER MULTIPLE rounds of discussions over seat-sharing, the BJP, TDP and Jana Sena Party (JSP) officially announced on Saturday that they will be contesting the coming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh together.  
 A joint statement released by the three parties said that the seat-sharing formula would be released in "a day or two", while resolving to work for the progress of the country and Andhra Pradesh "under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi".  
 Sources said that the TDP has agreed to raise its offer to 8 Lok Sabha seats for the BJP but on the  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



**DAYS BEFORE LOK SABHA POLLS NOTIFICATION**  
**EC quits, Commission is down to one; PM panel to meet next week**

**No transparency... raises questions on fairness of poll process: Opp**

**DAMINI NATH, MANOJ CG & RITIKA CHOPRA**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 9  
 BARELY DAYS before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections are expected to be announced, Election



**Arun Goel's EC tenure as EC was until Dec 5, 2023**  
 A meeting of the Prime Minister-led high-level panel to pick Election Commissioners (CEC and ECs) is likely to be held on March 14 or 15 — before the poll schedule is announced — and the Government sources said, has already sounded out Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, the Opposition member in the panel, about the possibilities. Sources said Chowdhury was sounded out before Goel's resignation. According to the new law on appointment of CEC and ECs  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**LAUNCHES UNNATI SCHEME WITH OUTLAY OF RS 10,037 CRORE**



PM Narendra Modi at Kaziranga National Park, Saturday. PTI

**An all-weather link to Tawang, Sela Tunnel boosts readiness at China border**  
**DMK, CONG FINALISE 9+1 SEAT-SHARING DEAL FOR LOK SABHA**  
**AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 9  
 THE Sela Tunnel, that was "dedicated to the nation" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, is a key border infrastructure project as it connects Guwahati to the strategic Tawang sector, thus aiding faster military movement to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).  
 Constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) at an altitude of around 13,000 feet and a cost of Rs 825 crore, the construction of the tunnel was aimed at providing all-weather connectivity to Tawang across Sela Pass on the Balipara-Charduar-Tawang (BCT) Road, Chariduar-Tawang (CT) Road,  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**GOVT & POLITICS**



DMK, CONG FINALISE 9+1 SEAT-SHARING DEAL FOR LOK SABHA  
 PAGE 8

**PM unveils projects for N-E, says next step is expansion of industries**

**SUKRITA BARUAH**  
 GUWAHATI, MARCH 9  
 LAUNCHING MEGA development projects for various Northeastern states during events in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that "Modi doesn't do work by counting the number of Parliament seats from a place".  
 During an event in Imphal in Arunachal Pradesh, he launched the central government's new flagship project for the Northeast  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**Team India scale new summit, leave England with memory of false dawn**

**SANDEEP DWIVEDI**  
 DHARAMSALA, MARCH 9  
 BY LUNCH on Day 3, the writing was on the wall. Still miles behind the total that would force India to bat again, half of England's team was back in the dressing room. A famous win for the home team looked inevitable. Fighting a lost cause with the tail-enders was England's old hand Joe Root.  
 That was when Sarfaraz Khan, fielding at short leg,  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Team India after defeating England by an innings and 64 runs to win the Test series 4-1, in Dharamshala. PTI REPORT, P 15

**TRAIN HATE KILLINGS**  
**2 more RPF cops dismissed: 'failed to discharge duty'**

**SWEETY ADMULAM**  
 MUMBAI, MARCH 9  
 TWO RAILWAY Protection Force (RPF) constables — who were on the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Superfast Express on July 31 last year, when Constable Chafanshi Chandra allegedly gunned down a senior colleague and three passengers — have been dismissed from service.  
 The dismissal orders for Constables Anjay Acharya and  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**In year of Gaganyaan, also set to launch: Indian private space research organisation**

**PAGE 1 ANCHOR**  
**ANONNA DUTT**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 9  
 "MARCH 22-28, 2024" With this cryptic tweet on X at 12.56 am on Saturday, Agnikul Cosmos announced the launch window for India's second privately built rocket.  
 The IIT-Madras incubated start-up is expected to launch its 3D-printed suborbital rocket, Agnibaan SoT-ED, later this  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Agnibaan SoT-ED by Agnikul Cosmos is a 3D-printed suborbital rocket. X/AgnikulCosmos

**SPACE START-UPS' PLANS FOR THIS YEAR**

**AGNIKUL COSMOS** Launching a 3D-printed suborbital rocket

**SKYROOT AEROSPACE** Launching a three-stage orbital rocket

**PIXEL** Launching a constellation of hyperspectral satellites

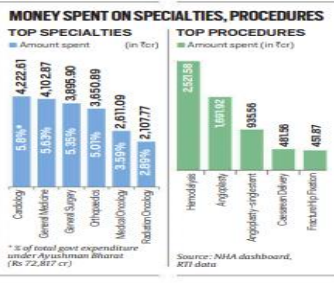
**BELLATRIX AEROSPACE** Tested electric and green fuel propulsion systems in space

**DHIRVA SPACE** Tested platforms for small satellites in space

**AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION-PART 2**

**Under Ayushman Bharat, top treatments: cardiology, cancer, general surgery, orthopaedics**

**KAUNAIN SHERIFFM**  
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 9  
 IN THE six years since the Centre's flagship free health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat was launched in September 2018, more than a quarter of the total money spent by the government in treating the poor has been in five key specialties — cardiology (heart); general medicine; general surgery; orthopaedics (bones); and medical and radiation oncology (cancer).  
 Data analysed by The Indian Express from the dashboard of the National Health Authority, the apex body overseeing implementation of Ayushman Bharat, and obtained under the Right to Information Act showed that cardiology tops the expenditure chart, followed closely by general medicine, general surgery, orthopaedics, and medical oncology. These five (see chart) cumulatively account for  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



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 As India knows that **New Criminal Laws** will come into force on **July 1, 2024**. We believe that it is our national duty to share our understanding of New legislations especially its nuances, niceties and novelness & comparison of Old and New Laws for benefit of all. We want to offer our honorary service to the legal fraternity including all law Colleges, Universities, Bar and Benches. For any invite, please mail us on **ambitionevents03@gmail.com**.  
**Thanks!** Team Ambition

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WORLD'S 5TH LARGEST EXPORTER OF WINE HAD OVER 2 BILLION LITRES UNSOLD IN MID-2023

# Global drop in wine consumption forces Aus farmers to destroy vines

PETER HOBSON

GRIFFITH (AUSTRALIA) MARCH 9

MILLIONS OF vines are being destroyed in Australia and tens of millions more must be pulled up to rein in overproduction that has crushed grape prices and threatens the livelihoods of growers and wine makers.

Falling consumption of wine worldwide has hit Australia particularly hard as demand shrinks fastest for the cheaper reds that are its biggest product, and in China, the market it has relied on for growth until recent years.

The world's fifth largest ex-

porter of wine had more than two billion litres, or about two years' worth of production, in storage in mid-2023, the most recent figures show, and some is spoiling as owners rush to dispose of it at any price.

"There's only so long we can go on growing a crop and losing money on it," said fourth-generation grower James Cremasco, as he watched clanking yellow excavators strip out rows of vines his grandfather planted near the southeastern town of Griffith.

About two-thirds of Australia's wine grapes are grown in irrigated inland areas such as Griffith, its landscape shaped by vine-growing tech-



Unpicked grapes wither on the vine near the town of Griffith in southeast Australia. Reuters file

niques brought by Italian migrants arriving around the 1950s.

As major wine makers such as Treasury Wines and Carlyle Group's Accolade Wines refocus on more expensive bottles that are selling better, the areas around Griffith are struggling, with unpicked grapes shrivelling on vines.

"It feels like an era is ending," said Andrew Calabria, a third-generation vineyard owner and wine maker at Calabria Wines.

"It's hard for growers to look out the back window and see a pile of dirt instead of vines that have been there as long as they've known."

Nearby, the remains of 1.1 million vines that once com-

prised one of Australia's largest vineyards were piled in heaps of gnarled and twisted wood as far as the eye could see.

Red wine has suffered the most. In regions like Griffith, prices of the grapes going into it fell to an average of A\$304 (\$200) a ton last year, the lowest in decades and down from A\$659 in 2020, data from industry body Wine Australia show.

The government, which forecasts lower prices again this year, said it recognises the significant challenges facing growers and is committed to supporting the sector, though many growers say it can do more. Cremasco said some of his red grapes sold for

little more than A\$100 a ton.

To balance the market and lift prices, up to a quarter of the vines in areas such as Griffith must be pulled up, said Jeremy Cass, head of Riverina Winegrape Growers, a farmers' group there.

That would destroy more than 20 million vines across 12,000 hectares (30,000 acres), Reuters calculations based on Wine Australia data show, or about 8% of Australia's total area under vine. Growers and wine-makers in other regions have also been pulling out vines. "If half the vines in Australia were ripped out, it still might not solve the oversupply," said a wine maker in Western Australia. **REUTERS**

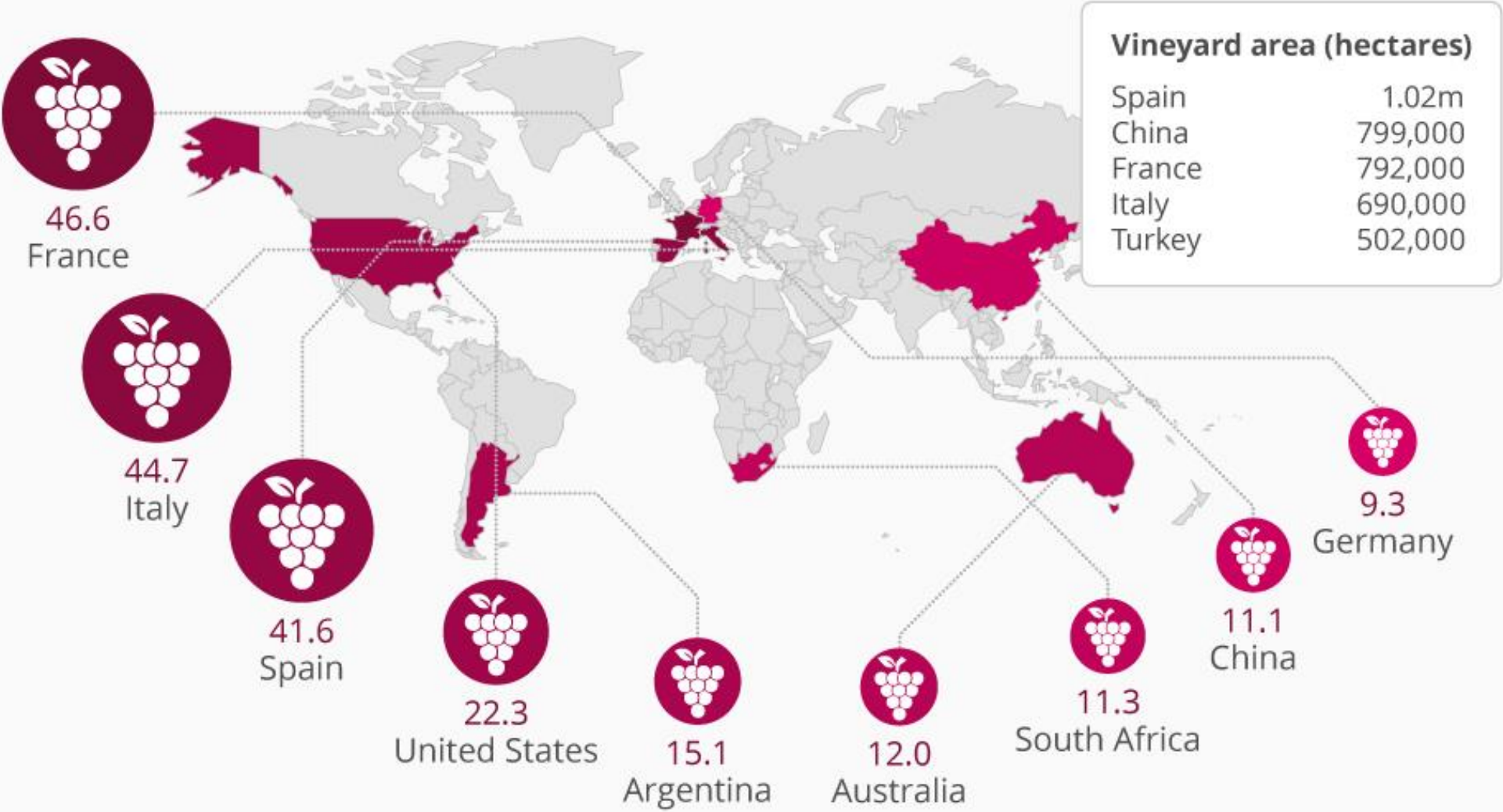
## Here are the top 10 wine producers by volume:

