

Daily Current Affairs



जनसत्ता



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“The very things that
hold you down are
going to lift you up.”

TIMOTHY MOUSE
DUMBO



‘Grea

”

POPSUGAR.



TRAGEDY IN HARYANA
Six students killed in school bus accident
NEWS » PAGE 8



WAR RAGES ON
Israel on alert after Iranian threat
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Nepotism, defections: theme for poll season
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Bilateral ties in the time of polls
Statements during poll campaigns that affect foreign policy a concern
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PERFECT OUTING
Bumrah and Batters help MI crush RCB
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INSIDE

OBCs will suffer the most if INDIA wins, says Shah
BHOJPAL
Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday said that if the INDIA coalition comes to power at the Centre, the Other Backward Classes (OBC) will "suffer the biggest loss" » PAGE 2



BJP leader seeks name change for Sulthan Bathery
KOZHIKODE
BJP's Kerala unit chief K. Surendran, also the NDA candidate for the Wayanad, has waded into a controversy by declaring that, if elected, he will change the name of Sulthan Bathery town to 'Ganapathi Vattam' » PAGE 2

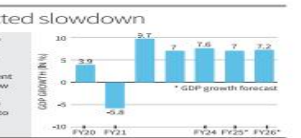
'No shortage of capital funds for Indian Air Force'
NEW DELHI
There will be no shortage of capital funds for the Indian Air Force due to consolidation of the demand of three Services in the defence budget for 2024-25, the IAF said. » PAGE 8

Sound and stable Sino-Indian relations serve the interests of both sides, region, says Beijing

Suhaimi Haidar
NEW DELHI/BEIJING
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments about tensions at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are "highly significant", according to Indian foreign affairs experts. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) reacted to his remarks on Thursday, calling for India to work with China to "put the bilateral relations forward on a sound and stable track."
In an interview to the U.S.-based magazine Newswatch, published on Wednesday, Mr. Modi had between his silence on India's ties with China and stand-off at the LAC which has been going on since April 2020. He had called for the two sides to "urgently address the prolonged situation on our borders so that

ADB projects India's GDP growth at 7% this year

Retail inflation to ease to 4.6%, food inflation to cool to 5.7% if farm output stays normal, it says
Downside risk exists from shocks such as a spike in crude oil prices leading to higher global inflation
Higher incomes will spur demand and confidence levels among urban consumers



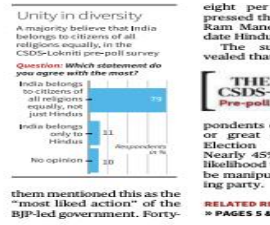
Need a simpler tariff policy to boost manufacturing, says ADB
Yikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI
India needs to take efforts to simplify its tariff policy to enhance its trade competitiveness and address its 'limited' integration with global value chains, the ADB said, stressing that this was imperative for its manufacturing sector.
MORE REPORT » PAGE 12

Work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme signalling the result stress.
"In India, growth is forecast to remain strong as rising consumption complementing continued investment growth," said Abdul Abiad, director ADB's macroeconomics research division.
As India accounts for 80% of South Asia's GDP, it is still the fastest-growing sub-region with improving domestic demand as prices moderate in most economies, he noted.
South Asia is expected to grow 6.3% this year and 6.6% in 2025.
Higher incomes will spur consumer demand and confidence levels in urban consumers has improved, so demand is expected to rise from those areas with falling inflation and a gradual improvement in cities' labour mar-

economic outlook depends on price and financial market stability that are crucial for consumer and business confidence, the ADB said its projections face a downside risk from global shocks such as a spike in crude oil and energy prices leading to higher global inflation and tighter financial conditions.
"On the domestic side, there is a risk of underperformance in agriculture due to weather shocks that can affect demand and inflation," it noted.
Among upside risks to its forecast, the ADB said, was faster-than-expected foreign direct investment inflow, particularly into manufacturing, which would improve output as well as productivity.
"Better-than-expected global growth could boost exports and thus growth," it added.

'Most Indians' believe in country's plurality: survey

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI
An overwhelming number, 79% of those surveyed in the CSDS-Loknethi poll aver that "India belongs to all religions equally, not just Hindus", with only 10% saying that "India belongs only to Hindus". This belief in plurality was more pronounced in urban areas (85% in towns and 84% in cities) and higher among the educated (89% as compared to those with no schooling (72%).
88% of the respondents said the Ram Mandir was their most important concern, 22% of them mentioned this as the "most liked action" of the BJP-led government. For



Curtain falls on Ramzan



The celebration: Devotees offer 'namaz' at the Jama Masjid in New Delhi on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the end of the month of Ramzan, on Thursday. THE HINDU

Controversial U.S. football star, actor Simpson dies

Reuters
WASHINGTON
O.J. Simpson, the American football star and actor who was convicted in a sensational 1995 trial of murdering his former wife but was found responsible for her death in a civil lawsuit and was later imprisoned for armed robbery and kidnapping, has died at 76.
Nicknamed "The Juice," Simpson was one of the best athletes of the late 1960s and 1970s.
REPORT ON » PAGE 14

Apple changes hacking alert wording after India 'pressure'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI
Apple, Inc. is now calling "state-backed attackers" "mercenary" hackers in email alerts to affected customers, and has changed this language on support documentation on its website as well.
This change from the iPhone app comes months after a report of "pressure" from the Indian government to give authorities deniability for hacking attempts on political leaders. Journalists and activists, who have repeatedly been alerted to unauthorized intrusions into their phones from spyware such as Pegasus, which the Intelligence Bureau acquired in 2019.
The change, which now takes the form of individual nation-states following hacking attempts, coincided with media reports on Thursday claiming that a fresh batch of such notifications was sent to users in India and 91 other countries. However, hours after these reports came up, no user in any of these countries has publicly reported receiving such an alert.
Last November, Apple and the Centre misleadingly claimed that users in 150 countries received notifications of hacking alerts, when only users in India reported receiving them that week.
An Apple spokesperson declined to comment on record on the change in language. Three people who have received such alerts previously in India told The Hindu they didn't receive any in the last year. Rights group Amnesty International has opened a digital security helpline for individuals who received the alert.
Last December, The Washington Post reported that "senior Modi administration officials" demanded that the company help soften the political impact of the warnings", referring to November's alerts.
At least two individuals who received the alerts that month found in separate reports received notifications that their phones had traces of the Pegasus spyware.



Media reports claim that a fresh batch of such alerts has been sent to users. REUTERS

ADB projects India's GDP growth at 7% this year

Retail inflation to ease to 4.6%, food inflation to cool to 5.7% if farm output stays normal, it says

Downside risk exists from shocks such as a spike in crude oil prices leading to higher global inflation

Higher incomes will spur demand and confidence levels among urban consumers

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India's economy is expected to remain robust over the next two years, even though headline growth in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is forecast to slow from 7.6% in 2023-24 to 7% this year, before improving to 7.2% in 2025-26, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said.

As per its Asia Development Outlook report released on Thursday, the bank expects retail inflation to ease to 4.6% this year and 4.5% in 2025-26. India's "persistent" food inflation is expected to drop to 5.7% as farm output returns to normal trends this year.

With the U.S. reporting a resurgence in inflation in March, dimming prospects of much-anticipated interest rate cuts from the Fed-

eral Reserve, the ADB noted that a 'higher for longer' interest rate regime would have some impact on Asia's inflation outlook, with a slightly smaller dent in growth.

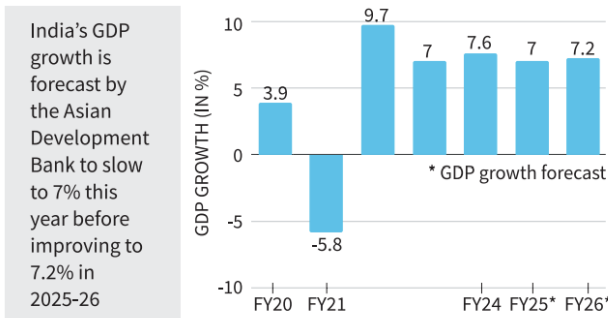
More impact on India

However, this impact would be "more pronounced and persistent" for India, given the higher sensitivity of its inflation pace to exchange rate fluctuations, and its greater reliance on imported goods, it said.

Moreover, if the spike in shipping costs triggered by the strife in the Red Sea persists, it could add to inflation pressures across developing Asia.

A projected normal monsoon this year will also help revive rural consumption, which was muted last year due to erratic rainfall affecting the farm sector, with greater demand for

Projected slowdown



work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme signalling the resultant stress.

"In India, growth is forecast to remain strong as rising consumption complements continued investment growth," said Abdul Abiad, director of ADB's macroeconomics research division.

As India accounts for 80% of South Asia's GDP, it is still the fastest-growing

sub-region with improving domestic demand as prices moderate in most economies, he noted.

South Asia is expected to grow 6.3% this year and 6.6% in 2025.

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Need a simpler tariff policy to boost manufacturing, says ADB

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

India needs to take efforts to simplify its tariff policy to enhance its trade competitiveness and redress its 'limited'

integration with global value chains, the ADB said, stressing that this was imperative for its manufacturing sector.

MORE REPORT
» PAGE 12

kets, the ADB reckoned. However, a rise in imports to meet domestic demand could widen the Current Account Deficit moderately to 1.7% of GDP this year and next year, it said.

Muted exports

India's growth, the report said, will be driven by public and private sector investment demand and by gradual improvement in consumer demand as the rural economy improves.

While exports are likely to be relatively muted this year as growth in major advanced economies slows down, they will improve in 2025-26.

"Foreign direct investment inflow will likely remain muted in the near term due to tight global financial conditions but will pick up in 2025-26 with higher industry and infrastructure investment," the report averred.

Stressing that India's

economic outlook depends on price and financial market stability that are crucial for consumer and business confidence, the ADB said its projections face a downside risk from global shocks such as a spike in crude oil and energy prices leading to higher global inflation and tighter financial conditions.

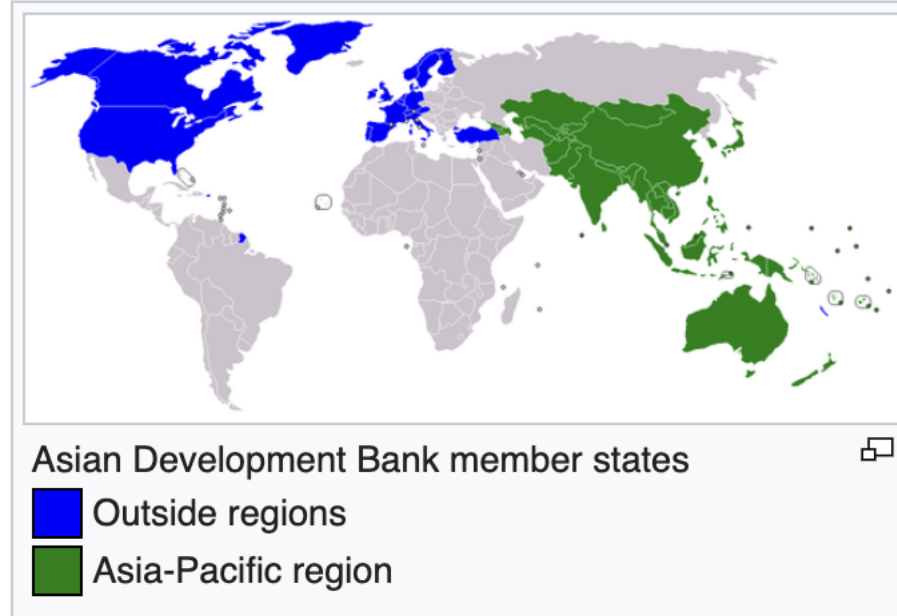
"On the domestic side, there is a risk of underperformance in agriculture due to weather shocks that can affect demand and inflation," it noted.

Among upside risks to its forecast, the ADB said, was faster-than-expected foreign direct investment inflow, particularly into manufacturing, which would improve output as well as productivity.

"Better-than-expected global growth could boost exports and thus growth," it added.

Headquarters in 2011

Abbreviation	ADB
Formation	19 December 1966; 57 years ago
Type	Multilateral Development Bank
Legal status	Treaty
Purpose	Social and Economic Development
Headquarters	6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong , Metro Manila 1550, Philippines
Region served	Indo-Pacific
Membership	68 countries
President	Masatsugu Asakawa (from 17 January 2020) ^[1]
Main organ	Board of Governors ^[2]
Staff	3,769 ^[3]



Five largest borrowing countries^{[36][37]}

Country 	2018		2017		2016		2015	
	\$ million 	% 	\$ million 	% 	\$ million 	% 	\$ million 	% 
 China	17,015	16.6	16,284	16.9	15,615	24.8	14,646	25.2
 India	16,115	15.7	14,720	15.2	13,331	21.2	12,916	22.2
 Pakistan	10,818	10.6	10,975	11.4	4,570	7.3	4,319	7.4
 Indonesia	10,356	10.1	9,393	9.7	8,700	13.8	8,214	14.1
 Bangladesh	9,169	8.9	8,685	9.0	-	-	-	-
 Philippines	-	-	-	-	5,935	9.4	5,525	9.5
Others	38,998	38.1	36,519	37.8	14,831	23.5	12,486	21.6
Total	102,470	100.0	96,577	100.0	62,983	100.0	58,106	100.0

The 20 countries with the largest capital contribution and voting rights in the Asian Development Bank

Rank 	Country 	Subscribed capital (% of total) 	Voting power (% of total) 
	<i>World</i>	100.000	100.000
1	 Japan	15.571	12.751
1	 United States	15.571	12.751
3	 China	6.429	5.437
4	 India	6.317	5.347
5	 Australia	5.773	4.913
6	 Indonesia	5.434	4.641
7	 Canada	5.219	4.469

Mixed Signals

FY24 growth revised upwards by 3% points

FY25 growth outlook down to 6%, from 7% earlier

Higher inflation projected for next 2 years



PM's remarks on China ties feeble: Congress

Commenting on Modi's interview to a U.S.-based magazine, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh says the PM missed an opportunity to send a powerful message to China to stop it from further asserting its claim on Indian territory; he claims the 'ineffective' response is also disrespectful to our martyrs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his "ineffective and feeble" response to China over alleged border incursions, and demanded an apology from him. Commenting on the Prime Minister's interview to the U.S.-based magazine *Newsweek*, Congress general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh said that "the Prime Minister was at his cowardly worst". "His only comment on China's repeated infringements on Indian sovereignty

was that the India-China border situation needs to be addressed urgently to resolve the 'abnormality' in the bilateral interaction," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X. The Congress leader said that the Prime Minister had a chance to send a powerful message to China, but his "ineffective and feeble response" is likely to encourage China further in asserting its claim on Indian territory. "The Prime Minister's reaction to the China issue is not only disgraceful but also disrespectful to our martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice in defending our borders," Mr. Ramesh said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a public meeting in Rishikesh on Thursday. PTI

Referring to Mr. Modi's statement at an all-party meeting post the Golan clashes, the Congress leader said Mr. Modi should apologise to the public for

keeping "the nation in the dark about his failures in protecting the borders with China". "The Prime Minister should apologise to the 140

crore Indians for deceiving them on national television on June 19, 2020, with his statement *Na Koi Ghussa Hai, Na Hi Koi Ghus Aaya hai* (None has entered inside our territory)...". Mr. Ramesh said that for the past four years, the Congress has targeted the PM and his government for giving a "clean chit" to China on the issue of border transgressions. Soon after Home Minister Amit Shah had claimed in an election rally last Tuesday that China had not occupied "an inch of Indian territory", Mr. Ramesh had lashed out at the Union Minister. "Now, the only man

who can give the Prime Minister competition in lying and falling back on his Home Minister — has also given a clean chit to China. He has claimed that China 'couldn't encroach a single inch' in the border of the government," the Congress leader had said. Mr. Ramesh said "facts" suggest that China has occupied 2,000 sq km of Indian soil, taken over 26 out of 65 patrolling points in Ladakh, and built complete villages 50-60 km inside Arunachal Pradesh. "Each time the BJP gives a clean chit to China, they make it harder for India to deal with China's illegal encroachment," he added.

BJP govt. undermined probe agencies, Constitution: Yechury

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The pillars of the Indian Constitution and independent agencies have been systematically undermined in the 10 years of the Narendra Modi-led BJP government at the Centre, said CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, here on Thursday. Speaking at an election campaign meeting organised to seek support for Chemical Central DMK candidate Dayanidhi Maran, Mr. Yechury said: "We are here together to protect India and protect its secular de-

mocratic republic character. The Prime Minister claims that he was conducting a crusade against corruption, but, the truth was that the Modi government remained the most corrupted government since independence," Mr. Yechury said. "The electoral bonds scheme was a legalisation of political corruption." "The BJP government misused central agencies to threaten corporates by raiding and pressuring them to donate through electoral bonds. They also had a nexus with some corporates to get money from them by award-

ing contracts," he alleged. The four important pillars of the Indian Constitution — against secularism, economic sovereignty, federalism, and social justice — have been "systematically undermined", along with independent agencies such as RD, IT, and CBI," he said. "Mr. Modi is communalising and polarising and dividing the electorate and attempting to threaten Hindutva. I am confident that the people of Tamil Nadu will ensure, once again like in the 2019 election, that the BJP will not get a single seat in the State," he added.

Exercising their right



Early start: Policemen cast their votes for the Lok Sabha election in Tamil Nadu on Thursday. The election Commission has made special arrangements through postal ballots for police officials who are deployed on election duty. B. JOTHI RAMAIAH/ANM

As an alumna of the Film & Television Institute of India (FTII), Ms. Kapadia is best known for her acclaimed documentary *A Night of Awe*, which she premiered at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival's Director's Fortnight side bar where it won the Oeil d'Or (Golden Eye) award. *All We Imagine As Light*, also written by Ms. Kapadia, marks her narrative feature debut. The film is about Prabha, a nurse, who inherits an unexpected gift from her long-estranged husband that throws her life into disarray. Her younger son, Anu, tries in vain to find a private spot in the big city to be alone with her boyfriend. One day the two nurses go on a road trip to a beach town where the mystical forest becomes a space for their dreams to manifest, according to the plotline. In her previous film, she competed for the coveted Palme d'Or award was legendary filmmaker Khrinal Sen's *Kharji* in 1983.

No shortage of capital funds due to consolidated budget of 3 Services

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

There will be no shortage of capital funds for the Indian Air Force (IAF) because of consolidation of the demand of three Services in the defence budget for 2024-25, the IAF has said. Funds sought for 2024-25 have already been allotted to the Services. Prior to February 2024, capital funds had been allocated separately to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. "The Integrated Capability Development Programme, which is a 10-year plan, will be finalised by headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) and approved by the cabinet. This would be prepared after taking inputs from the service headquarters. The



Chief of Defence Staff would provide further inputs to the Navy and the Air Force." "The Integrated Capability Development Programme, which is a 10-year plan, will be finalised by headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) and approved by the cabinet. This would be prepared after taking inputs from the service headquarters. The

defence budget to bring flexibility in financial management by enabling the MoD to reappropriate funds among the services, to give the services priority, the IAF said. The total allocation for defence stands at ₹6.2 lakh crore for 2024-25 of which the capital allocation, which is for new procurements, stands at ₹1.72 lakh crore. Of the ₹6.2 lakh crore, 27.67% went to capital, 14.82% for revenue expenditure on sustenance and operational preparedness, 30.68% for pay and allowances, 22.72% for defence pensions and 4.1% for civil organisations under the MoD. Officials noted that the consolidation of the capital budget would help better address this issue.

In a first in 40 years, Indian film to compete for Cannes award

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* on Thursday scripted history by becoming the first Indian movie in over 40 years to feature in the prestigious Competition section of the Cannes Film Festival, where it will vie for the top prize Palme d'Or. Iris Knobloch, president of the Cannes Festival, and Thierry Fremaux, general delegate, announced the official selection line-up for the 2024 edition of the gala at a press conference streamed live from Cannes, France. Besides Ms. Kapadia, British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri's *Sandwich* will also be showcased at the 77th edition of the festival. The movie will be screened under the Un Certain Regard section. Ms. Kapadia is best known for her acclaimed documentary *A Night of Awe*, which she premiered at the 2021



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Six children dead as school bus overturns in Haryana

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Six students, in the 13-17 age group, were killed and 28 injured when a private school bus ferrying them overturned and hit a tree in Haryana's Mahendragarh district, around 100 km southwest of Delhi. The police said the incident occurred on Thursday morning when bus driver Dharmender, under the influence of alcohol, tried to overtake another vehicle. He was arrested along with school principal Deepi and secretary Hoshiar Singh. After the news broke out, President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock over the incident.

PM Modi reviews heat preparedness

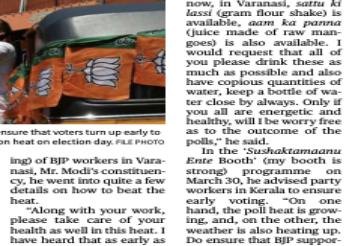
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday reviewed India's heat preparedness plans with senior officials on Thursday. Thursday's meeting reviewed preparedness in terms of availability of essential medicines, intravenous fluids, ice packs, oral rehydration supplements and drinking water. With polling set to begin later this month, health aid will be provided by the Ministry and National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) were sought to be translated into regional languages.

BJP plans to beat complacency and the heat

NEWS ANALYSIS
Nistula Hebbur
NEW DELHI

In an election where much of the narrative revolves around the inevitability of a BJP victory, the party is facing two challenges: complacency among its workers convinced of victory, and the record-breaking heat in the country this poll season. The India Meteorological Department has already predicted that the country will experience heat waves lasting 10 to 20 days, double that of the usual occurrence. In meetings with the



BJP workers in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, are urged to ensure that voters turn up early to cast their votes and escape the afternoon heat on election day. FILE PHOTO

ing of BJP workers in Varanasi, Mr. Modi's constituency, he went into quite a few details on how to beat the heat. "Along with your work, please take care of your health as well in this heat. I have heard that as early as

Ex-civil servants seek EC view on 'witch-hunt'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A group of former civil servants has flagged the "disturbing pattern of harassment and witch-hunt" of Opposition parties and politicians in the run-up to the general election, and asked the Election Commission (EC) to take "firm action". In an open letter to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners, the Constitutional Conduct Group said its members have served the Centre and State governments, and have no affiliation with any political party but

are strongly committed to the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. The letter, which was signed by 87 former civil servants, said: "The arrest of a senior Opposition politician and the harassment of politicians in the run-up to the general election, and asked the Election Commission (EC) to take 'firm action'". In an open letter to Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners, the Constitutional Conduct Group said its members have served the Centre and State governments, and have no affiliation with any political party but

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Iris Knobloch, president of the Cannes Festival, and Thierry Fremaux, general delegate, announced the official selection line-up for the 2024 edition of the gala at a press conference streamed live from Cannes, France.

Besides Ms. Kapadia, British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri's *Santosh* will also be showcased at the 77th edition of the film gala. The movie will be



Payal Kapadia

screened under the Un Certain Regard section.

Ms. Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* will be presented under the main segment alongside 19 other titles.