- Italy: 4,250,000 liters per year
- France: 3,641,900 liters per year
- Spain: 3,248,000 liters per year
- United States: 2,333,900 liters per year
- Australia: 1,369,000 liters per year
- Argentina: 1,182,100 liters per year
- China: 1,163,600 liters per year
- South Africa: 1,080,100 liters per year
- Chile: 949,200 liters per year
- Germany: 746,200 liters per year 



# The World's Biggest Wine Producers

Global wine production (million hectoliters) and vineyard area (hectares) in 2014



@StatistaCharts Source: IOVW

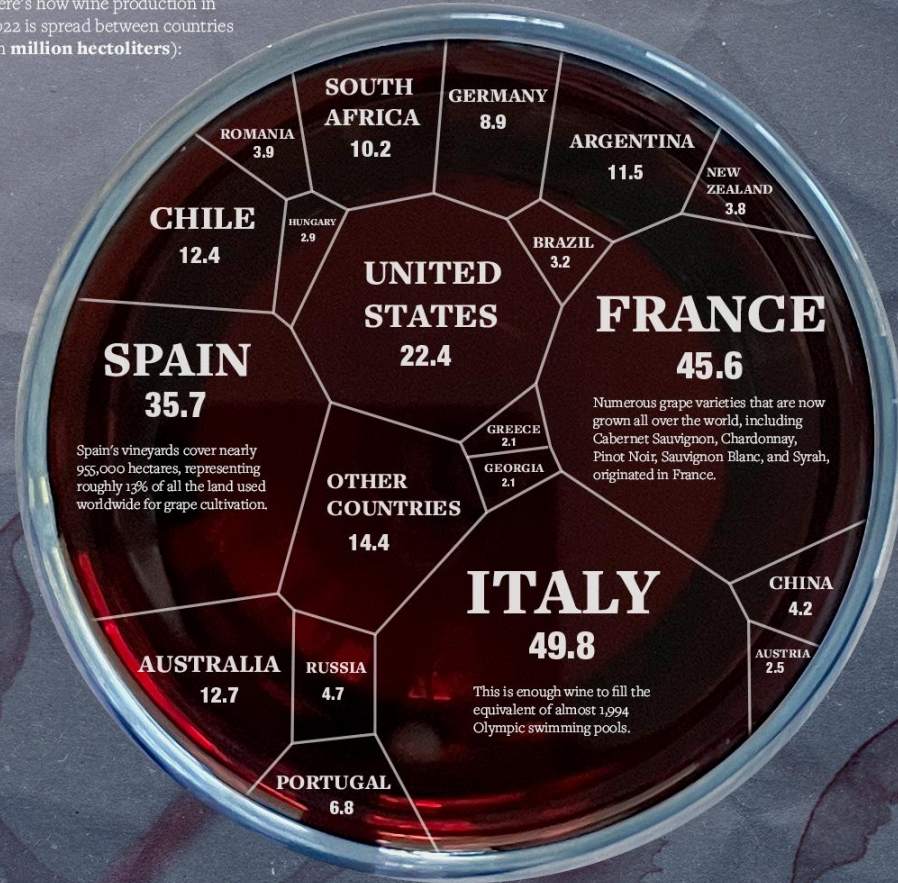
# GLOBAL WINE PRODUCERS



World wine production in the last twenty years has remained quite stable, with a yearly average of around 240 million hectoliters.

## By Country

Here's how wine production in 2022 is spread between countries (in million hectoliters):

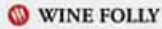


The top three wine producing nations, Italy, France, and Spain, account for more than 50% of the world's total wine production.

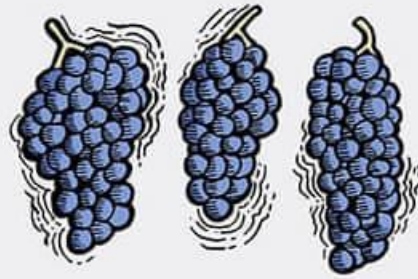
Source: International Organization of Vine and Wine



# HOW RED WINE IS MADE

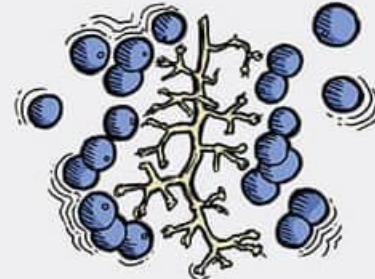


This is just the tip of the iceberg, keep exploring!  
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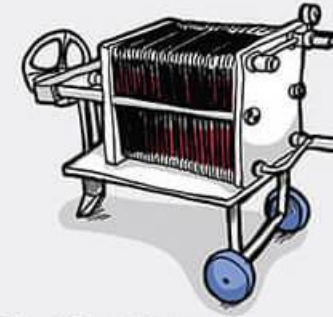
## Harvest grapes

The vintner chooses when to harvest and if it's done by hand or machine. Generally speaking, red wine grapes ripen later in the season than white wine grapes.



## Prepare grapes

Grape bunches get destemmed. Some vintners ferment whole clusters to add tannin. The must is analyzed while grapes cold soak. Most winemakers add sulfur dioxide during this step to stop microbial growth.



## Clarification

Clarifying or "fining" agents (such as egg whites or vegan bentonite clay) remove proteins. Then, wine passes through a filter for sanitation. Some wines are left unfinned and unfiltered.



## Press

After the fermentation, vintners drain the freely-running wine from the tank and press the skins and seeds for any remaining "press" wine.



## Fermentation

Grape skins give red wine its color and flavor. So, during the fermentation, vintners punch down grapes or pump-over the must so the skins stay submerged.



## Add yeast

Yeasts (wild or commercial) eat grape sugars and make alcohol, CO<sub>2</sub>, and heat. Red wines ferment for an average of 5-21 days at 68-84°F (20-30°C) and often get left to macerate on the grape skins for 7-28 days after the fermentation completes.



## Bottling

Bottling occurs with minimal exposure to oxygen. Sometimes sulfur dioxide is added during this stage to help preserve the wine.



## Malolactic

As wine settles in tanks or barrels, a second "fermentation" happens. Malolactic fermentation (MLF) is when bacteria converts sharp malic acid into smoother, more chocolately-tasting lactic acid.



## Aging

Red wine ages in barrels or tanks for several months to several years. Oak barrels enhance red wines with aromatic compounds (such as vanillin) and subtle oxidation.



## Blending

The winemaker blends grape varieties or barrels together to create the final wine. Winemakers often rely on texture as the aromas haven't finished evolving.



## Bottle aging

Some wines continue to age in bottles for years until release.







**LAUNCHES UNNATI SCHEME WITH OUTLAY OF RS 10,037 CRORE**



PM Narendra Modi at Kaziranga National Park, Saturday. *PTI*

## PM unveils projects for N-E, says next step is expansion of industries

**SUKRITA BARUAH**  
GUWAHATI, MARCH 9

LAUNCHING MEGA development projects for various Northeastern states during events in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam on Saturday, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi declared that “Modi doesn’t do work by counting the number of Parliament seats from a place”.

During an event in Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, he launched the central government’s new flagship project for the Northeast

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## An all-weather link to Tawang, Sela Tunnel boosts readiness at China border

**AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9



THE SELA Tunnel, that was “dedicated to the nation” by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, is a key border infrastructure project as it connects

Guwahati to the strategic Tawang sector round-the-year, thus aiding faster military movement to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) at an altitude of around 13,000 feet and a cost of Rs 825 crore, the construction of the tunnel was aimed at providing all-weather connectivity to Tawang across Sela Pass on the Balipara-Chariduar-Tawang (BCT) Road,

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



- 
- The Union Cabinet approved the Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme, 2024 (UNNATI – 2024).
  - **About**
  - Government of India has formulated New Industrial Development Scheme, UNNATI as a Central Sector Scheme for the development of Industries and generation of employment in the states of North East Region.
- 



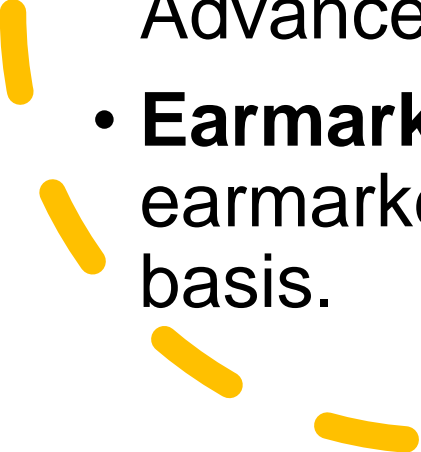


- **Salient Features of the Scheme**

- **Scheme period:** The scheme will be effective from the date of Notification and up to 2034 along with 8 years of committed liabilities.

- **Districts are categorized in two zones:** Zone A (Industrially Advanced Districts) & Zone B (Industrially Backward Districts).

- **Earmarking of funds:** 60% of the outlay of Part A has been earmarked to 8 NE states and 40% on First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis.



**HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT**  
**T.N., Karnataka, Kerala discuss issue at meet**  
STATES » PAGE 3

**NO RESPIRE**  
**War rages in Gaza on the eve of Ramzan**  
WORLD » PAGE 12

**PM'S U.P. VISIT**  
**'Development push by BJP rattled Opposition'**  
NEWS » PAGE 4

**DATA POINT**  
**How to solve Bengaluru's water crisis**  
**Wastewater generated is an untapped resource**  
OPINION » PAGE 9

**DOUBLES DELIGHT**  
**Satwik-Chirag pair wins French Open**  
SPORT » PAGE 16

**INSIDE**

**Indian fishermen arrested by Sri Lankan Navy**  
PUDUKOTTAI/KARAIKAL  
A total of 22 Indian fishermen hailing from different parts of Tamil Nadu were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday of trespass into the island nation's waters. The fishermen, along with their boats, were taken to the Kankesanthurai naval base, Coastal Security Group sources said. » PAGE 4

**Portugal goes to polls with shift to right expected**  
LISBON  
Voters in Portugal went to the polls on Sunday in an early election that could see the country join a shift to the right across Europe after eight years of Socialist rule. Final opinion polls published on Friday show the centre-right Democratic Alliance narrowly ahead of the Socialist Party but short of an outright majority. » PAGE 12

**Zardari sworn in as Pak. President for a second time**  
ISLAMABAD  
Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday took oath as Pakistan's 14th President, a day after the veteran politician staged a remarkable comeback when he was overwhelmingly elected as the only civilian President of the coup-prone country for a second time. He replaced Dr. Arif Alvi who completed his term in Sept. 2023. » PAGE 12

# Goel likely quit over 'differences' with CEC

Differences with Rajiv Kumar are said to have arisen during a visit to Bengal to oversee poll preparations | Opposition raises questions over resignation of the EC days ahead of announcement of LS polls | Sources say only some high ranking government officials and CEC knew about the developments

**Maheeb Langa**  
AHMEDABAD  
The sudden and unexpected resignation of Election Commissioner (EC) Arun Goel, barely a week before the announcement of the Lok Sabha election, came as a surprise to many, but insiders in the poll body have said that apparent differences emerged between Mr. Goel and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar during their visit to West Bengal to oversee poll preparations earlier this month. According to well-placed sources, Mr. Goel refused to attend the press conference in Kolkata to brief the media about the



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar (right) with former Election Commissioner Arun Goel. K. BHARDWAJ

preparations in the State after his reported differences with Mr. Kumar. The CEC addressed the media alone on March 5. "Health concerns" In the press briefing, the CEC mentioned that Mr. Goel had returned to Delhi due to "health concerns". However, sources close to Mr. Goel have dismissed that and maintained that "he is in the pink of health". Instead, they said that "he flew back to Delhi cutting short his visit in West Bengal owing to some serious differences". However, they did not elaborate further on what transpired between the two officials nor what issues they differed on that caused Mr. Goel's abrupt exit from the poll body. Reacting to Mr. Goel's resignation, Opposition parties on Sunday asked whether he had stepped down due to differences with the CEC, or to contest an election.

## Govt. likely to appoint new ECs by March 15

**NEW DELHI**  
The two vacancies in the Election Commission, created by the resignation of Arun Goel and the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey, are likely to be filled by March 15, sources said on Sunday. » PAGE 5

sent his resignation to the President of India without informing the CEC. "There were attempts from the government to reconcile their differences but he remained firm on his exit," officials said. His resignation was accepted by the President on

March 9 and the Ministry of Law and Justice issued a gazette notification stating that Mr. Goel's resignation was accepted with effect from the same day. "Except perhaps the CEC and other highest ranking officials in the govt, nobody had an inkling about Mr. Goel's decision to resign," claimed multiple sources in the government and the ECI.

**Opposition's questions**  
Reacting to the resignation, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked in a post on X, "Did he actually resign over differences with the Chief Election Commissioner and with the Modi government, which does the front-seat

driving for all supposedly independent institutions? Or did he resign for personal reasons? Or did he, like the Calcutta High Court judge a few days back, resign to contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls on a BJP ticket?" Mr. Ramesh said. Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasahab Thackeray) leader Manjiv Raut alleged that the ECI "has been privatised" and "become a branch of the BJP" over the last ten years, raising concerns about who would replace Mr. Goel. "Like the BJP's people have been appointed in the High Courts, Supreme Court, Governor's houses, they will appoint two of their BJP people here too."

## Relentless protest



Call for action: Farmers hold a 'rail roko' protest at Devi Das Pura on the outskirts of Amritsar on Sunday to press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price. PTI (INPUT ON PAGE 5)

# India signs free trade pact with 4 European nations, eyes \$100bn in investment

**Suhasini Halidar**  
NEW DELHI

India signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with four European countries — Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland — on Sunday, with a goal of reaching \$100 billion in investments in India and one million jobs within 15 years.

The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) marks the second such full-fledged FTA signed after India's agreement with the United Arab Emirates, and will see considerable tariff reductions, increase market access, and simplify customs procedures.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, which are separate from the European Union, said that, for the first time, the FTA also included a chapter on commitments to human rights and sustainable development.

The agreement will also see a 50% reduction in tariff on 7 billion in exports according to their parliamentary procedures, expected possibly by the end of the year.

**'Commitment a goal'**  
Touting the FTAs as an investment as a unique achievement, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said it was "for the first time in the history of the world that we are inking an FTA with a binding commitment to invest \$100 billion in India from EFTA countries". However, EFTA Ministers clarified that the commitment was in fact, a "goal" for both sides, based on the current levels of investment pegged at about \$10.7 billion, as well as GDP predictions, and the estimated value of the TEPA.

According to the TEPA's Chapter 7 that deals with "Investment Promotion and Cooperation", the two sides had shared "objectives" to increase foreign direct investment from EFTA states into India by \$50 billion within 10 years and another \$50 billion in the next five years. It would also aim to facilitate the generation of 1 million jobs within 15 years in India" resulting from those invest-

ments. "States cannot decide where companies invest," Norwegian Trade Minister Jan Christian Vestre told presspersons in a briefing. "It's about creating the right environment, speaking to our companies and then tracing and tracking development," he said, adding that the investments by EFTA companies would be assessed periodically. If the goals are not achieved within 15 years, with a three-year grace period and another two years in negotiations, India will be entitled to withdrawing some of its trade concessions "temporarily", the agreement says.

Apart from Mr. Vestre, the EFTA Ministers who flew into Delhi for the signing of the agreement were Swiss Federal Councilor Guy Parmelin, Iceland Foreign Affairs Minister Bjarni Benediktsson, and Liechtenstein Foreign Affairs Minister Dominique Hasler. (With inputs from Jacob Koshy)

**'BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT'**  
» PAGE 4



Landmark pact: The signing ceremony of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI/PTI

# Gig workers suffer from lack of social security, regulation: study

**A. M. Haseeb**  
NEW DELHI

Almost a third of app-based cab drivers work for over 14 hours a day, while more than 83% work more than 10 hours and 60% work over 12 hours, according to a study of more than 10,000 Indian cab drivers, gig and platform workers.

It noted that social disparities make the situation worse, with over 60% of the drivers from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes working for over 14 hours a day, while only 16% of the unreserved category work such long hours. The study was conducted by the People's Association in Grassroots Action and Movements, and the Indian Federation of App-based Transport Workers with technical support from the University of Pennsylvania and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung India.



a German foundation. Authors of the study, which will be released on Monday, recommended stronger social security for app-based workers, and called on the government to exercise oversight on the fairness of algorithms and the mechanisms used by platforms to monitor such workers. The study report says that over 43% of participants in the study earn less than ₹500 a day or ₹15,000 a month, after deducting

all their costs. It found that 84% of the app-based delivery persons earn less than ₹10,000 a month, while 78% spend over 10 hours each day at work. Noting the differences among workers from different castes, the report said that "these income disparities further exacerbate the already existing social inequalities and perpetual cycles of poverty and distress within these communities". Overall, 5,302 cab drivers and 5,028 delivery persons across eight cities Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Lucknow, Kolkata, Jaipur, and Indore participated in a 50-question survey. 78% of the respondents were in the age group of 21 to 40 years.

Due to the demanding work hours, the study found that drivers are physically exhausted, and exposed to an increased risk of road traffic accidents, especially due to the '10-minute delivery at the doorstep' policy of certain e-commerce platforms. The lack of social and job security creates additional stress and leads to potential health issues. "76% of the delivery persons are struggling to make their ends meet," the report said. Another major complaint of the workers is the issue of ID deactivation and customer misbehaviour.

## Trinamool to contest all 42 seats in Bengal

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

Putting an end to speculation over seat-sharing arrangements with the Congress, the Trinamool Congress on Sunday announced candidates for all 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal.

The list of candidates has surprises in store, with the party fielding former cricketers Yusuf Pathan from Kolkata, Saugata Roy from Bardhaman and Kirati Azad from Bardhaman-Durgapur. The party retained veteran MPs Sudip Banerjee from Kolkata, Saugata Roy from Dum Dum Lok, and Kalyan Banerjee from Serampore. Among those dropped by the Trinamool is Barackpore MP Arun Singh, who won the 2019 election on BJP ticket but later returned to the regional party. **FULL REPORT**  
» PAGE 5



IN BRIEF



CBDT starts sending alerts to assesses for tax mismatch

The Income Tax (IT) Department on Sunday said it has started sending emails and SMSes to assesses whose taxes paid during the current fiscal are not commensurate with financial transactions. The department is undertaking an e-campaign, which aims to inform such persons/entities of significant financial transactions urging them to compute their advance tax liability correctly and deposit the due advance tax on or before March 15. In a statement, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said the IT Department has received information on specific financial transactions undertaken by persons or entities during the 2023-24 financial year.

Former SC judge sworn in as Lokpal Chairperson

Former Supreme Court Judge, Justice (retired) Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar was administered the oath of office as the Chairperson of the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal by President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday, nearly two years after the post fell vacant. The swearing-in at the Rashtrapati Bhavan was attended by the Vice-President Jagdeep Dhanikar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Justice Khanwilkar (ret'd) was appointed the Lokpal Chairperson in the last week of February.

'Rail roko' protest by farmers affects train services in Punjab

Protesters of India

CHANDIGARH

Farmers on Sunday squatted on railway tracks at many places in Punjab as part of a 'rail roko' protest called by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha to press the Centre to accept their demands including a legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP).

Movement of several trains was affected in Punjab on Sunday. The protest was held from 12 noon till 4 pm. The farmers sat on railway tracks at many locations in 22 districts.

According to railway authorities, nine trains were cancelled and many trains were either short-terminated or short-originated.

Farmer leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dhillwala claimed that their 'rail roko' agitation was successful.

"Till a concrete resolution is offered by the government to our demands, we will continue our struggle", Mr. Pandher said.

Besides a legal guarantee of MSP, the farmers are demanding the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, pension for farmers and farm labourers, no hike in electricity tariff, withdrawal of police cases and "justice" for the victims of the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence, reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, and compensation to the families of the farmers who died during a previous agitation in 2020-21.

The protesting farmers from Punjab have been camping at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points since February 13, when security forces stopped them from marching towards Delhi.

Report turns spotlight on India's 'zero-food children'

A recent study had ranked India as having the third-highest percentage of children who had not eaten any food for 24 hours; experts say rapid urbanisation is fuelling malnutrition in country

Mayank Kumar LUCKNOW

Sunita Gautam, a 26-year-old domestic help, wonders if she will be able to provide her 11-month-old boy the nutrition he requires. "My child is mainly dependent on breastmilk. At times, I give him porridge, but that too not every day as he takes time to eat and is more habituated to breastmilk. I have a very busy daily routine. If I don't earn money, how can I provide a better life for my child?" Ms. Gautam, who works in Lucknow's Vishal Khand area, asks.

Ms. Gautam's baby is likely to be one of the millions of "zero-food children" aged six months to 23 months in Uttar Pradesh. These infants have not eaten any substantial caloric content—semi-solid, solid, soft, or mushy food, infant formula, or fresh milk—for 24 hours.

A study published recently in the peer-reviewed JAMA Network Open journal found the prevalence of zero-food children in India.



Rapid urbanisation and nuclearised families have contributed to large number of 'zero food children' in Uttar Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

At 19.3%, drawing attention to extreme food deprivation among children, the study ranks India as having the third-highest percentage of zero-food children, above only Guatemala (21.8%) and Mali (20.5%). In terms of numbers, India has the highest number of zero-food children at more than six million.

Another study published in 2023 in *clinical Medicine*, part of the noted *Lancet Discovery Science*, found that Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for 28.4% of zero-food children in India.

"The States of Uttar Pradesh (28.4%), Bihar (14.2%), Maharashtra (7.1%), Rajasthan (6.5%), and Madhya Pradesh (6%) account for nearly two-thirds of the total zero-food children in India," the report said.

"My husband is an alcoholic. He spends most of his time at home but I cannot trust him to feed the child. He may harm the child as he takes me to feed him (the baby)," Ms. Gautam said.

Shalini Singh, a public health specialist, argues that alongside poverty and marginalisation in economic backgrounds, it is rapid urbanisation and nuclearised families that are contributing to such a large

number of "zero food children" in India's most populous State.

She said lack of awareness about the nutritional needs of children and misconceptions, also contribute to the numbers. "Women from underprivileged economic backgrounds tend to sustain their families, resulting in their having insufficient time to consistently breastfeeding for children above six months of age. With rapid industrialisation, nuclear families have grown in both urban and rural areas, so there is no one to invest the time and energy required to feed a child, apart from the mother," she said, adding that lack of awareness about nutritional needs of children, and social misconceptions, also contribute to the numbers.

Uttar Pradesh's urban population is approximately 23% of the total in 2011 Census and had grown by more than 25% in 2011, signifying a large number of poor moving towards urban centres in search of a livelihood.

7,396 golden langurs in India, reveals survey

Rahul Karmakar GUWAHATI

There are an estimated 7,396 golden langurs in India, the latest survey of the primate has revealed. The comprehensive population estimation of the endangered primate was carried out by two phases by the Primate Research Centre NE India (PRCNE), Assam Forest Department, Bodoland Territorial Council, Saltinji Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), and Conservation Himalayas.

The entire distribution range of the golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) in the Manas Biosphere Reserve and all fragmented forests in the western part of Assam.

In the first phase during March-April 2020, the survey covered the western part of the Manas Biosphere Reserve, including Rihai Reserve Forest, a major part of it was recently upgraded to Raimona National Park, Chirang Reserve Forest, Manas Re-



Nature's charm. The previous population estimation in 2008-09

serve Forest, and Manas National Park up to the western bank of the Manas River.

The second phase during the same months in 2021 focused on fragmented forest habitats of golden langurs in the Bonggaigaon, Kokrajhar, and Dhubri districts of western Assam. The block count method was applied for the first time to assess the abundance, spatial distribution, and densities of the golden langur populations.

"This method is considered to be relatively simple, cost-effective, and robust for arboreal and small

group-living primates such as the golden langur," H.N. Kumar, the principal scientist of SACON, said.

The golden langur habitat was demarcated into 51 counting blocks, each overlaid with 50-hectare grid cells. Ten teams, each comprising one or two trained enumerators and three to four forest staff, surveyed the blocks.

We observed 7,220 individuals of golden langurs in 706 unique groups and 31 lone males or floating males. Estimating minimum population size, we found there to be 7,396 individuals in 707 groups, inclusive of bisexual and male bands, along with 31 lone males." Jhomas Biswas, the lead primatologist at PRCNE, said. He supervised the survey.

"The population of golden langurs is divided into two major sub-populations. The northern extent, extending from the Sankosh River to the India-Bhutan border along the northern side of National Highway 27 and State Highway 2," Dr. Biswas explained.

The northern population of the primate with the golden been was estimated at 5,566 in 534 groups and 23 lone males. The population of the southern fragments was estimated at 1,830 langurs in 173 groups and eight lone males.

'Unstable situation'

While the Rihai Reserve Forest was home to the most (2,847) northern pop-

Other parties make promises, only BJP fulfils them, says PM

Shubhomoy Sikdar RAIPUR

Launching the Mahatari Vandana Yojana, a financial assistance scheme for eligible married women in Chhattisgarh, on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it was only the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that kept its electoral promises.

"Women from underprivileged economic backgrounds tend to sustain their families, resulting in their having insufficient time to consistently breastfeeding for children above six months of age. With rapid industrialisation, nuclear families have grown in both urban and rural areas, so there is no one to invest the time and energy required to feed a child, apart from the mother," she said, adding that lack of awareness about nutritional needs of children, and social misconceptions, also contribute to the numbers.

Uttar Pradesh's urban population is approximately 23% of the total in 2011 Census and had grown by more than 25% in 2011, signifying a large number of poor moving towards urban centres in search of a livelihood.



Narendra Modi

stems from the well-being of every family, and this begins with the health and dignity of the women," he said.

Speaking of some of the other initiatives taken by his government, Mr. Modi said that women were getting pucca houses and Ujjwala gas cylinders in their names.

He added that more than 10 crore women from self-help groups have benefited during his tenure, while more than one crore women have become *laksh-pati didis*. This refers to beneficiaries of a scheme which aims to train women's self-help groups to earn a sustainable income of at least 7 lakh per annum by setting up micro-enterprises within their villages.

Mr. Modi—who addressed the beneficiaries gathered at the Raipur micro-conferencing—emphasised that a healthy family

CISF officer blames online gambling for deaths

Shubhomoy Sikdar BHILAI

A senior Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer has flagged online gambling and fraud as new factors pushing personnel to end their lives.

To a question related to mental health and instances of suicides among the personnel, CISF Special Director-General Piyush Anand said in most cases, the reasons behind the suicides were personal and not professional. He added that the force was conducting financial literacy classes to train staff against the possible pitfalls of gambling.

Mr. Anand was addressing a press conference on the occasion of the CISF's 58th Kaising Day.

"Those in distress may contact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention 011-407639002

THE CROSSWORD 14119

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions.

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site. @ <https://www.thehindu.com/crossword>

Sudoku puzzle grid with clues and solutions.

FAITH

The paripoorna avatara

In his Peria Thirumozhi, Thirumangai Azhvar has an entire padhigan (set of 10 verses) extolling Lord Narayana's dasavatara, explained M.A. Venkatarishman in a discourse. He writes about nine of them in order in nine separate verses, but does not devote a separate verse for a Kalki avatara. That is because a padhigan can, by definition, contain only 10 verses, of which the tenth has to be the phala sruti verse. So it would not have been possible to allocate a separate padhigan for Kalki. But Thirumangai Azhvar mentions Kalki in the phala sruti verse. There are three avatars in which the name 'Rama' features. We have the Parasurama and Balarama avatars in addition to Dasaratha Rama.

While talking of Parasurama and Balarama in the phala sruti verse, Thirumangai Azhvar refers to Parasurama and Balarama as 'Rama'. But for Dasaratha Rama, he uses the Tamil word "Rama", showing that this Dasaratha Rama was a paripoorna avatara, a complete avatara. The Ramayana is read with reverence, because it tells us about this avatara. We have only two Rihabasas—the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Among them, Ramayana is superior, says Pillai Lokachariar. That is because it is entirely about the Lord's avatara, whereas, the Mahabharata is mainly about two warring factions of a family.

Rihabasa means something that states what happened, in just the way it happened. Puranas were written after the event had already taken place, so there is the chance of interpolations. That makes the Rihabasa score on grounds of accuracy.

- Across: 1. Half-brother of a couple of students get spherical object (4) 2. Remove part of intestine and unsettle (10) 3. Activity for summer? Dad prepared gin cocktail (6) 4. Heavy rainfall! Our pond managed to cover part of wall (8) 5. Carve's organ of sight also forbidden to some extent (3,5) 14. Republican assistance given back (8)

- Down: 1. Yes, nailed badly around ring saw (4,4,2) 2. Is lecturer walking around covered walk? (8) 3. After can is thrown from Canada, soldier gets initial order/request to play slowly (6) 4. Current editor performed very well (4) 5. Girl scowled and scowled (10) 6. Quickly buy pans (4,2) 13. Jacob's twin is in Mesa University (4) 14. Dancer from Indian movies twice before commencement of night (5) 15. Felling men agitated creator of spy going across at 18 (3,7) 16. Malvolent sibling abducted Indian at one (8) 17. Graduate engineers take tax back with knight not using saddle (8) 20. Skewer, without using energy, a graceful antelope (6) 22. Disrespectful! Carrying new cocktail! (6) 24. Young lady starting to nurse... Not odd! (4) 25. Taste-maker's treaty? (4)

Sudoku solution grid.

Sudoku solution grid.

# Report turns spotlight on India's 'zero-food children'

A recent study had ranked India as having the third-highest percentage of children who had not eaten any food for 24 hours; experts say rapid urbanisation is fuelling malnutrition in country

**Mayank Kumar**  
LUCKNOW

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Rapid urbanisation and nuclearised families have contributed to large number of 'zero food children' in Uttar Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

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number of "zero food children" in India's most populous State.

She said lack of awareness about the nutritional needs of children, and misconceptions, also contribute to the numbers.

"Women from underprivileged economic backgrounds work to sustain their families, resulting in their having insufficient time to complement breastfeeding for children above six months of age. With rapid industrialisation, nuclear families have grown in both urban and rural areas, so there is no one to invest the time and energy required to feed a child, apart from the mother," she said, adding that lack of awareness about nutritional needs of children, and social misconceptions, also contribute to the likely numbers.

Uttar Pradesh's urban population is approximately 23%, according to the 2011 Census and had grown by more than 25% in 2011 when compared with 2001, signifying a large number of poor moving towards urban centres in search of a livelihood.



# 7,396 golden langurs in India, reveals survey

**Rahul Karmakar**

GUWAHATI

There are an estimated 7,396 golden langurs in India, the latest survey of the primate has revealed. The comprehensive population estimation of the endangered primate was carried out in two phases by the Primate Research Centre NE India (PRCNE), Assam Forest Department, Bodo-land Territorial Council, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), and Conservation Himalayas.

The entire distribution range of the golden langur (*Trachypitecus geei*) covers the Manas Biosphere Reserve and all fragmented forests in the western part of Assam.

In the first phase during March-April 2020, the survey covered the western part of the Manas Biosphere Reserve, including Ripu Reserved Forest – a major part of it was recently upgraded to Raimona National Park - Chirang Reserve Forest, Manas Re-



**Nature's charm:** The previous population estimation in 2008-09 recorded 6,000 golden langurs in India. ANI

serve Forest, and Manas National Park up to the western bank of the Manas River.

The second phase during the same months in 2021 focused on fragmented forest habitats of golden langurs in the Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, and Dhubri districts of western Assam. The block count method was applied for the first time to assess the abundance, spatial distribution, and densities of the golden langur populations.

“This method is considered to be relatively simple, cost-effective, and robust for arboreal and small

group-living primates such as the golden langur,” H.N. Kumara, the principal scientist of SACON, said.

The golden langur habitat was demarcated into 51 counting blocks, each overlaid with 50-hectare grid cells. Ten teams, each comprising one or two trained enumerators and three to four forest staff, surveyed the blocks.

“We observed 7,720 individuals of golden langurs in 706 unique groups and 31 lone males or floating males. Estimating minimum population size, we found there to be 7,396 individuals in 707 groups, in-

clusive of bisexual and male bands, along with 31 lone males,” Jihosuo Biswas, the lead primatologist at PRCNE, said. He supervised the survey.

“The population of golden langurs is divided into two major sub-populations. The northern extended population, which encompasses the western part of the Manas Biosphere Reserve, extending from the Sankosh River to the Manas river up to the India-Bhutan border along the northern side of National Highway 27 and State Highway 2,” Dr. Biswas explained.

The northern population of the primate with the golden sheen was estimated at 5,566 in 534 groups and 23 lone males. The population of the southern fragments was estimated at 1,830 langurs in 173 groups and eight lone males.