An alumna of the Film & Television Institute of India (FTII), Ms. Kapadia is best known for her acclaimed documentary *A Night of Knowing Nothing*, which premiered at the 2021

Cannes Film Festival's Director's Fortnight side-bar where it won the Oeil d'or (Golden Eye) award.

All We Imagine As Light, also written by Ms. Kapadia, marks her narrative feature debut.

The film is about Prabha, a nurse, who receives an unexpected gift from her long-estranged husband that throws her life into disarray. Her younger roommate, Anu, tries in vain to find a private spot in the big city to be alone with her boyfriend.

One day the two nurses go on a road trip to a beach town where the mystical forest becomes a space for their dreams to manifest, according to the plotline.

The previous Indian film to compete for the coveted Palme d'Or award was legendary filmmaker Mrinal Sen's *Kharaj* in 1983.

Cannes Film Festival



Location [Cannes, France](#)

Founded 20 September 1946; 77 years ago
(as International Film Festival)

Most recent [2023 Cannes Film Festival](#)

Awards [Palme d'Or, Grand Prix](#)

Website [www.festival-cannes.com](#)

- **Competition**

- [Palme d'Or](#) – Golden Palm
- [Palme d'Or du court métrage](#) – Best Short Film
- [Grand Prix](#) – Grand Prize of the Festival
- [Prix du Jury](#) – Jury Prize
- [Prix de la mise en scène](#) – Best Director
- [Prix d'interprétation masculine](#) – Best Actor
- [Prix d'interprétation féminine](#) – Best Actress
- [Prix du scénario](#) – Best Screenplay

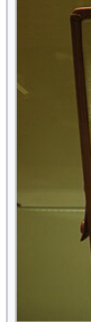
- **Other Sections**

- [Prix Un Certain Regard](#) – Young talent, innovative and audacious works
- [Cinéfondation](#) prizes – Student films
- [Caméra d'Or](#) – It rewards the best first film of the Festival, choosing among the debutants' works among the Official Selection, the Directors' Fortnight and the International Critics' Week selections.

- **Given by Independent Entities**

- [FIPRESCI Prize](#) – The International Federation of Film Critics awards prizes to films from the main competition section, Un Certain Regard and parallel sections
- [Directors' Fortnight](#) Prizes
- [Prix Vulcain](#) – Awarded to a technical artist by the CST
- [International Critics' Week](#) Prizes
- [Prize of the Ecumenical Jury](#)
- [François Chalais Prize](#)
- [L'Œil d'or](#) – Best documentary film
- [Trophée Chopard](#)
- [Palm Dog](#) – Best canine performance^[47]

[Golden Palm – Best LGBT-related film](#)^[48]



*Palme
Now at*

News & Comment

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of vacant posts in pollution control bodies

6,075 More than 50% of the 12,016 sanctioned posts in 28 State pollution control boards and eight pollution control committees are vacant. ■

Sunflower oil imports touch record high in March

4.45 lakh tonne. India imported a record 4.45 lakh tonne of sunflower oil in March, taking advantage of lower prices, while the country's total edible oil imports reached 11.49 lakh tonne in the month. ■

Share of vacant train driver posts: Railway Board in RTI response

14.7 in percentage. Out of the total 1.27 lakh sanctioned posts of both drivers and assistant drivers in all railway zones across the country, 18,766 were lying vacant as of March 1. ■

India's rank in the World Cybercrime Index

10 According to a study published in the journal PLoS ONE, Russia topped the list of cybercrime with frauds involving people making advance fee payments being the most common type. ■

Workers from India to be brought to Israel by May

6,000 Indian workers will arrive in Israel to help the country's construction sector to meet a labour shortage. ■

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ISRO's 'zero orbital debris' milestone

How did ISRO ensure practically zero debris left in earth orbit after the PSLV-C58/XPoSat mission? What is the purpose and function of the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3)? How does it contribute to space debris mitigation efforts? What are the risks space debris poses to space assets?

EXPLAINER

Suchitra Karthikeyan

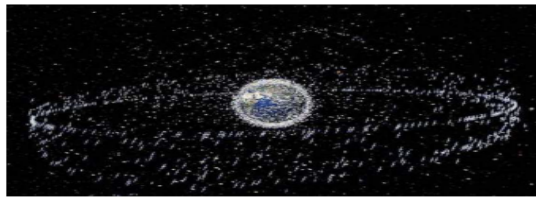
The story so far

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has said its PSLV-C58/XPoSat mission has practically left zero debris in earth orbit. The space agency explained that the last stage of the Polar Satellite Launch vehicle (PSLV) used in the mission was transformed into a kind of orbital station — called the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3) — before it was left to re-enter the earth's atmosphere instead of floating in orbit once its mission was completed. ISRO said that after it completed the primary mission of injecting all satellites into their target orbits, the fourth stage of PSLV was transformed into the POEM-3. It was subsequently de-orbited from 650 km to 350 km, rendering it more susceptible to being pulled towards the earth and burning up in the atmosphere. ISRO also said it "passivated the stage," meaning dumped its fuel, to avoid an explosion that could have hung small pieces of debris into orbit.

What is POEM-3?

Developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) as an inexpensive space platform, POEM uses the spent fourth stage of a PSLV rocket as an orbital platform. Used for the first time in the PSLV-C58 mission in June 2022, ISRO had POEM orbit the earth to perform in-orbit scientific experiments with various payloads onboard.

POEM is powered by solar panels mounted on the fuel tank of the rocket's fourth stage and a lithium-ion battery. It has a navigation, guidance, and control (NGC) system to stabilise its altitude along with helium control thrusters. The NGC system has four Sun sensors, a magnetometer, and gyroscopes, and talks to ISRO's NavIC satellite constellation for navigation. POEM also has a telecommand system to communicate with the ground station.



Orbital threat: With the rise in the number of satellites in orbit around the earth, space debris has become a pressing issue. AFP

ISRO first demonstrated the reuse of the spent fourth stage of its rocket in its PSLV C-44 mission in 2019. After satellites were injected into the target orbits, the fourth stage, carrying a student payload called Kalanmat-V2, was moved to a higher circular orbit of 483 km and stayed there, facilitating the payload's requirements.

What has POEM-3 achieved?

ISRO launched the PSLV C-58 mission from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on January 1. After deploying the XPoSat satellite in its desired orbit of 650 km, the fourth stage, now called POEM-3, was lowered to a 350-km-high circular orbit. The lower a satellite is in orbit around the earth, the more drag it experiences and the more energy it needs to expend to stay in orbit.

POEM-3 featured nine payloads: two each from VSSC and Bellatrix Aerospace Pvt Ltd, one each from the start-ups TakeMe2Space, Inspecity Space Labs Pvt Ltd, Dhruva Space, and from IISc Institute of Technology, KI Somaiya Institute of Technology, and ISRO's Physics Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad.

It completed 400 orbits around the

earth by its 25th day. The payloads were operationalised to perform their experiments at this time. ARKAZOO, RUTRA, and LEAP-TD completed their respective experiments while the data from WeSAT, RSEM, and DEX were collected after every orbit for further analysis on the ground. Two fuel cells from VSSC demonstrated their ability to generate power. By January 27, 2024, all of POEM-3's payload objectives were completed.

For two months, POEM-3 prepared for its re-entry while ISRO tracked it with its Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network stations in Bengaluru, Lucknow, Mauritius, Sriharikota, Port Blair, Thiruvananthapuram, Brunei, and Biak (Indonesia) and the Multi-Object Tracking Radar (MOTR) at Sriharikota. On March 21, POEM-3 re-entered the earth's atmosphere, meeting its fiery end.

Why is this significant?

With the rise in the number of satellites in orbit around the earth, space debris has become a pressing issue. Space debris in the low earth orbit (LEO) mainly comprises pieces of spacecraft, rockets, and defunct satellites, and the fragments of objects that have deteriorated

explosively as a result of anti-satellite missile tests. This debris often flies around at high speeds of up to 27,000 km/hr. Due to their sheer volume and momentum, they pose a risk to several space assets.

The LEO extends from 100 km above the earth's surface up to 2,000 km above. It includes satellites tracking intelligence data, encrypted communication, and navigation. According to ISRO's Space Situational Assessment Report 2022, the world placed 2,533 objects in space in 179 launches in 2023.

Debris also exists, but in smaller volumes, in the geosynchronous orbit (GEO) 36,000 km above the earth's surface. Currently, 7,000 operational satellites are orbiting the earth at different altitudes along with millions of pieces of space debris. The U.S. Space Command tracks and catalogues space debris larger than 10 centimetres in LEO and larger than 0.31 metres in GEO.

How are agencies dealing with debris?

The latest incident of space debris causing havoc was recorded on March 8 when a discarded battery dropped by the International Space Station ripped through the roof of a house in Florida.

As more communication satellites/constellations are launched and more anti-satellite tests are conducted, more on-orbit breakup and collisions occur, producing smaller fragments in orbit. The number of space objects (debris or functional equipment) greater than 10 cm in size in LEO is expected to be about 60,000 by 2030, per ISRO estimates. Space debris can also create unstable regions in the orbit where too much debris has accumulated, and which can trigger a cascading avalanche of collisions that produce yet more, but smaller pieces of debris.

Currently, there are no international space laws pertaining to LEO debris. Most spacefaring nations abide by the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines 2002 specified by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC), which the U.N. endorsed in 2007.

THE GIST

ISRO successfully conducted the PSLV C58/XPoSat mission, deploying the XPoSat satellite into orbit and subsequently transforming the last stage of the PSLV into the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3).

Developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), POEM utilises the spent fourth stage of a PSLV rocket as an orbital platform for scientific experiments.

POEM-3 completed 400 orbits around the earth, operationalising nine payloads to conduct various experiments before re-entering the earth's atmosphere.

With the increasing number of satellites in orbit, space debris poses a significant risk to space assets.

Is transparency lacking in candidate disclosure?

How has the Supreme Court addressed concerns about candidates with serious criminal charges contesting elections? What reforms have been proposed by the Law Commission and EC to address these issues?

Rangarajan R

The story so far

The Supreme Court recently held that candidates need not disclose every piece of information and possession in their election affidavits unless it is substantial in nature. In another development, the Election Commission of India (EC) has asked the Central Board of Direct Taxes to verify the declaration with respect to yearly income in the affidavit filed by Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the BJP candidate from Thiruvananthapuram.

What does the law specify?

Section 33 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) read with rule 4A of election rules, requires every contesting candidate to declare in his nomination paper for elections along with an affidavit in a prescribed format. In Association of Democratic Reformers (ADR) Vs Union of India (2002), the Supreme

Court held that voters have the right to know about the criminal antecedents, income and asset details of the candidate and his/her dependants and educational qualification of contesting candidates. This resulted in Section 33A being added to the RP Act that requires details of criminal antecedents to be part of the election affidavit.

Section 125A of the RP Act further prohibits the failure to furnish required information; giving false information or concealing any information in the nomination paper or affidavit shall be punishable with imprisonment up to six months or fine or both.

What are the issues?

In a recent case, an independent candidate from Arunachal Pradesh failed to declare his assets as assets in his election affidavit while contesting the Assembly election in 2019. His election was set aside by the Gauhati High Court. However, the Supreme Court reversed the

decision and held that non-disclosure of information that is not material or substantial cannot be treated as an attempt to unduly influence the voters. In the case of Mr. Chandrasekhar, the complaint is about alleged concealment of his income and substantial assets in his election affidavit that can have a potential impact on the decision of the voters.

An even more significant issue relates to candidates with serious criminal charges contesting elections. Some candidates circumvented the requirement of rule 4A by leaving certain columns blank and filing incomplete affidavits. It once again required an order of the court in Resurgence India Vs EC (2018), to ensure that all columns are filled appropriately. According to a report by ADR, 19% of candidates in the 2019 Lok Sabha election faced charges of rape, murder or kidnapping.

The Law Commission in its 244th report on 'Electoral Disqualifications' (2014) and EC in its memorandum on

'Electoral reforms' submitted in 2016 had provided certain recommendations. First, a conviction for filing a false affidavit should attract a punishment of a minimum of two years imprisonment and a ground for disqualification. Second, the trials in such cases must be conducted on a day-to-day basis. Finally, persons charged by a competent court with offences punishable by imprisonment of at least five years should be debarred from contesting in the elections provided the case is filed at least 6 months before the election in question.

The Supreme Court in *Public Interest Foundation Vs Union of India* (2018) directed candidates as well as political parties to issue a declaration about criminal antecedents at least three times before the election, in a newspaper in the locality and electronic media.

What can be the way forward?

Candidates with serious criminal charges contesting elections is likely to be misused by various ruling parties. However, the other recurring problem is the failure to increase punishment for filing false affidavits and a ground for disqualification need to be implemented. The Supreme Court's order to provide wide publicity of criminal records should also be strictly implemented. This would curtail a discrediting voter to exercise a well-informed choice.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Postrime'. Views expressed are personal

THE GIST

The Supreme Court ruled that candidates are not obligated to disclose every detail in their election affidavits unless the information is substantial in nature.

Instances of candidates failing to disclose assets and income have raised questions about the transparency and completeness of affidavits.

While debarring candidates based on chequesheets could be misused, implementing stricter punishment for false affidavits and increasing transparency in disclosing criminal records are crucial steps. Ensuring voter awareness and informed choices through better disclosure mechanisms is essential for electoral integrity.

Share of vacant train driver posts: Railway Board in RTI response

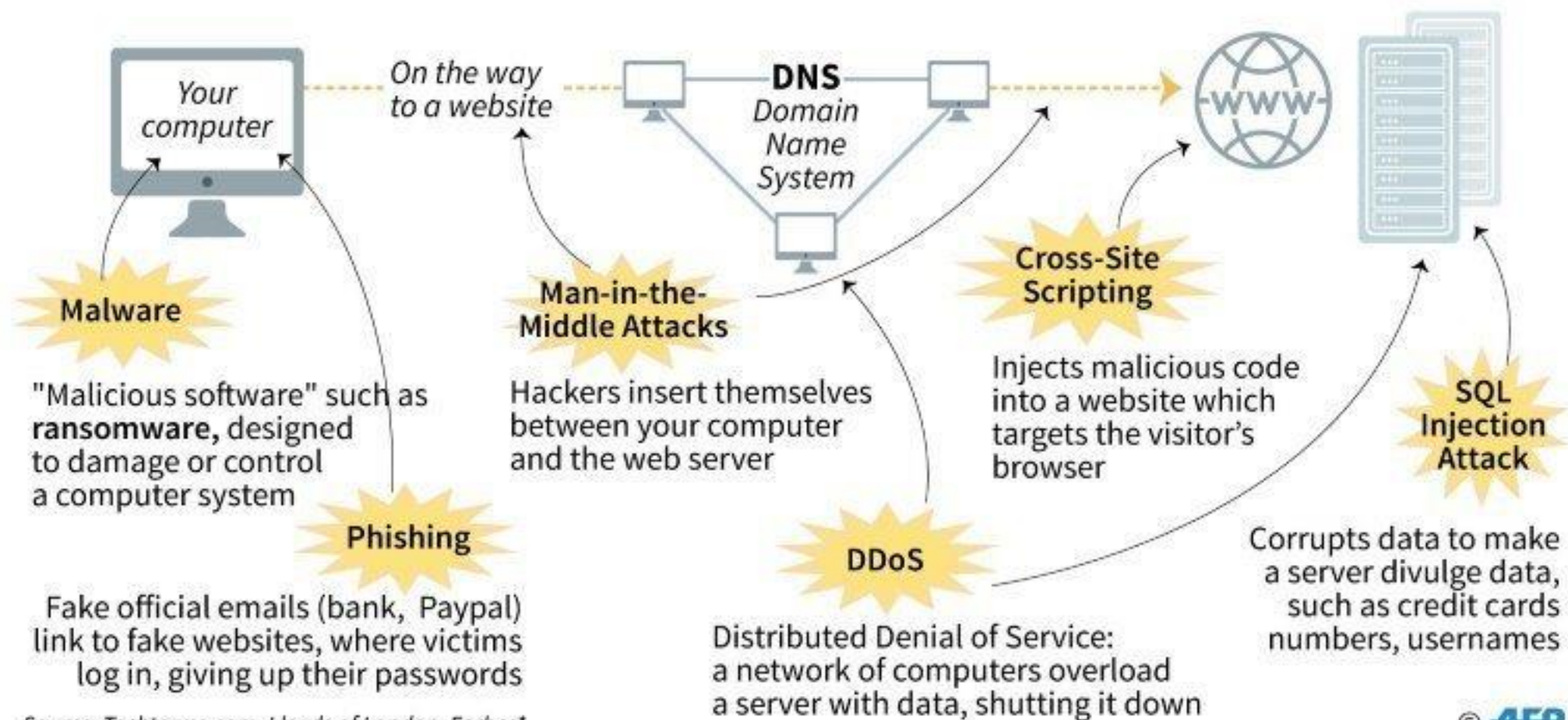
14.7 in percentage. Out of the total 1.27 lakh sanctioned posts of both drivers and assistant drivers in all railway zones across the country, 18,766 were lying vacant as of March 1. PTI

India's rank in the World Cybercrime Index

10 According to a study published in the journal PLoS ONE, Russia topped the list of cybercrime with frauds involving people making advance fee payments being the most common type. PTI

The different types of cyber attacks

Cyber crime worldwide cost \$400 billion in 2015 and is forecast to reach \$2 trillion in 2019*



Source: Techterms.com, Lloyds of London, Forbes*

Types of Cybercrime



Malware

- Ransomware
- Viruses
- Worms
- Spyware



Bots

- DoS (denial of service)
- DDoS (distributed denial of service)
- Credential theft



Social engineering

- Phishing
- Baiting
- Swatting



Physical cyberattacks

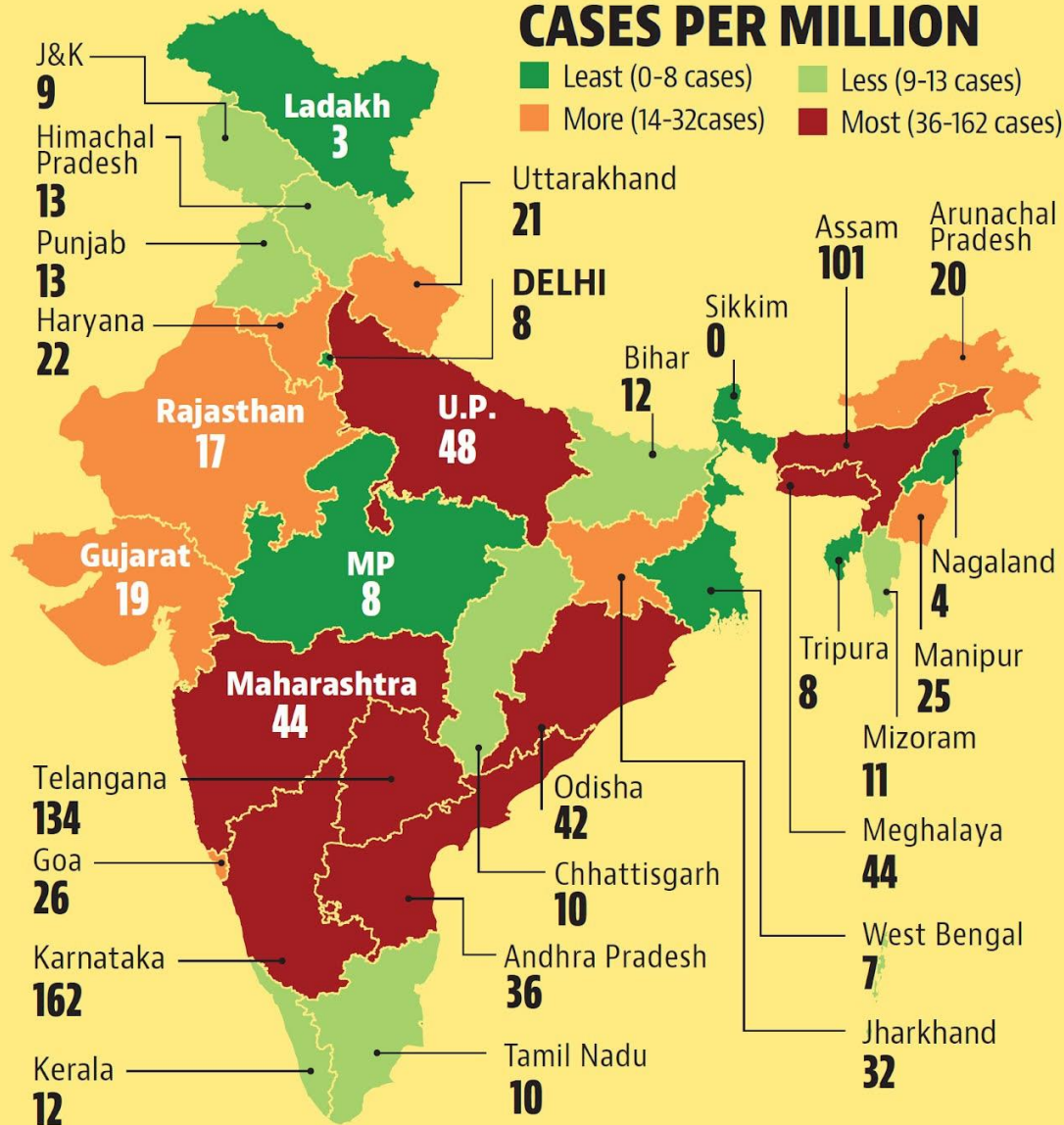
- USB driver with virus
- Attacker pretends to be an employee
- Identity theft

Critical Infrastructure in India: Recent Cyberattacks & Security Incidents



Vulnerable digital space

Number of cases filed last year under sections dealing with cyber crime rose to 50,035 from 44,735 a year before as more people moved to working from home, spending more time with digital tools



RATE OF CRIME

State	Cases filled in 2020	Change from 2019
Uttar Pradesh	11,097	-2.8%
Karnataka	10,741	-10.6
Maharashtra	5,496	10.7
Telangana	5,024	86.7
Assam	3,530	58.2
Odisha	1,931	30.0
Andhra Pradesh	1,899	0.7
Bihar	1,512	44.0
Rajasthan	1,354	-23.2
Gujarat	1,283	63.6
Jharkhand	1,204	10.0
Tamil Nadu	782	103.1
West Bengal	712	35.9
Madhya Pradesh	699	16.1
Haryana	656	16.3
Kerala	426	38.8
Punjab	378	55.6
Chhattisgarh	297	69.7
Uttarakhand	243	143.0
Delhi	168	46.1



U.S. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House in Washington, AFP

Japanese astronaut to be first non-American to set foot on Moon

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

A lucky Japanese astronaut will become the first non-American to set foot on the Moon during one of NASA's upcoming Artemis missions, U.S. President Joe Biden announced on Wednesday.

The offer to Japan — an opportunity many nations have long dreamed of — came as part of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's state visit, and as Washington seeks to strengthen ties with its key Asian ally.

"Two Japanese astronauts will join future American missions, and one will become the first non-American ever to land on the Moon," Mr. Biden said in a press conference with Mr. Kishida. Mr. Kishida hailed the announcement as a "huge achievement" and announced that Japan would in return supply a rover for the programme.