## ‘Unstable situation’

While the Ripu Reserve Forest was home to the most (2,847) northern pop-

ulation golden langurs, Kokrajhar district’s Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary had 838 individuals, the most in the southern fragmented range of the primate.

The previous population estimation in 2008-09, also conducted under the supervision of Dr. Biswas, recorded 6,000 golden langurs in India. Each group then had an average of 9.24 individuals, which was 1,45 individuals less than the average group recorded in the latest survey.

On the flip side, the survey report underlined an unstable situation in the fragmented habitats of the golden langurs, particularly due to the absence of non-breeding all-male bands. The primatologists involved in the survey highlighted the need for corridor linkage among the fragmented habitats through plantations and canopy bridges to offset potential threats the primates face from anthropogenic interactions.

**IN BRIEF**

**Neeraj backs government's talent-spotting programme**

Ace Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has backed the government's nationwide sports development initiative 'Kirir', saying it has the potential to bring about big changes in the country's educational ecosystem. The Sports Ministry has launched 'kirir', a grassroots-level talent-identification programme aimed at school-going children. The programme will identify and nurture talent and bridge the gaps in sports across the country. "We need to tell children in the age group of 13-14 that they need to give attention to both sports and education. And if the schools can also support and balance things for them, it would be great," said Neeraj in a video posted by SAF Media. "School can plan their regimen properly, how they will select children (for sports) and how they will manage their academics and sports." "I think that the education system should change so that both sports and academics can be balanced. If that happens then it will bring about great changes in our country," he added.

**Bangladesh downs India, wins SAFF U-16 Women's C'ship**

India fell short of a title conquest, losing to Bangladesh 2-3 in the penalty shootout during the SAFF U-16 Women's Championship final at Kathmandu on Sunday. Both the teams were tied at 1-1 after the regulation time. Anushka Kumari found the net in the fourth minute for India. Shweta Rani's own goal in the 70th helped Bangladesh get back into the game and eventually clinch the crown.

**Rubina and Manish make do with mixed team pistol silver**

Rubina Francis and Manish Narwal were beaten to the gold by the Chinese duo of Li Jun and Yang Chao in the P6 mixed team air pistol event of the WPSR Para shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karol Singh Range in New Delhi on Sunday.

**The results: P6 mixed team air pistol:** 1. China (Li Jun, Yang Chao) 16 (56/2); 2. India (Rubina Francis, Manish Narwal) 12 (370 EWR); 3. India 2 (Bhaskar Sharma, Rudransh Khadwalwal) 16 (359).

**P10 mixed team air rifle:** 1. China (Zhong Yilin, Dong Chao) 16 (627.9 WR); 2. India (2 Mona Agarwal, Aadithya Giri) 4 (622.9); 3. Ukraine (Iryna Shchetnik, Andri Doroshenko) 16 (622.9); 4. India (Ishant Lakshya, Swarnpreet Singh) 4 (618.5).

**R11 mixed team air rifle:** 1. Brazil (Jessica Michalakis, Bruno Kofer) 16 (602.7); 2. USA (Madison Chalmers, Ben Hoy) 6 (627.4); 3. India (Pavani Banoth, Satya Rajala) 17 (661.0).

**Heroes knock out Blitz**

**PVL**

**Sports Bureau CHENNAI**

Calicut Heroes crushed Chennai Blitz 15-13, 15-12 in their final league match of the Ru Pay-Prime Volleyball League at the Nehru Indoor Stadium here on Sunday.

Heroes thus topped the table with 12 points with a better set difference (E3) and will now get a bye to two points in the Super 5s beginning on Monday.

Mumbai Meteors booked the final fifth spot in the Super 5.

Setter Mohan Utkrapandan and attacker Jerome Vinitth were the key players instrumental in knocking out Chennai, which failed miserably when it came to the crunch.

Calicut had players who delivered at the death in the first set, it was skipper Jerome and in the second it was Vikas Maan. Vikas' jump smash at 14-12 broke the no response.

Delhi Toofans beat Ahmedabad Defenders 15-11, 15-11 to finish second in the league. Delhi will get one point in the Super 5s.

**Teams qualified for Super 5s:** 1. Calicut Heroes, 2. Delhi Toofans, 3. Ahmedabad Defenders, 4. Bengaluru Torpedoes, 5. Mumbai Meteors.

**Parantap, Kruthik put Karnataka on top against Uttar Pradesh**



Crucial Parantap and Kruthik's unbroken partnership took the home side from 134 for five to 325, v. Uttar Pradesh.

**C.K. NAUYDU TROPHY**

**Sports Bureau BENGALURU**

Karnataka made a strong start to its Col. C.K. Nayudu (U-23) Trophy final against Uttar Pradesh, raking up 325 runs for the loss of five wickets on day one at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

Middle-order bat Yashovardhan Parantap (84 batting: 111b, 124c) was the star as he combined for an unbroken 131-run stand for the sixth wicket with Kruthik Krishna (58 batting: 103b, 5x4) after the home side was reduced to 194 for five.

**RANJI TROPHY**

**Amol Karhadkar MUMBAI**

The venue may have changed. So did the opposition. But the trend of Mumbai's batting continued in the Ranji Trophy final against Vidarbha. The top-six caved in yet again but the lower order — led by the fearless Shardul Thakur — gave respectability to the total on a day dominated by bowlers.

Had it not been Shardul's counter-attacking 75, Mumbai would have struggled to put on 224 after a day dominated by bowlers. He inserted in to bat on Day One at the Wankhede Stadium. Him and Akshay Kulkarni, featuring in his last match for Mumbai as injured Mohit Avasthi's replacement, then left Vidarbha reeling at 31 for three at stumps.



Rescue mission: It was again down to Shardul to save Mumbai's blushes. EMMANUEL YOGINI

The Mumbai essay was a remarkable session of two stints of batters' domination on either side of bowling supremacy. Prithvi Shaw's trademark cover-drive off Umesh Yadav and Bhupen Lalwanji's flicks through midwicket were a treat to the eyes as the Sunday crowd built up in anticipation of a run-fest. Yash Thakur, the first change batsman, struck

by jaggling one away from Lalwanji and forced him into an edge to captain Akshay Wadkar. The dismissal triggered a collapse as Vidarbha picked six for two to leave

**'We are not happy with the total we have put on board'**

**Amol Karhadkar MUMBAI**

Just like he came hard at the Vidarbha bowlers with the willow, Shardul Thakur minced no words at the Mumbai specialist batter after the first day's play of the Ranji Trophy final.

"We are not happy with the total that we have put on the board. Certainly with the way we started off, if the top order had applied the correct strategy and approach, we could have reached 350 or even 370 with five or six wickets down at the end of the day's play," Shardul said.

From 81 for no loss, Mumbai were reduced to 111 for six before Shardul came to the rescue with a 69-ball 75. During an 108-

ball boundary-less drought before Shardul's first 40, Mumbai lost captain Akshay Rahane and Shreyas Iyer, among others.

While Rahane has struggled right through the season with the willow, Shreyas has looked jittery ever since being excluded from the BCCI's central contracts list. Shardul stood right behind the duo.

**Rough patch** The rough patch for them and in a rough patch, we could have reached 350 or even 370 with five or six wickets down at the end of the day's play," Shardul said.

From 81 for no loss, Mumbai were reduced to 111 for six before Shardul came to the rescue with a 69-ball 75. During an 108-

**AfI's plans to excel in 2036 Olympics**

**M. R. Praveen Chandran THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

The Athletics Federation of India (AfI)'s brainstorming meeting to formulate a strategic plan for excelling in the 2036 Olympics identified core areas which needed attention and the necessity to create a friendly ecosystem for athletes, coaches and other stakeholders.

The AfI has decided to streamline the calendar to ensure that the athletes will have enough domestic competitions so that they can peak at the right time before major competitions.

The AfI will also see that the athletes get adequate foreign exposure. Speaking to *The Hindu* after the conclusion of the five-day meeting, the AfI president Adil Kumarwarla said there will be two-point strategy starting with the junior programme.

Even after just two race-points and despite turmoil at Red Bull, Verstappen seems in near-total control of the track as he aims for a fourth consecutive title year.

A fantastic weekend for the whole team and also for myself. I felt really good with the car," Verstappen said. The Dutch driver won easily ahead of his teammate Sergio Perez. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was third.

**Yash Thakur recalls looking up to 'bedrock' Umesh**

**Amol Karhadkar MUMBAI**

For five years, Yash Thakur has been groomed as Umesh Yadav's understudy. On Sunday, playing his maiden Ranji Trophy final, Yash, the protégé, overshadowed the master to help Vidarbha bowl Mumbai out for 224.

Yash's bowling first-change, broke the 81-run opening stand with a fuller one that jaggled away to kiosk opener Bhupen Lalwanji's edge and rested in Akshay Wadkar's gloves. He came back after lunch to break the back of Mumbai's lower-order, dismissing Shams Mulani and Tarnish Kotian.

Yash cannot forget the first time he met Umesh, at the Vidarbha Cricket Asso-

ciation Academy in Nagpur during his 14-day stay.

"After being selected for my first day at the VCA Academy, I met Umesh bhैया in person," Yash had told *The Hindu* earlier in the season. "I was a bit shy of him and wanted to follow into his footsteps by going on to train in India. But the first big dream was to bowl like

him and bowl in tandem with him just once." While Yash refers to him as a "bedrock" of the Vidarbha unit, much of the heaping praise on Umesh, Yash remembers an incident during the first time he bowled along with Umesh, during Vidarbha's Ranji semifinal against Kerala in 2018-19 on a "terrible" pitch at Wankhede.

"We ran through them in the first innings, he was unplayable. In the first time he bowled along with Umesh, during Vidarbha's Ranji semifinal against Kerala in 2018-19 on a "terrible" pitch at Wankhede. "We ran through them in the first innings, he was unplayable. In the first time he bowled along with Umesh, during Vidarbha's Ranji semifinal against Kerala in 2018-19 on a "terrible" pitch at Wankhede.

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Mumbai reeling at 111 for six from 81 for no loss. Harsh Dubey — the left-arm spinner who was brought in place of Akshay Wadkar — struck gold in a lone spell having got rid of Prithvi Shaw, Musheer Khan and captain Ajinkya Rahane.

Umesh Yadav found Shreyas Iyer in no-man's land at the crease to be caught-behind. In came Shardul and took the bowlers head on. Tushar Deshpande hung around as the duo's 42-run association helped Mumbai cross the 200-run mark.

**The scores: Mumbai — 1st Innings:** Prithvi Shaw b Dubey 46 (63b, 5w4), Bhupen Lalwanji c Wadkar b Thakur 37 (66b, 4w4), Musheer Khan lbw b Dubey 6 (25b, 0w0), Ajinkya Rahane c Shreyas b Dubey 7 (55b), Shreyas Iyer c Karan b Umesh 7 (15b, 1w4), Harshk Tamore c Wadkar b Thakure 5 (41b), Shams Mulani lbw b Thakur 13 (37b).

**Vidarbha — 1st Innings:** Akshay Wadkar b Thakur 21 (46b, 2w4), Dhruv Shreyas lbw b Shardul 11 (2-64-3), Sarvesh 6 (25-0, 0w0-2), Total (in 64.3 overs): 224. **Fall of wickets:** 1-81 (Lalwanji, 15.6 overs), 2-102 (Shaw, 22.2), 3-92 (Musheer, 24.2), 4-99 (Shreyas, 27.5), 5-113 (Tamore, 37.4), 6-113 (Rahane, 38.3), 7-154 (Shams, 47.5), 8-113 (Kotian, 51.4), 9-218 (Deshpande, 62.1).

**Vidarbha bowling:** Umesh 13.3-2-43-2, Thakure 16-6-36-1, Dubey 20-3-62-3, Thakur 11-2-64-3, Sarvesh 6-25-0. **Vidarbha — 1st Innings:** Akshay Wadkar b Thakur 21 (46b, 2w4), Dhruv Shreyas lbw b Shardul 11 (2-64-3), Sarvesh 6 (25-0, 0w0-2), Total (for three wks. in 13 overs): 31. **Fall of wickets:** 1-1 (Shreyas, 2.3), 2-20 (Moshade, 7.1), 3-24 (Karan, 11.3).

**Mumbai bowling:** Shardul 5-0-14-3, Kulkarni 6-2-9-2, Deshpande 2-0-8-0. **Test:** Vidarbha 1-0-0-0.

**WRESTLING**  
**Sports Bureau KOLKATA**  
Promising wrestlers Asian champion Aman Sehrawat and National champion Sujate Kalkal (65kg) won their respective freestyle weight classes even as Tokyo Olympic silver medalist Ravi Dahiya and bronze medalist Bajrang Punia failed to make the Indian squad in the selection trials held for the upcoming Asian championships and Asian Olympic Games qualifiers at Sonapat on Sunday.

Sehrawat, who earlier defeated Ravi 14-13 in a thrilling round robin contest, recorded a convincing 10-0 victory over Ajit for the top spot. Ravi also lost 10-8 to Udit.

**Convincing win:** Kalkal got past Rohit Kumar 10-0. Earlier, Rohit posted a convincing 9-1 victory over Bajrang, who managed to overcome Ravinder 3-3 via criteria.

Former silver medalist Deepak Punia (86kg) booked his place in the Olympic qualifiers. As per the ad-hoc com-

mittee's guidelines, the winner of the trials in the Olympic weight categories will represent India in upcoming Olympic qualifiers including the Asian Olympic qualifier (April 15-20) and World Olympic qualifier (May 9-12).

The winners in non-Olympic weight categories are the second-placed wrestlers in Olympic weight categories at the trials will represent the country in the Asian championships (April 11-16) in Bishkek.

**The squad: Men: Freestyle: Olympic weights: 57kg:** 1. Aman Sehrawat, 2. Udit, 65kg: 1. Sujate Kalkal, 2. Rohit Kumar, 74kg: 1. Jaideep, 2. Yash Taneja, 86kg: 1. Deepak Punia, 2. Virendra Singh, 97kg: 1. Virendra Singh, 2. Vicky, 125kg: 1. Sumit Mishra, 2. Anshu Malik. **Non-Olympic weights: 61kg:** Akash Dahiya, 70kg: Ashwamekh 70kg: Ravinder, 92kg: Vinay. **Greek Roman: Olympic weights: 60kg:** 1. Sumant, 2. Praveen Kumar, 67kg: 1. Ashu, 2. Virendra Singh, 74kg: 1. Virendra Singh, 87kg: 1. Sumit Kumar, 2. Mohan Singh, 100kg: 1. Naveen, 2. Mohan Singh. **Non-Olympic weights: 55kg:** Ajun Halakur, 61kg: Umesh, 72kg: Anshu Gulia, 82kg: Rohit Dahiya.





## Neeraj backs government's talent-spotting programme

Ace Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has backed the government's nationwide sports development initiative 'Kirti', saying it has the potential to bring about big changes in the country's educational ecosystem. The Sports Ministry has launched 'Kirti', a grassroots-level talent-identification programme aimed at school-going children. The programme will identify and nurture talent and bridge the gaps in sports across the country. "We need to tell children in the age group of 13-14 that they need to give attention to both sports and education. And if the schools can also support and balance things for them, it would be great," said Neeraj in a video posted by *SAI Media*. "School can plan their regimen properly, how they will select children (for sports) and how they will manage their academics and sports." "I think that the education system should change so that both sports and academics can be balanced. If that happens then it will bring about great changes in our country," he added.

## Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

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Hamara Sankalp  
Viksit Bharat



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100-222610/04/2024

## PM: Azamgarh's vikas nas Opp sleepless, Modi doosri mitti ka insaan hai

LAULSHREE SETH  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 10

TEPPING UP his attack on the opposition INDIA bloc, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was in Azamgarh Sunday to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of as many as 782 projects worth Rs. 24,700 crore in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



PM Narendra Modi with CM Yogi Adityanath in Azamgarh on Sunday. **PTI**

## Day after, Opp asks: Did EC Goel quit over differences, will he contest elections?

XPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

DAY after Election Commissioner Anup Goel resigned from his post, just days ahead of the announcement of the Lok Sabha elections, the Opposition Sunday asked the government, asking whether his surprise stepping down was because of "differences" with it or with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Ajay Kumar. West Bengal Chief

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL  
BY UNNY



## WILL EASE PRODUCT, SERVICE TARIFFS: GOYAL \$100 bn, 10 lakh jobs in 15 yrs: India seals trade pact with Europe group

Agreement signed by Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland



Union Minister Piyush Goyal at the signing of the India-EFTA Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement in New Delhi. **PTI**

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

INDIA AND the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA), an inter-governmental grouping of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, signed a trade pact Sunday that will see the EFTA countries committing to invest \$100 billion in India, and aiming

to generate 10 lakh jobs over a 15-year period in exchange for tariff concessions for their pharma, chemical products and minerals, among other items.

The India-EFTA deal has gone through a decade after negotiations were abandoned in 2013 due to differences between the two partners after as many as 13 rounds of talks. However, major geo-political shifts and a common

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Why it marks a shift, could be a template for bigger deals

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

THE PROGRESS of the India-EFTA trade deal, which has been lodged just in time before the elections dates are set to be announced, largely hinged on the \$100 billion investment commitment over a 15-year period pledged by the four western European nations. This deal also involved a greater degree of complementarity

between the two sides, and a lower level of complexity when compared to the other deals under negotiations — the one with the UK and another with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Mamata goes solo, sinks INDIA hopes, sharpens attack on BJP

ATRI MITRA & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA  
KOLKATA, MARCH 10

ENDING SPECULATION about a possible tie-up with Congress as part of the larger Opposition bloc, INDIA to take on the BJP, Chief Minister and TMC leader Mamata Banerjee Sunday fielded party candidates in all 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal. Announcing the list of TMC candidates at a mega rally at

## External Affairs Minister Jaishankar at Adda today



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar has been the face of India's diplomacy in a fast-changing world in the last five years. The first Foreign Secretary to become the country's Foreign

Minister, he played a crucial role in shaping the foreign policy



Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata on Sunday. **PTI/Anirupa Paul**

RELATED REPORT  
PAGE 6

Adhir: She can't be trusted, fielded Yusuf to help BJP

MANOJ CG  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

THE INDIA bloc in West Bengal formally collapsed Sunday with the Trinamool Congress announcing its candidates for all 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



There can't be a temptation now to experiment with a coalition govt. It's a critical time for India

IDEA EXCHANGE WITH DELHI FINANCE MINISTER ATISHI **PTI 22**

**Strong resolve for clean and green energy for Delhi**

# Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan

*Inauguration of*

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- **Charagah** for fodder • **Afforestation** alongside roads/ public spaces, etc.
- **Rs. 383 crores** sanctioned in just 3 months for urbanized villages.

**Chief Guest**

## Shri Amit Shah

Hon'ble Union Minister of Home Affairs & Cooperation

**Guest of Honour**

## Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena

Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Delhi

**आगे बढ़ें PNG चुनें**

PIPED NATURAL GAS

11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 | Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi | 04:00 PM



**INAUGURATED BY PM MODI**

# With double capacity, Delhi airport unveils expanded T1



**UPASIKA SINGHAL**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

INDIRA GANDHI International Airport's expanded Terminal 1 can now handle 40 million passengers annually, double its previous capacity of 17 million passengers per year. The revamped terminal was inaugurated virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday; he also inaugurated 12 other airports and laid the foundation stones for 4 airports across India.

The Prime Minister attended the inauguration through a live link from Azamgarh. "Today, projects worth about Rs 34,000 crore have been inaugurated and foundation stones laid in many states from Azamgarh. Along



Completed at a cost of Rs 4,600 crore, the expanded Terminal 1 will be ready for use within the next two months, said sources. *Abhinav Saha*

The Prime Minister attended the inauguration through a live link from Azamgarh. “Today, projects worth about Rs 34,000 crore have been inaugurated and foundation stones laid in many states from Azamgarh. Along with Azamgarh, new terminal buildings have been inaugurated at many airports including Shravasti, Moradabad, Chitrakoot, Aligarh, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Lucknow, Pune, Kolhapur, Delhi and Adampur... All these efforts will make air travel more comfortable and accessible for the common man of the country,” said the Prime Minister.

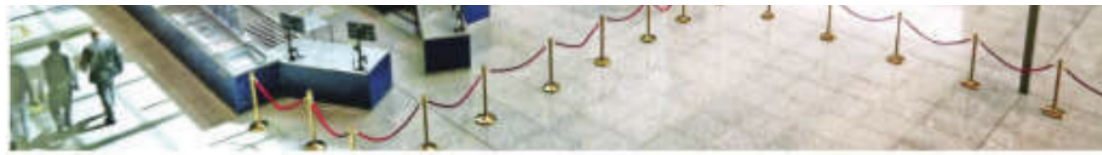
The inauguration was attended by Delhi L-G VK Saxena and Minister of State for Civil Aviation General VK Singh.

According to Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) sources, with all its three terminals combined, IGIA can now handle over 100 million passengers per year — making it one of the few worldwide with this passenger capacity. Additionally, the expansion extends the area of the airport from 55,740 sqm to a whopping 2,06,950 sqm.

Completed at a cost of Rs 4,600 crore, the expanded terminal will be ready for use in the next two months, said sources.

### What passengers can expect

For passengers, the airport has



Completed at a cost of Rs 4,600 crore, the expanded Terminal 1 will be ready for use within the next two months, said sources. *Abhinav Saha*

## HERE ARE SOME OF ITS FEATURES

FACILITIES	EARLIER	POST-EXPANSION
Passenger capacity	17 million per year	40 million per year
Total area	55,740 sqm	2,06,950 sqm
Self-baggage drops	0	36
Self-check-in kiosks	12	108
Baggage drop-off counters	4	9
Passenger bridges/airbridges	0	22
Baggage handling capacity	3,240 baggage/hour	6,000 baggage/hour
Baggage reclaim carousels	8 (52 metres each)	10 (70 metres each)

a Facial Recognition System — DigiYatra — at all its 24 entry gates; 20 automated tray retrieval systems; and individual carrier systems. An individual carrier system divides the luggage carousel into cells where baggage can be placed to reduce damage to the luggage and jams at the belt.

The expanded terminal will have 108 common usage self-service kiosks where passengers can check-in without the help of ground staff. Further, there are 100 check-in counters with 36 self-baggage drop kiosks where

one can drop off their baggage without the help of airport staff.

Additionally, the capacity of the baggage handling system at T1 has doubled from 3,240 baggage per hour to around 6,000 per hour. The number of check-in islands has also been increased to five against four earlier.

DIAL has also realigned pick-up and drop-off lanes to ease traffic and expanded parking facilities to accommodate the surge in travellers.