NASA's Artemis programme seeks to return humans to the Moon for the first time in over 50 years, and to build a sustained lunar presence ahead of potential missions to Mars. Between 1969 and 1972, the U.S. Apollo programme saw 12 Americans walk on the Moon.

"America will no longer walk on the Moon alone," NASA chief Bill Nelson said in a video. "Diplomacy is good for discovery. And discovery is good for diplomacy," he added.

The first mission to take astronauts to the lunar surface, Artemis 3, is planned for 2026. China meanwhile has said it seeks to put humans on the Moon by 2030.

Japan's space agency JAXA is "extremely happy" about the announcement, a spokesman said.

Bumpy ride for EVs in Europe as their market share shrinks

Though the European Union will ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035, sales of EVs in the region have taken a hit in recent months, making vehicles emissions-free is essential to the EU meeting its climate commitments

Agence France-Presse
LILLESTRØM

Electric cars are a key part of Europe's green transition plans but the road ahead remains littered with obstacles with 10 years to go before a crucial milestone.

Despite the fact that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned in the European Union as of 2035, sales of plug-in "zero-emission" vehicles have stalled in the region in recent months.

The market share for electric cars has shrunk from 14.6% last year to 12% or less since the start of this year, a drop attributed mainly to Germany's decision to abruptly halt subsidies for electric car purchases on Europe's biggest market at the end of 2023.

Sigrød de Vries, director general of the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), expressed "concern". Fewer than 30% of Europeans say they plan to buy an electric vehicle (EV), according to the ACEA, and more than half refuse to pay more than €35,000 (\$37,750) for a car, a price level offering few EVs.

The "2035 deadline... is just around the corner, especially when you talk production cycles," Ms. de



Electric vehicles accounted for 90% of new car registrations in Norway in the first quarter, REUTERS

Vries told an EV conference last week in Lillestrøm in Norway. "We need to go from 15% (zero-emission cars) to 100% in about just around 10 years," she said.

At the end of 2023, the EVs passed the "tipping point" of 5% — considered the point of mass adoption — in 31 countries around the world, according to the Bloomberg news agency.

But only two-thirds of the EU's 27 member states have surpassed this level.

Cars are Europe's primary mode of transport, and account for 15% of Europe's CO₂ emissions.

Making vehicles emissions-free is therefore essential if the EU wants to meet its climate commit-

ments. Norway, a non-EU member — and also a major oil and gas producer — is a leader in EV adoption.

Led by Tesla, electric vehicles accounted for 90% of new car registrations in Norway in the first quarter thanks to generous tax incentives. The country aims to reach the 100% mark by 2025.

Carmakers like Volkswagen and Volvo have already ended sales of their combustion models in Norway.

See-sawing sales Elsewhere, the industry's electrification is "largely sluggish."

Britain has pushed back by five years its ban on the sale of new combustion cars.

2035, and many see this target as unrealistic to reach in Europe.

But Nissan, one of the first traditional carmakers to roll out a plug-in with its Leaf model, says sales that yo-yo are not a concern.

"It seesaws and it will always be like that," Guillaume Pelletier, Nissan's vice president of electrification and connected services, said.

"There was a really strong start to the wave of electrification in the past two years and now we are starting to normalize the process a bit," he said.

"We see nonetheless a clear upward trend." Volkswagen, Stellantis, and Renault plan to introduce new, less expensive

electric models in the coming months, but they are all so relying on their hybrid models to boost sales.

One of the main hurdles cited by industry experts is the difficulty to roll out the necessary EV infrastructure quickly and broadly.

More than half of the EU's charging stations are found in just two countries: Germany and the Netherlands, according to the ACEA.

Major challenge In Spain for example, where people replace their cars only every 14 years on average, 65% of owners park them in the street, making charging a challenge, said Isabel Gorgoso, head of "new mobility" at energy group Cepea.

"If you think about Norway five years ago, then you have Spain now," she said.

Other obstacles cited are the heaps of the EU regulations for carmakers — up to nine new ones per year — and ever-changing national policies, which could be exacerbated further by rising support for Europe's populist movements, which are generally climate-sceptic.

"With high-stake European elections around the corner, what happens in the next few months could really determine the fate of Europe's vehicle industry," Ms. de Vries said.

Brothers in arms



Oleksandr Revchuk, in foreground, a Ukrainian serviceman who lost his left arm and most of his left leg in multiple mine blasts in 2023, pulls fellow wheelchair-bound veteran Bohdan Tanchyn with his electric wheelchair, in the Recovery Rehabilitation Center, in Myiv. REUTERS

A father comes of age as he accepts his transgender daughter's struggles

Associated Press
SMITHVILLE

Before his transgender daughter was suspended after using the girls' bathroom at her Missouri high school. Before the bullying and the suicide attempts. Before all that, Dusey Farr was — in his own words — "a full-on bigot." By which he meant that he was eager to steer clear of anyone LGBTQ+. Now, though, after everything, he says he would not much care if his 16-year-old daughter told him she was an alien. Because she is alive.

"When it was my child, it just flipped a switch," he said. Mr. Farr, who is suing the Platte County School District on Kansas City's outskirts, said he has found him-

self in an unlikely role: fighting bathroom bans that have proliferated at the State and local levels in recent years. But Mr. Farr is not so unusual, says his attorney, Gillian Wilcox of the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri. "It sometimes takes meeting a person before someone can say, 'Oh, that's a person and they are just being themselves,'" she says.

Looking back, Mr. Farr figures his daughter, the youngest of five, started feeling out of place in her own body when she was just six or seven.

Mr. Farr said he did not have "exposure to what I would consider the outside world" in the conservative Nebraska community where he was raised. "I

had never seen the LGBTQ+ community, and I would still have my closed-minded thoughts." He said things then that he now regrets.

"No parent has a favourite," Mr. Farr says, "but if I had a favourite, it would be my youngest." But when she was 12, she started to steer away from him. It lasted for a few months before she came out to her family. He knows now how hard this was.

His wife, whom he described as less sheltered, was on board immediately. Him, not so much. Given the way I was raised, LGBTQ+ is a sin. And these were things unfortunately that I said to my daughter." They bumped heads and argued, their relationship strained. In desperation,



Dusty Farr with his transgender daughter in Smithville, AP

he turned to God, questioning teachings that he once took at face value that being transgender was an abomination. "Then it hit him. 'She is a girl.'"

"I got peace from God. Like, 'This is how your daughter was born. I don't make mistakes as God. So she was made this way. There is a reason for it.'"

Polish govt begins the long-awaited debate on liberalising abortion laws

Agence France-Presse
WARSAW

Poland's parliament on Thursday will open a long-awaited debate on liberalising abortion laws in the majority Catholic country, with splits in the ruling coalition suggesting an uncertain outcome.

Women's rights were rolled back during the eight-year rule of the previous right-wing Polish government, with the tightening of already strict abortion laws sparking mass rallies nationwide.

The country's 48 million has some of the strictest anti-abortion laws in the European Union, allowing it only if pregnancy results from sexual assault or incest, or if it threatens the life or health of the mother.

Elections last October



Polish Minister for Equality Katarzyna Kotula speaking at the Parliament on the day of the debate on abortion law, AP

yielded a pro-EU government coalition comprising the Civic Coalition of Prime Minister Donald Tusk and the Third Way and Left groupings. Mr. Tusk's party and the Left have pledged to legalise abortion, but the other coalition members are divided.

Bills that would grant more reproductive rights have been stuck in parliament for months.

A six-hour debate is now scheduled to start on Wednesday afternoon on a Bill to legalise abortion until the 12th week of pregnancy, submitted by Mr. Tusk's Civic Coalition, and the other coalition members are reluctant to back

Court allows man to visit museum's 'Ladies Lounge'

Agence France-Presse
SYDNEY

An artist who banned men from seeing her Australian museum exhibit said on Thursday she was "saddened" by a court decision forcing her to admit "persons who do not identify as ladies".

Kiraha Kaechele set up the "Ladies Lounge" at Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), in part as a protest against discrimination and men's only social clubs, which existed for centuries virtually unchallenged.

A male visitor launched a discrimination case last year after being denied entry to the marble-floored lounge, which features work by leading artists and a collection of antiquities.

A court this week agreed that because he had paid the museum's A\$23 (\$23 entry fee) he should be able to access all areas of the museum, including the Ladies Lounge. The court said the museum had violated Tasmania's Anti-Discrimination Act and gave it 28 days to alter national policies, which could be exacerbated further by rising support for Europe's populist movements, which are generally climate-sceptic.

"With high-stake European elections around the corner, what happens in the next few months could really determine the fate of Europe's vehicle industry," Ms. de Vries said.

Ms. Kaechele had described the exhibit as a response to the experience of women being forbidden from entering certain spaces throughout history.

"I am deeply saddened by the court's ruling," Ms. Kaechele said in a statement posted on Instagram.

the legislation in a vote scheduled for Friday. And even if parliament approves the reforms, they would still need to be signed into law by President Andrzej Duda, which the conservative Catholic ally of the ruling PiS party in the Opposition is unlikely to do.

"Bills of similar content have been discussed in parliament many times over the past 20 years, none of them was ever forwarded for further committee proceedings," Krystyna Kacpura, head of the Federation for Women and Family Planning, said.

Mr. Tusk, a former EU chief and the arch-foe of the right-wing PiS party previously in power, had hoped lawmakers representing his coalition would speed the legislation to clear the first hurdle.

said. Beyond angry now, Mr. Farr called not just the school but the ACLU. By now, Mr. Farr's daughter was afraid to go to school.

He says, "Twice she tried to kill herself and was hospitalised".

At semester's end, Mr. Farr and his family were out of the district. Bathroom access remained a source of friction in the new school, so again she switched to lecturing her. So she When she turned 16 last spring, Mr. Farr agreed to let her drop out.

She is in counselling now, taking hormone replacement therapy, leaving her room and watching TV with Mr. Farr. She is interviewing for a job and considering an alternative high school program.

Then, his daughter started using the boys' restroom. One day, a classmate approached and told another student, "Maybe I should rape her," the suit