Inside the terminal, travellers will have access to a range of

amenities including shopping and dining options, designated prayer area, yoga space, quiet zones, lounges, communal seating areas, charging stations for laptops and mobile devices, facilities for baby care, and smart washrooms

The expansion was part of Delhi Airport’s Phase 3A Expansion project which also saw the airport develop a fourth runway along the dual elevated eastern cross taxiway; the refurbishment of its British-era first runway; construction of two flyovers; and modifications at T3.



Rank <span>↕</span>	Airport <span>↕</span>	Location <span>↕</span>	Country <span>↕</span>	Code (IATA/ICAO) <span>↕</span>	Total passengers <span>↕</span>	Rank change <span>↕</span>	% change <span>↕</span>
1.	 <a href="#">Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Atlanta, Georgia</a>	United States	ATL/KATL	93,699,630	—	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 23.8%
2.	 <a href="#">Dallas Fort Worth International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Dallas–Fort Worth, Texas</a>	United States	DFW/KDFW	73,362,946	—	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 17.5%
3.	 <a href="#">Denver International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Denver, Colorado</a>	United States	DEN/KDEN	69,286,461	—	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 17.8%
4.	 <a href="#">O'Hare International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Chicago, Illinois</a>	United States	ORD/KORD	68,340,619	—	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 26.5%
5.	 <a href="#">Dubai International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Garhoud, Dubai, Dubai</a>	United Arab Emirates	DXB/OMDB	66,069,981	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 23	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 127.0%
6.	 <a href="#">Los Angeles International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Los Angeles, California</a>	United States	LAX/KLAX	65,924,298	<span style="color: red;">▼</span> 1	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 37.3%
7.	 <a href="#">Istanbul Airport</a>	<a href="#">Arnavutköy, Istanbul</a>	Turkey	IST/LTFM	64,289,107	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 7	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 73.8%
8.	 <a href="#">Heathrow Airport</a>	<a href="#">Hillingdon, London</a>	United Kingdom	LHR/EGLL	61,614,508	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 46	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 217.7%
9.	 <a href="#">Indira Gandhi International Airport</a>	<a href="#">Palam, Delhi</a>	India	DEL/VIDP	59,490,074	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 4	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> 60.2%

# How Satwik-Chirag employed a variety of attacks to win French Open title

SHIVANI NAIK

MARCH 10

THERE ARE fewer things more entertaining in sport than compulsively winning. Badminton's Boe-ball that Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty dish out routinely, puts a lot of store on winning every point, turning every shot into a dart aiming for bullseye.

Their bravado and the bashfulness, the derring-do and the defense, the no-holds-barred smash, and the tightly concealed deception are all geared towards this unsatiated pursuit of winningness.

Three finals might be lost on the trot, in the process. And an Olympic gold might get won on a canter someday. But in the here and the now and today of this moment, Satwik-Chirag, shepherded by coach Mathias Boe, have won once again. The French Open was pocketed without dropping a set, and the final opponents happened to be Taiwanese Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan, who were tamed 21-11, 21-17.

"Feels good. But next week there's an-



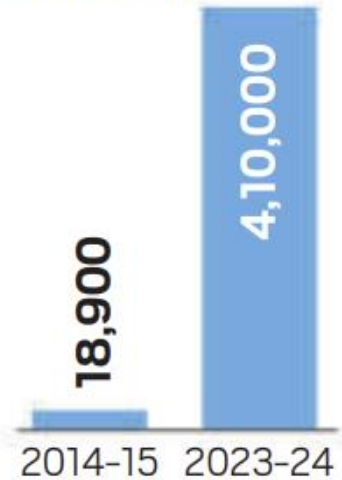
Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (L) and Chirag Shetty beat Taiwanese pair Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan to win the French Open title on Sunday. *Badminton Photo/BAI*



# Mobile phone manufacturing jumps 21 times in 10 yrs: ICEA

*Driven by export growth, mobile phones have now become India's 5th largest export as an individual commodity*

## MOBILE PHONE PRODUCTION IN INDIA (in ₹ crore)



## MOBILE PHONE EXPORTS:

2014-15: ₹1,556 cr

2023-24: ₹1,20,000 cr

- India now produces 97% of its total mobile phone demand locally
- 30% of the total production in financial year 2024 is meant for export
- Apple and Samsung, have played a crucial role in boosting mobile phone exports from the country.
- India manufactured devices are being exported in large volumes to the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Austria, and Italy besides Middle East, North Africa and South American markets.

Source: ICEA/PTI

# India begins importing pulses from Brazil

SANDIP DAS

New Delhi, March 10

**TO DIVERSIFY IMPORT** dependence on a few countries, India has initiated sourcing urad dal from Brazil for the first time to address a shortfall in domestic output.

Sources said that first consignment of around 3,000 tonne of urad dal from the South American country has arrived.

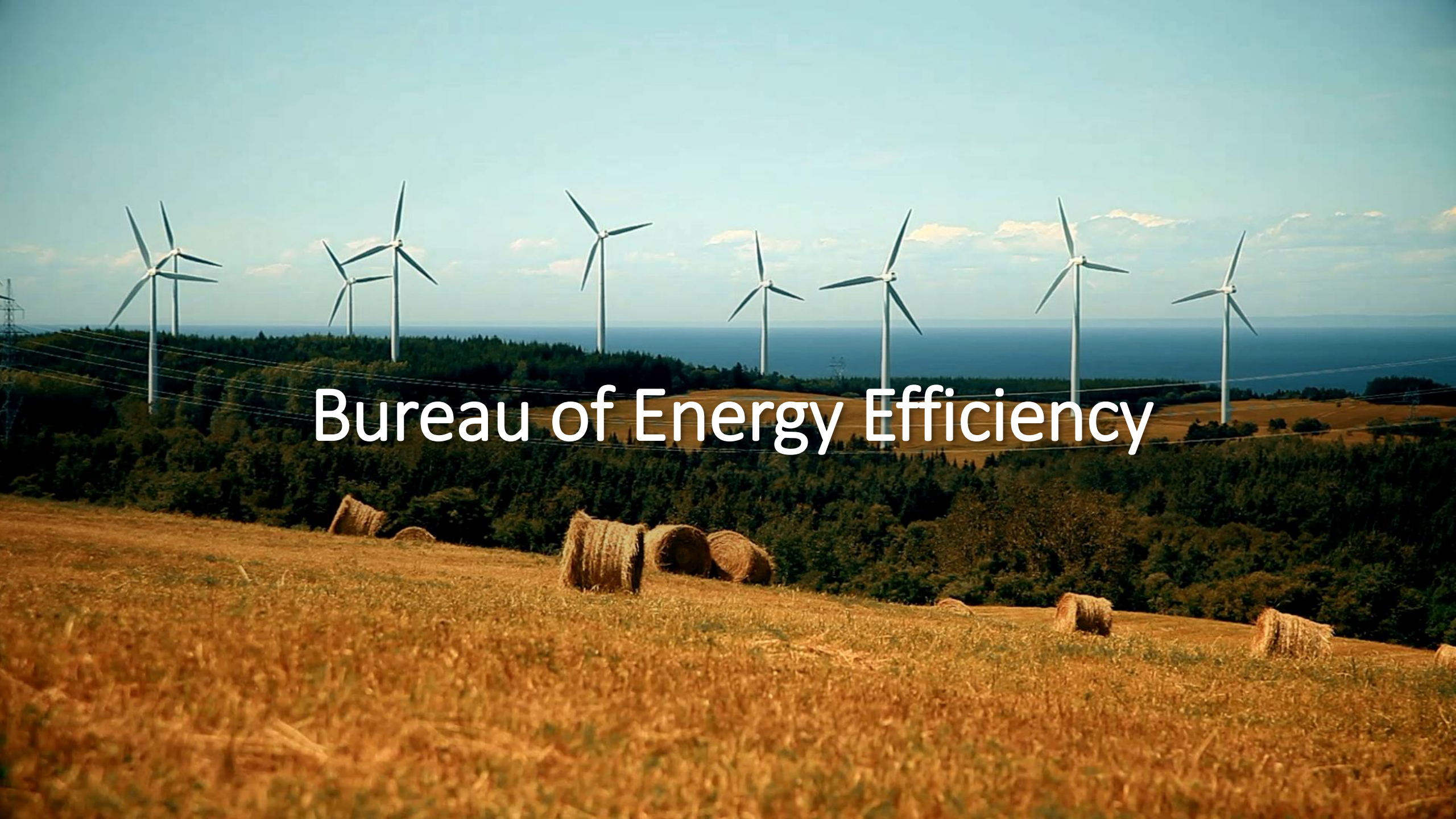
“We are working with Brazil and Argentina for the imports of urad and tur as depending on one country poses risk,” an official said. He said that around 20,000 tonne of urad is likely to be imported into India this year from Brazil.

The government has held a series of discussions with Brazil and Argentina to procure urad and tur dal to meet the domestic requirements.



Currently, under a memorandum of understanding (MoU), India exclusively imports urad dal from Myanmar, where supply disruptions have occurred due to internal security issues.

Pulses consumption in South American countries is relatively low, whereas pulses like urad and tur can be cultivated in Brazil and Argentina due to favorable weather conditions, for the purpose of exporting to India, an official said.

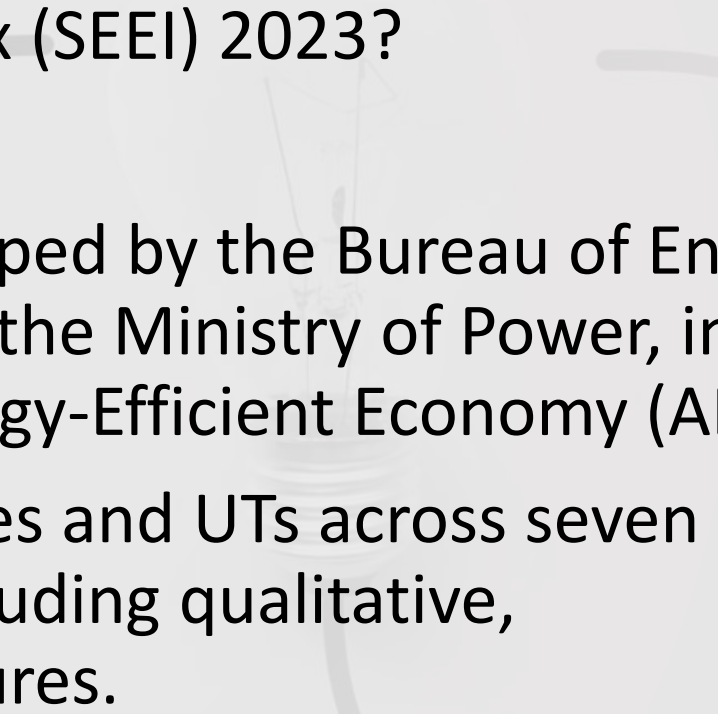




# Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- 
- The 22nd Foundation Day of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency was recently celebrated with the theme "Energy Transition through Electrification and Decarbonization in India" and the State Energy Efficiency Index 2023 was released.
- 











- 
- What is the State Energy Efficiency Index (SEEI) 2023?
  - About:
  - It is the 5th edition of the index, developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, in association with the Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE).
  - It evaluates the performance of 36 states and UTs across seven demand sectors using 65 indicators, including qualitative, quantitative, and outcome-based measures.

In **SEEI 2023**, states and UTs are classified as 'Front runner' ( $\geq 60$ ), 'Achiever' (50-59.75), 'Contender' (30-49.75), and 'Aspirant' ( $< 30$ ) according to their total scores.