Japanese astronaut to be first non-American to set foot on Moon

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON

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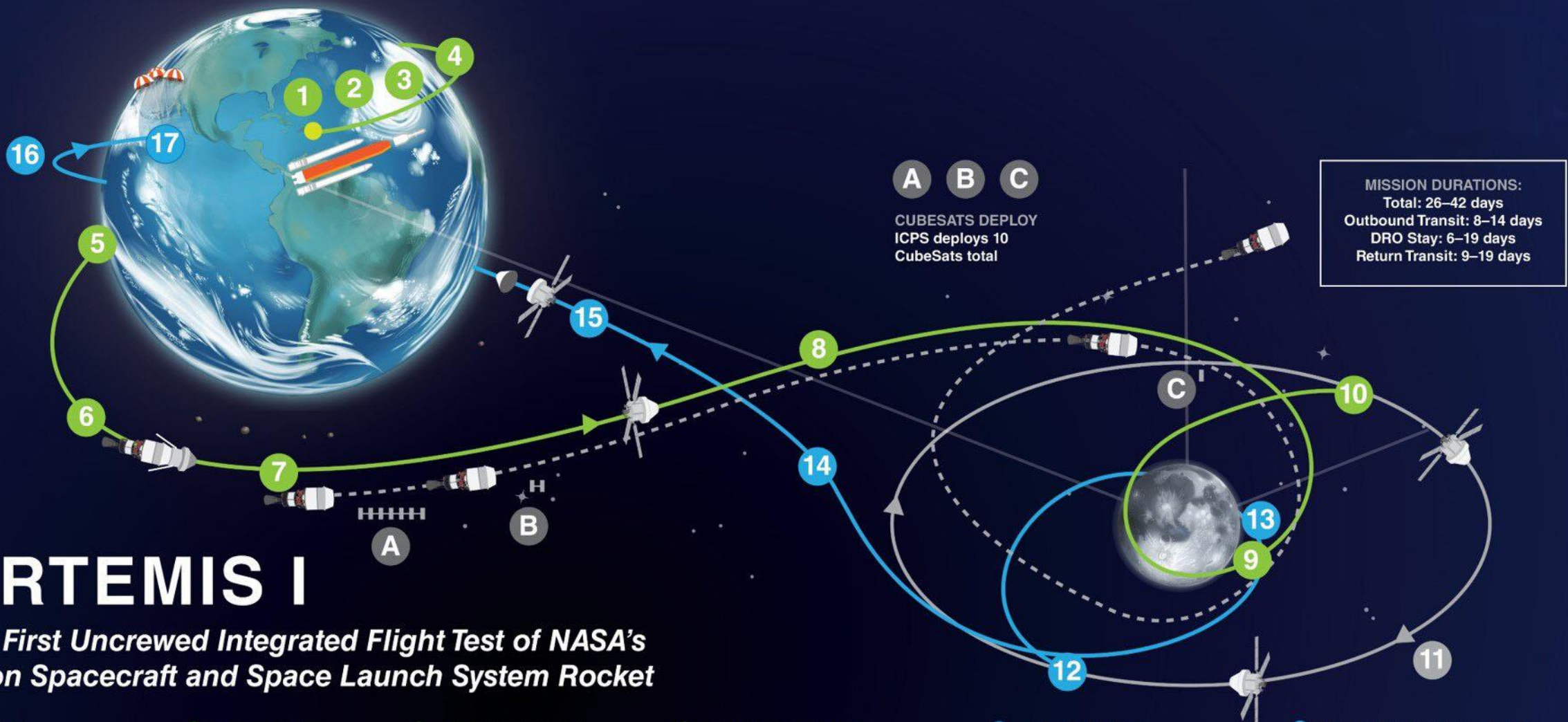
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Japan's space agency JAXA is “extremely happy” about the announcement, a spokesman said.

ARTEMIS I

The First Uncrewed Integrated Flight Test of NASA's Orion Spacecraft and Space Launch System Rocket



A B C

CUBESATS DEPLOY
ICPS deploys 10
CubeSats total

MISSION DURATIONS:
Total: 26–42 days
Outbound Transit: 8–14 days
DRO Stay: 6–19 days
Return Transit: 9–19 days

- 1 LAUNCH**
SLS and Orion lift off from pad 39B at Kennedy Space Center.
- 2 JETTISON ROCKET BOOSTERS, FAIRINGS, AND LAUNCH ABORT SYSTEM**
- 3 CORE STAGE MAIN ENGINE CUT OFF**
With separation.

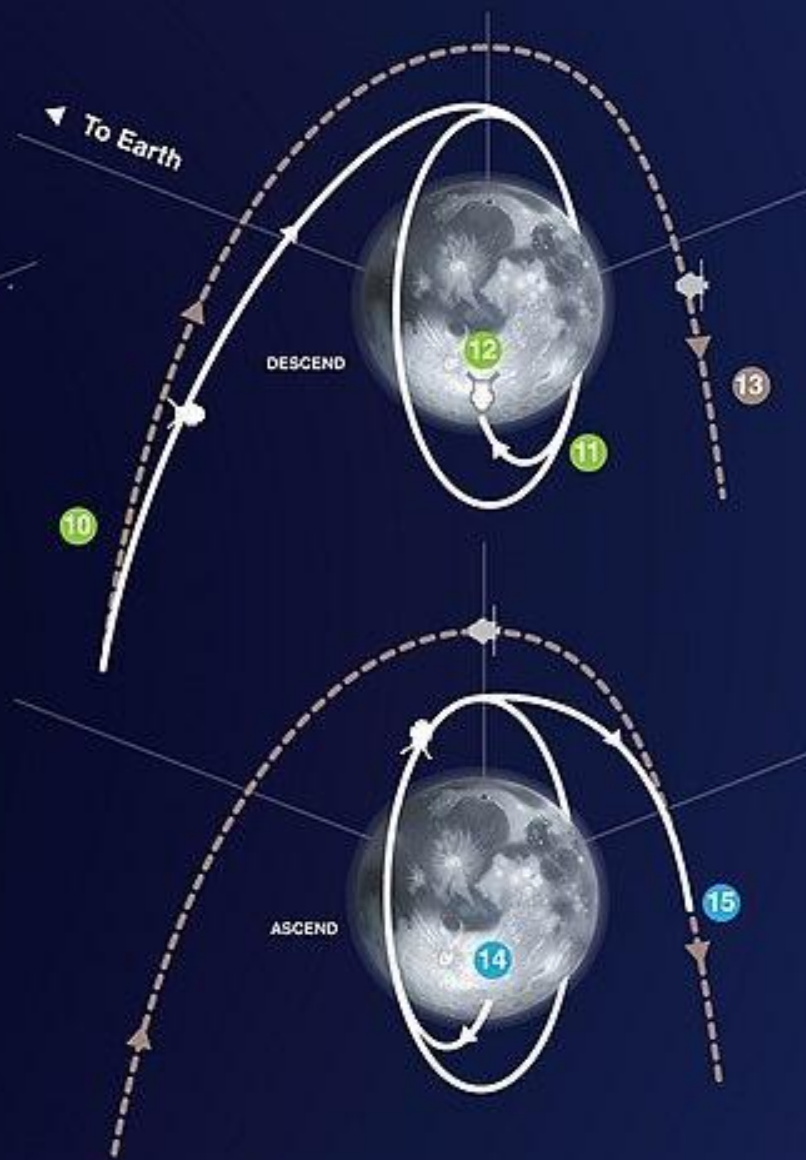
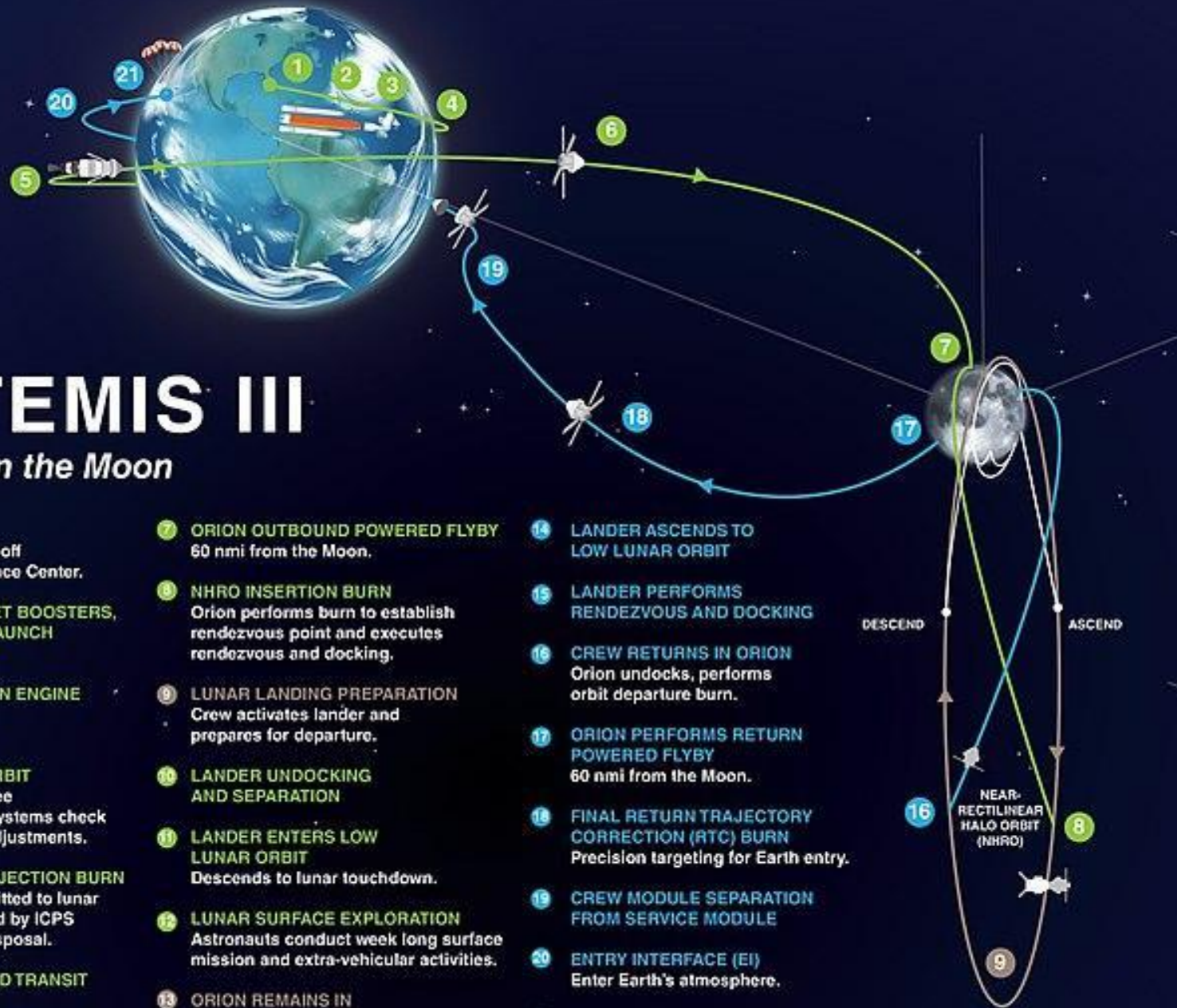
- 4 PERIGEE RAISE MANEUVER**
- 5 EARTH ORBIT**
Systems check with solar panel adjustments.
- 6 TRANS LUNAR INJECTION (TLI) BURN**
Maneuver lasts for approximately 20 minutes.

- 7 INTERIM CRYOGENIC PROPULSION STAGE (ICPS) SEPARATION AND DISPOSAL**
ICPS commits Orion to moon at TLI.
- 8 OUTBOUND TRAJECTORY CORRECTION (OTC) BURNS**
As necessary adjust trajectory for lunar flyby to Distant Retrograde Orbit (DRO).

- 9 OUTBOUND POWERED FLYBY (OPF)**
60 nmi from the Moon; targets DRO insertion.
- 10 LUNAR ORBIT INSERTION**
Enter Distant Retrograde Orbit.
- 11 DISTANT RETROGRADE ORBIT**
Perform half or one and a half revolutions in the orbit period 38,000 nmi from the surface of the Moon.

- 12 DRO DEPARTURE**
Leave DRO and start return to Earth.
- 13 RETURN POWERED FLYBY (RPF)**
RPF burn prep and return coast to Earth initiated.
- 14 RETURN TRANSIT**
Return Trajectory Correction (RTC) burns as necessary to aim for Earth's atmosphere.

- 15 CREW MODULE SEPARATION FROM SERVICE MODULE**
- 16 ENTRY INTERFACE (EI)**
Enter Earth's atmosphere.
- 17 SPLASHDOWN**
Pacific Ocean landing within view of the U.S. Navy recovery ship.



ARTEMIS III

Landing on the Moon

- 1 LAUNCH**
SLS and Orion lift off from Kennedy Space Center.
- 2 JETTISON ROCKET BOOSTERS, FAIRINGS, AND LAUNCH ABORT SYSTEM**
- 3 CORE STAGE MAIN ENGINE CUT OFF**
With separation.
- 4 ENTER EARTH ORBIT**
Perform the perigee raise maneuver. Systems check and solar panel adjustments.
- 5 TRANS LUNAR INJECTION BURN**
Astronauts committed to lunar trajectory, followed by ICPS separation and disposal.
- 6 ORION OUTBOUND TRANSIT TO MOON**
Requires several outbound trajectory burns.
- 7 ORION OUTBOUND POWERED FLYBY**
60 nmi from the Moon.
- 8 NHRO INSERTION BURN**
Orion performs burn to establish rendezvous point and executes rendezvous and docking.
- 9 LUNAR LANDING PREPARATION**
Crew activates lander and prepares for departure.
- 10 LANDER UNDOCKING AND SEPARATION**
- 11 LANDER ENTERS LOW LUNAR ORBIT**
Descends to lunar touchdown.
- 12 LUNAR SURFACE EXPLORATION**
Astronauts conduct week long surface mission and extra-vehicular activities.
- 13 ORION REMAINS IN NHRO ORBIT**
During lunar surface mission.
- 14 LANDER ASCENDS TO LOW LUNAR ORBIT**
- 15 LANDER PERFORMS RENDEZVOUS AND DOCKING**
- 16 CREW RETURNS IN ORION**
Orion undocks, performs orbit departure burn.
- 17 ORION PERFORMS RETURN POWERED FLYBY**
60 nmi from the Moon.
- 18 FINAL RETURN TRAJECTORY CORRECTION (RTC) BURN**
Precision targeting for Earth entry.
- 19 CREW MODULE SEPARATION FROM SERVICE MODULE**
- 20 ENTRY INTERFACE (EI)**
Enter Earth's atmosphere.
- 21 SPLASHDOWN**
Ship recovers astronauts and capsule.

Space exploration in 2024

Major planned missions

Schematic diagram, not to scale



Artemis 2/SLS NASA

NASA's first lunar flyby mission with crew aboard SLS (Space Launch Systems) and Orion spacecraft, before the planned return of humans on the Moon in 2025 (Artemis 3)



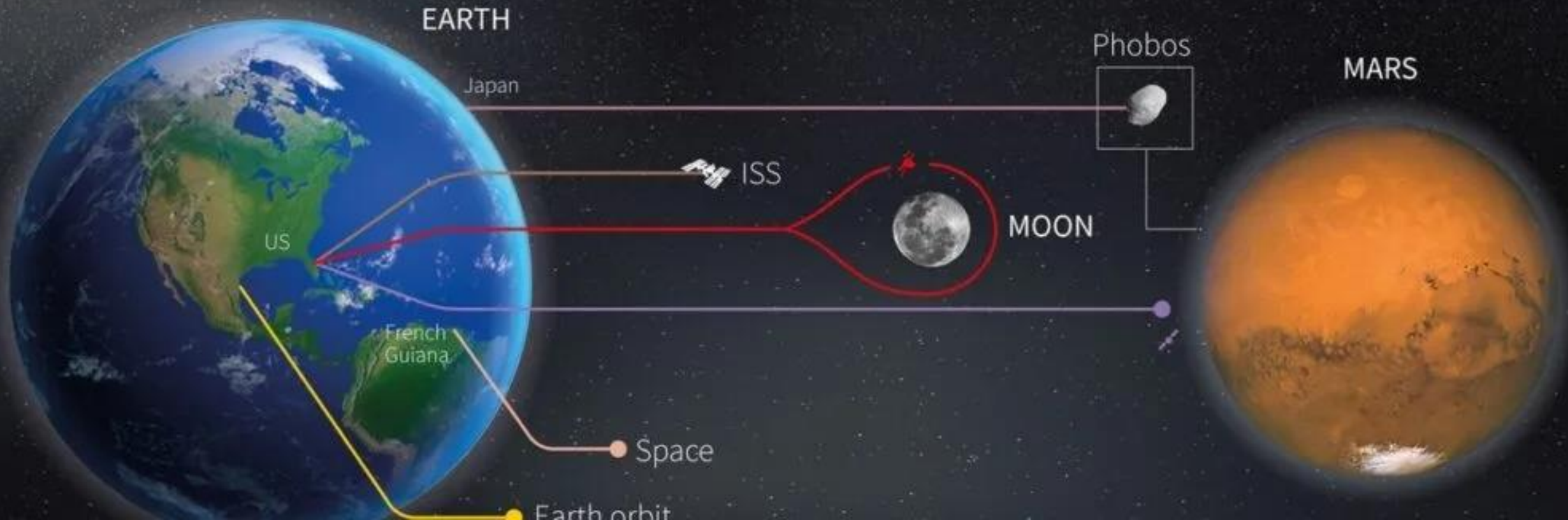
Ariane 6 ESA

Inaugural flight which, with Vega-C launcher, will enable Europe to regain autonomous access to space



Starship SpaceX/NASA

Orbital test flight



Major missions to the Moon

Country	Mission
 USSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Luna 1, Luna 2, Luna 3.◆ Luna 2 was the first spacecraft to impact the Moon's surface.
 USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Lunar Orbiter 1◆ Apollo 11: First humans to land on the Moon.◆ Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO)
 Japan	◆ Hiten
 China	◆ Chang'e 1
 India	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Chandrayaan-1◆ Chandrayaan-2



PM: Terror spreads in weak govts, Modi gov't enters homes of terrorists & kills

AVANEESH MISHRA
DEHRA DUN, APRIL 11

DESCRIBING PAST Congress-led government as "weak and unstable" which failed to check terrorism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Thursday that "Modi's strong government" was "killing terrorists after entering their homes (gauravkardiyon ko ghar me ghus kar mara jata hai)". He also said that because of his strong government, the Trianga (Tricolour) was now a guarantee of safety even in war zones.



PM Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh CM Pushkar Singh Dhami in Rishikesh on Thursday. ANI

Addressing a BJP rally in Rishikesh in Uttarakhand which will vote in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections on April 15, Modi attacked the Congress saying the "Delhi royal family" — he was referring to the Gandhi family — comes first for leaders of the party, followed by their own families. "This is the Congress tradition. But for Modi, you and all of India are my family," he told the crowd.

"Whenever we had a weak government in this country, our enemies capitalised on it. Whenever we had a weak government, our enemies capitalised on it."

THE WORLD

O J SIMPSON DIES AT 76 AFTER BATTLE WITH CANCER
TRUDEAU RAKES UP NIJJAR ISSUE AT HEARING ON POLLS

EXPRESS NETWORK

6 STUDENTS KILLED AS SCHOOL BUSES OVERTURN, POLICE SAY DRIVER DRUNK



'EID MUBARAK EVERYONE' Actor Shah Rukh Khan greets fans gathered outside his residence on the occasion of Eid, in Mumbai on Thursday. IPI

As Gandhis stall on Amethi, Raebareli, voters warn: 'Time gone when you could wave, win'

BJP's newly built offices buzz, Congress struggling to keep up momentum

MANOJ CG
AMETHI, RAEBARELI, APRIL 11

IT IS A Sunday afternoon, sitting with two colleagues and scrolling through his social media feed, Amethi district Congress president Pradeep Singh says he is confident Rahul Gandhi will again contest from the seat. And, five years after he lost the family seat to the BJP's Smriti Irani, Singh says, "He will win."

Barring the three, the district Congress office is more like a re-fashioned shop space — at Gariganj in Amethi is empty. There is a larger central Congress office next to it, but it is deserted, just over a kilometre before Amethi votes in the fifth



BJP has built new offices in Amethi (above), Raebareli, Manoj CG

phase, May 20. Singh suddenly stops his social media scrolling as he changes the channel. Singh heartily points out that the candidate Singhal mistook for the Congress nominee in Rajasthan. "Look at the

VOTE SHARE (in %)

Raebareli (2019)	
Sonia Gandhi (Cong)	55.8
Dinesh Pratap Singh (BJP)	38.36
Amethi (2019)	
Smriti Irani (BJP)	49.71
Rahul Gandhi (Cong)	43.86

(the Bharat Adivasi Party's Rajkumar Rao).

The two reluctantly return to the Amethi campaign. To questions as to why Rahul has not been declared the candidate yet, Singh says the announcement will come as soon as voting in Wayanad — the constituency in Kerala from where the Congress leader won in 2019 — is over.

Delhi excise policy: In Tihar in ED case, Kavitha now held by CBI

BRS leader K Kavitha was arrested on March 15

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

BHARAT RASHTRIA Samithi leader K Kavitha, lodged in Tihar jail following her arrest March 15 by the Enforcement Directorate probing allegations of money laundering in the Delhi excise policy case, was arrested by the CBI Thursday which is also investigating the case.

The CBI is likely to produce Kavitha before a Delhi court Friday to seek her remand. If that's granted, she will be moved to the lock-up at the CBI headquarters where officers will question her.

The CBI arrested her after obtaining permission from a special court. The CBI had questioned Kavitha inside the prison on Saturday after obtaining permission from the special court. She was questioned in connection with WhatsApp chats recovered from the phone of Dutchbhai Gowaria (a chartered accountant).

BUSINESS AS USUAL BY UNNY



And protesters repeated the slogan during the protest.

JUNE 15-16: INDIA INVITED

Ukraine: Swiss plan June meet, Russia presence 'sooner or later'

Maybe not on Day One but Russia has to be there, says Swiss Foreign Minister

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

ALMOST THREE months after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked Switzerland to do so, the Swiss government Thursday announced it proposes to host a conference, at the highest level, in the room of peace.

The proposed dates are June 15 and 16 at the Birgemastel hotel above Lake Lucerne in central Switzerland. This is aimed to ensure maximum attendance — the G7 leaders' summit will be held on June 13-15 in Borgo Ignazio in Aputia, Italy.

India has also been invited for the peace conference. The first round took place when Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis visited New Delhi on February 5 to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and sounded out Delhi on the conference and India's participation.

This was followed up by Zelenskyy's phone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March and a visit by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba to convey an invitation to India to attend the conference.

PROTEST AT INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION

UK attack: Of 15 lookout notices, NIA withdraws 3 over 'mistaken identity'

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

MONTHS AFTER serving 10-15 suspects, publicly releasing their photographs, and issuing lookout notices for them for alleged involvement in the violence at the Indian High Commission in London during a protest on March 15 last year, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has now determined that at least three persons from Punjab were wrongly identified.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had issued Look Out Circulars (LOCs) against 15 people, who were identified from five videos of the violence. These videos were procured by an NIA team during its visit to the High Commission in May last year to investigate the incident and a suspected terror link involving Pakistan's ISI. In the videos, people can be seen gathering outside the Indian High Commission in London and subsequently indulging in violence. Upon the team's return to India, the NIA shared the videos

NEW DELHI at the table

THE SWISS want India to be part of the peace process and Delhi will have to take a quick call on its participation at the highest level immediately after the June 4 poll results. India would want to be in the room, irrespective of the level of participation. The war and its course in the next two months will also determine India's next step.

The Swiss government said, "During President Zelenskyy's visit to Bern on January 15, 2024, Switzerland and Ukraine discussed the next steps towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. At Ukraine's request, Switzerland agreed to host a high-level conference... June 2024. Switzerland will probably offer an opportunity to discuss different approaches to peace in Ukraine."

The statement added: "The summit aims to create a common understanding of the framework conducive to this goal and a concrete roadmap for implementation."

UK CYBER SECURITY

CHIEF OF NEW ENVOY TO INDIA

GOVT & POLITICS

PHOTOGRAPHY

UK CYBER SECURITY

PHOTOGRAPHY

and photographs of 45 suspects in public domain, along with an appeal to the public to report any information. Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the immigration department also helped with the identification. The latter is learnt to have been in May last year to investigate the incident and a suspected terror link involving Pakistan's ISI. In the videos, people can be seen gathering outside the Indian High Commission in London and subsequently indulging in violence. Upon the team's return to India, the NIA shared the videos

IPL rivalry gets deadly, behind fan's killing: 'Rohit out, Mumbai will lose'

PHOTOGRAPHY

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PHOTOGRAPHY

'Pegasus-like spyware': Apple warns users in India, 91 more countries

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

APPLE HAS sent a fresh round of threat notifications to some of its users in India, along with 91 other countries, warning that their iPhones may have been potentially attacked by "necessary spyware" like the Israeli NSO Group's controversial Pegasus malware.