States and UTs are also classified into **four groups** based on their total final energy consumption (TFEC) for **peer-to-peer performance comparison**: Group 1 ( $> 15$  million tonnes of oil equivalent (MTOE)), Group 2 (5-15 MTOE), Group 3 (1-5 MTOE), and Group 4 ( $< 1$  MTOE).

- The **top-performing states in each group** are Karnataka (Group 1), Andhra Pradesh (Group 2), Assam (Group 3), and Chandigarh (Group 4).

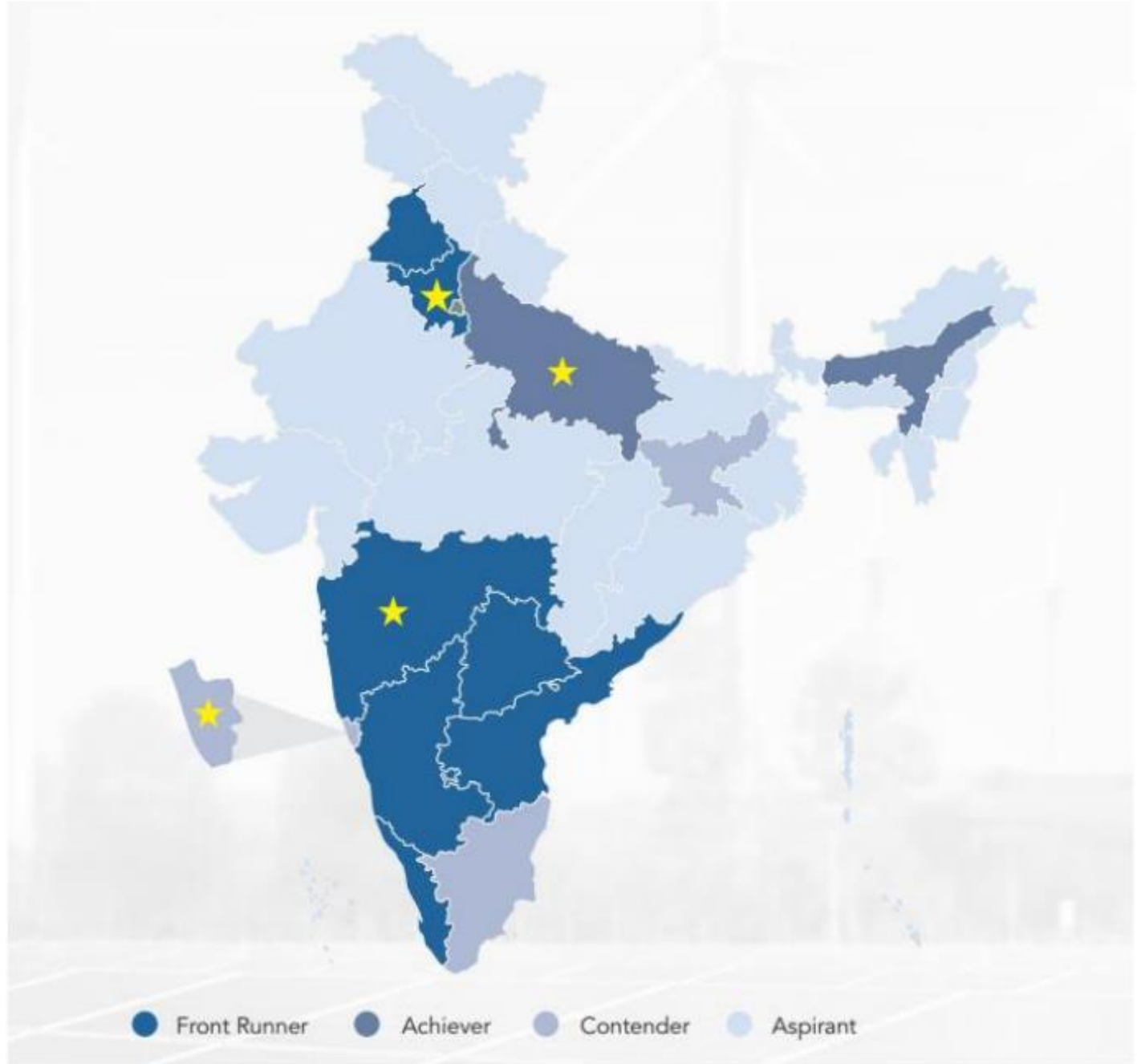


		Sectors							
Categories									
Policy		Cross-sector	Buildings	Industries	Municipal Services	Transport	Agriculture	DISCOM	Total
Finance									
Institutional Capacity									
Adoption of EE Measures									
Energy Savings									
		Programme-specific Indicators							
		Common Indicators							
Sector weights		15	22	17	11	16	8	11	100
Indicator Weights	Common	15	9	6	2	7	3	6	48
	Programme		13	11	9	9	5	5	52


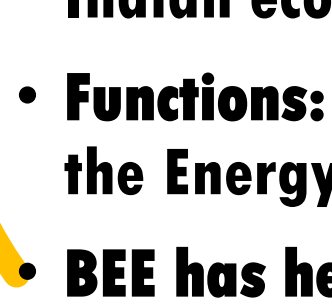
**Framework for SEEI 2023**

- 
- **Front runner ( $\geq 60$ ):**
    - **Seven states in 'Front runner' category in SEEI 2023: Karnataka (score 86.5), Andhra Pradesh (83.25), Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Telangana.**
  - **Achiever (50-59.75):**
    - **Two states, Assam and Uttar Pradesh are in the 'Achiever' category,**
  - **Contender (30-49.75):**
    - **Three states, Goa, Jharkhand, and Tamil Nadu, are in the 'Contender' category.**
  -





***Performance of states and UTs under SEEI 2023***

- 
- **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):**
  - **BEE was established on 1st March 2002, under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001, under the Ministry of Power.**
  - **The mission of BEE is to assist in developing policies and strategies for energy efficiency with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.**
  - **Functions: It is responsible for regulatory and promotional functions outlined in the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.**
  - **BEE has helped India reduce its energy consumption by around 3.5%.**
- 



- 
- **On which of the following can you find the Bureau of Energy Efficiency Star Label? (2016)**

**1. Ceiling fans**

**2. Electric geysers**

**3. Tubular fluorescent lamps**

- 
- **Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

**(a) 1 and 2 only**

**(b) 3 only**

**(c) 2 and 3 only**

**(d) 1, 2 and 3**



A woman in a red and purple saree stands in the center of the frame, looking towards the right. She is surrounded by other people, including a man in a light blue uniform and another man in a striped shirt. The background features white curtains and a soft, ambient light. The text "IRIS: India's First AI Teacher Robot" is overlaid in white on the image.

# IRIS: India's First AI Teacher Robot





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A school in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala has unveiled a groundbreaking innovation in education with the introduction of India's first Generative Artificial Intelligence(AI) teacher robot named 'Iris'.

---

Developed in collaboration with Makerlabs Edutech, Iris aims to transform traditional teaching methods through personalised learning experiences for students.

- 
- **Equipped with voice assistant and IRIS engages students in interactive learning activities.**
  - **IRIS responds to user queries, provides explanations, and delivers educational content through personalised interactions.**
    - **With a 4-wheel chassis and 5 degrees of freedom (DoF) movements, IRIS can move freely and engage in hands-on learning activities.**
  - **In August 2023, India inaugurated its first-ever AI school in Kerala.**
- 





Measles and Rubella Champion  
Award

- India received the **Measles and Rubella Champion Award** for its exemplary efforts in combating these Diseases.
- **About**
- **Awarded by:** Measles and Rubella Partnership at the American Red Cross Headquarters in Washington D.C., USA.
- Measles and Rubella are **vaccine preventable diseases** (VPDs) and MR Vaccine is part of India's **Universal Immunization Programme** since **2017**.



**Measles** : It is caused by a **single-stranded, enveloped RNA virus** with 1 serotype.

- Symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose and a rash all over the body.



**Rubella**: It is also known as **German measles** or three-day measles, is an infection caused by the **rubella virus**.

Symptoms include fever, red rash blotchy and swollen lymph glands.



Haiper



- 
- Recently, **Haiper** — a company founded by former members of Google DeepMind, TikTok, and top labs from research academia, introduced a new **text-to-video model**.
  - **About**
  - The announcement came just weeks after the launch of **OpenAI's AI model Sora**, which is capable of **generating one-minute high-definition videos from text prompts**.
- 

## Haiper's model

According to Haiper, its model is a **powerful perceptual foundation model-driven AI that has been designed for a “new path towards AGI”** (artificial general intelligence, an AI software with human-like intelligence and the ability to self-learn).

Haiper is an **all-in-one visual foundation model** that allows everyone, with or without technical training, to generate high-quality video content with ease.





The founders claim that Haiper brings forward **cutting-edge machine learning** with the belief that creativity should be “fun, surprising, and shareable”.



Haiper offers tools such as **text-to-video, animated static images, video repainting tools, etc.**

Users can go on to the website, log in with their email addresses, and start generating videos for free by typing in text prompts.



While the **short length (only 2 seconds at present) is a limitation**, the company has said that it is working towards extending the video outputs.



While **OpenAI's Sora is still not available for the public, Haiper is offering users to try its tool for free** on its website.



# Right to Repair Portal



**The Department of Consumer Affairs of India (DoCA) has recently launched the Right to Repair Portal India on the occasion of National Consumer Rights Day 2022.**

## **About the Right to Repair Portal**

**Aim:** To provide consumers with access to repair information for their products and reduce e-waste.



**ision:** The website provides information about the **circular economy**, which is the new economic model that focuses on **repairing and reusing products**, as opposed to throwing them away.

- This shift is in line with the government's vision of **creating a circular economy by promoting mindful and deliberate utilisation of products** instead of mindless and wasteful consumption.

### Key objectives:

- The Right to Repair Portal India **brings together information from different sectors** including automobiles, consumer durables, mobile and electronics, and farming equipment.




- 
- It provides consumers with **access to product manuals and repair videos**, as well as information on the price and warranty of spare parts.
  - The portal also **allows consumers to submit feedback and suggestions** on products and services.
  - **Role:** The website is expected to play a key role in **enabling consumers to make informed decisions** about the purchase and maintenance of their products, and to promote a circular economy model.
- 



# Dying Declaration



- 
- In the **Naeem vs. The State of Uttar Pradesh** case on March 05, 2024, the Supreme Court (SC) ruled that **a dying declaration can serve as the sole basis of conviction** if it inspires full confidence, without requiring further corroboration.

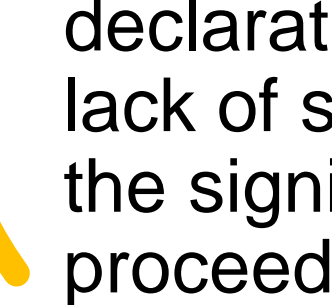
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- 





- **What was the case about?**

- The case involved **Shahin Parveen**, who accused her brother-in-law (Pappi), his wife (Naeema), and Naeema's brother (Naeem) of setting her on fire.
  - Despite affirming Pappi's conviction based on the dying declaration, the court acquitted Naeema and Naeem due to a lack of specific evidence against them. The judgment highlights the significance of credible dying declarations in criminal proceedings
- 



## What is Dying Declarations?



A dying declaration is a statement made by a person who believes they are about to die, regarding the cause or circumstances of their impending death. It is admissible as evidence in legal proceedings, based on the belief that a dying person would be unlikely to lie.

















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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, some wearing suits. The background is blurred, showing more people and a window. The overall mood is celebratory and professional.

Thank you  
guys.

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