Apple has not attributed the attacks to any stakeholder, and in fact, has also diluted the language of the notification. In the past, the company would alert users that "state sponsored" attackers may be targeting their iPhones. But, according to a change in its policy, the company has now termed these attacks as "necessary spyware" instead of "state-sponsored".

similar notification to Opposition leaders across parties — from Congress's Shaahi Tharoor to AAP's Raghav Chadha to TMC's Mahua Moitra — warning of a "potential state-sponsored spyware attack" on their iPhones.

After pressure from the government, the company later clarified that it "does not attribute the threat notifications to any specific state-sponsored attacker".

On Thursday, the threat notification emails were sent at about 12:30 am IST to impacted users in India. The company declines to specify details on how many people received the notification. The email mentions that NSO Group's Pegasus spyware, saying tools like those are being used to target people on an ongoing basis globally.

Last October, it had sent a

In seat facing Lanka, highlight is OPS fight, not Katchatheevu

Expelled from AIADMK and now in BJP camp, ex-CM fights from relatively new territory, faces lingering anger

ARUN JANARDHANAM
RAMANATHAPURAM (TN), APRIL 11

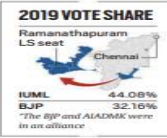
LOCATED DEEP in southern Tamil Nadu, a state where it is just beginning to make an impact, Ramanaithapuram has long been on the BJP's radar.

Under the IPU government at the centre, it waged a battle against the Sethusamudram project to create a shipping route between India and Sri Lanka, whose one end would have touched Ramanathapuram, claiming it would destroy the bridge Lord Hanu's army made as per the Ramayana.

Last year, a heaz began that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose government has been

crowd!" he exclaims. "He (the candidate) is on a camel."

His colleague Sarvesh Kumar Singh heartily points out that the candidate Singhal mistook for the Congress nominee belongs to "some Adivasi party"



Once the Lok Sabha poll battle began, the BJP rolled out yet another slogan — accusing the India Gandhi-led Congress government of giving away Katchatheevu island located 33 km off the

Panneerselvam campaigns in Desivpattinam village near Ramanathapuram, Arun Janardhanam

making extensive outreach to Tamils, would contest from Ramanathapuram.

IPL rivalry gets deadly, behind fan's killing: 'Rohit out, Mumbai will lose'

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

MIHAR VASAVDA
HANNAMANT WADI (KOLHAPUR), APRIL 11

A WOMAN'S wall pierces the narrow lane at the end of which sit two houses separated only by a thin wall. The front door of one shack is bolted. Inside the adjacent house, a young man — head shaved, eyes moist and legs folded — sits on the floor in a slumped posture. In a room, village elders console his weeping mother.

It's Pashwa, the first day of the New Year, but inside their modest home, and on the streets and squares, they are still mourning the passing of Bandopant Tibble. The 30-year-old died on March 30, three days after he was seriously injured in a fight with another fan.

In a much-debated transfer, Bandopant had moved to Mumbai from Gujrat Titans before the current season. This came within days of

emotionally in cricket. When will we treat sport as sport? It's a question many have been asking lately.

Since the start of this IPL season, social media has witnessed toxic battles between fans of various teams. In the recent past, it was the Mumbai Indians' fans who were the target of abuse. Rivalry between fans of different teams always existed, but animosity between those idolising individual cricketers is a recent phenomenon.



Bandopant Tibble (left) died on March 30. His son Vijay (above, second from right) sits with village elders at their home in Hannamantwadi village, on the outskirts of Kolhapur. Mihir Vasavda

the Rohit-led Indian team finishing runners-up in the 2023 ICC T20 World Cup. Fans were seen during his first home game at Wankhede Stadium.

It was the face of a farmer who was killed for simply saying "Mumbai Indians will lose". The tragedy has stunned Hannamantwadi, a village of a few thousand on the outskirts of Kolhapur — it's a modest village with people who are farmers with meagre earnings. It's an uncomplicated, peaceful life, says Sarangsinh Bhak, the sarpanch of the village. The village is in the back of beyond and it's an ordeal just to

get there — half a day from Mumbai or Pune, the two nearest major cities, to get to Kolhapur followed by another long journey to Hannamantwadi.

On the face of it, Hannamantwadi — or Kolhapur in general — doesn't have skin in the IPL game. There isn't any team from the region, nor has a player from here made it that far.

Yet, such is the IPL's lure that it has even gone hooked. Just last week, a fruit seller outside Shahu Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Rs 1 crore in a fantasy game.

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MYNABAR CRISIS
India moves staff out of consulate in Sittwe
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R. CHIDAMBARAM'S VIEW
'BJP's goal is to have only one government'
NEWS > PAGE 6



CONSTITUENCY WATCH
Land conflicts, forest rights go hand-in-hand
NEWS > PAGE 7



ASER 2023
Data for better education, a brighter future
Outcomes must be used for corrective action
EDITORIAL > PAGE 2



SECOND MUM
Kuldeep and McGurk star for Delhi Capitals
SPORTS > PAGE 14

INSIDE

Avenge my 2019 LS election defeat: Kharge

KALABURGI
All India Congress Committee president M. Mallikarjun Kharge has called upon the people to "avenge" his defeat in the last Lok Sabha polls by electing Congress candidates in this polls. > PAGE 7

Tribunal upholds ban on Shabir Shah's outfit

NEW DELHI
A tribunal has upheld the Union government's decision to ban the Jamnu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, founded by separatist leader Shabir Ahmad Shah, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. > PAGE 7

Centre planning President's Rule in Delhi: AAP

NEW DELHI
The AAP on Friday alleged that the Modi government was trying to impose President's Rule in Delhi. The party had received several indications to this effect, it said. > PAGE 2

'BJP has an edge, but a tough fight is possible'

Satisfaction levels with the NDA government remain significant but numbers have come down since the 2019 pre-poll survey; while 48% respondents back Modi, 27% back Rahul Gandhi for PM

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Three weeks before the 2024 general election was to commence, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) enjoyed a comfortable 12 percentage point lead over the rival alliance, INDIA, according to the CSDS-Lokniti pre-poll survey. The Narendra Modi factor continues to play a major role in providing the NDA with its advantage. However, livelihood-related issues are emerging as a major concern in this election. Dissatisfaction over unemployment and inflation among sections of the society indicates that a tough fight is ahead.

A matter of choice

Excerpts from CSDS-Lokniti survey show the reasons for electing or rejecting the NDA government for a third term

Reason for re-electing the incumbent government	%	Reason for not electing the incumbent government	%
Good work	42	Increasing unemployment	32
Welfare schemes	18	Price rise/inflation	30
Modi is a great leader	10	Falling/declining income	11
The most admired work of Modi's government	%	The least popular initiative of Modi's government	%
Ayodhya temple	23	Price rise/inflation	24
Related to employment	9	Increasing unemployment	24
Poverty alleviation	8	Poverty	10
		Loyal bases: BJP supporters swear by the welfare schemes undertaken by the government. > PAGE 2	

'THE HINDU CSDS-LOKNITI Pre-poll Survey 2024'

of satisfaction was markedly lower among the south-eastern regions compared to the north and the west. **Three factors** The decrease in satisfaction stems from inflation, increasing unemployment and the government's response to the top three reasons chosen by respondents as reasons for not giving the government another chance. As opposed to this, "good work" and welfare schemes and "Modi is a great leader" were the top three reasons given for giving the NDA another chance. Overall, the survey indicated that the BJP is head-

ing into the 2024 elections with a healthy lead, although questions about its performance have left the field open. Close to 48% of voters continue to back Mr. Modi as their choice for Prime Minister in the pre-poll survey, with 27% choosing Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. Close to 56% of respondents trust "a lot" or "somewhat" Mr. Modi's guarantee, with 49% saying the same about Mr. Gandhi's guarantee. Notably, while Mr. Modi's guarantee was trusted more by the richer households, the middle-class placed similar trust in both. **MORE REPORTS ON > PAGES 6 & 5**

NIA arrests Bengaluru cafe bomber and chief conspirator in Bengal

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj BENGALURU

In a significant breakthrough, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested the alleged bomber and chief conspirator in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast case from a hotel near Kolkata, West Bengal, early on Friday. The arrested persons were identified as Abdul Matheren Ahmed Tashba, 30, the alleged chief conspirator in the case, and Musavvir Hussain Shaazib, 30, the alleged bomber.



In the net: An accused in the Bengaluru cafe blast case being brought to a court by NIA officials, in Kolkata. > PAGE 7

Trinamool, BJP spar over arrests

KOLKATA
The arrest of two accused in the Bengaluru cafe blast case from West Bengal on Friday triggered a war of words between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP in the State ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. > PAGE 7

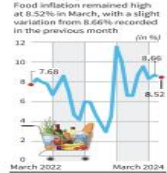
blast in Mangaluru in 2022. "The kingpins of this module that had been active for four years now have now been arrested," a senior official said. "The NIA said they were traced to their hideout to a lodge near Kolkata, where they were staying under false identities. After the NIA sought their help, the West Bengal police apprehended the accused. The NIA said the month-long manhunt for the duo that ended on Friday morning was a coordinated effort of several Central agencies along with police forces of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal among other States. With these arrests, the total number of arrests in the case has gone up to four.

Inflation in India slowed, yet no relief on food bills

Vikas Dhoot NEW DELHI

India's retail inflation moderated to a 10-month low of 4.85% in March from 5.1% in February but food inflation remained sticky at 8.52%, little changed from the 8.66% recorded in the previous month as price rise accelerated in cereals and meat, while vegetables, pulses, spices, and eggs remained in double-digit inflation. While inflation for urban consumers cooled significantly from 4.8% in February to 4.14% in March, rural consumers had a harder time as they experienced a slightly higher inflation of 5.45% in March compared with 5.34% in the previous month.

Still sticky



This trend was visible in the extent of food price rise as well, as it accelerated from 8.3% in February to 8.6% for rural India, while the food inflation for urban consumers dropped from 9.2% in February to 8.35% last month. On a month-on-month basis, there was no change in the Consumer Price Index but the food price index inched up about 0.2% and economists reckoned that the ongoing heatwave could spike food inflation in coming months. Even as crude oil prices are firming

June quarter is, however, expected to see an average inflation of 4.9%, as per the RBI.

Within the food basket, vegetables inflation cooled marginally from the seven-month high of 30.25% in February to 28.3% last month. A similar easing was recorded in pulses (up 17.7% in March from 18.5% in February), eggs (up 10.33% from 10.7%), and sugar (up 7.25% compared with 7.5% in February). "Food prices continue to be under pressure from cereals, vegetables, pulses, and pulses seeing high inflation and the present heatwave poses an upside risk," said the RBI's chief economist Madan Sabnavis.

Industrial output grew 5.7% in Feb.

NEW DELHI
India's year-on-year industrial output growth rebounded to a four-month high of 5.7% in February, from January's upgraded 4.4% pace, led by an 8% growth in mining and a 7.5% surge in electricity generation, even as consumption remained uneven with non-durables output contracting again while durables grew in the double digits. > PAGE 11

Summer sale



Scorching earth: Earth then pots to cool water being soaked to dry in the scorching midday sun at a workshop on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. Temperatures have been hovering around 43 degrees Celsius for a week now, even as the worst of summer is a long way off. > PAGE 10A

Time is 'not far' for J&K to get Statehood: Modi

Peerzada Ashiq JAMMU
Prime Minister Narendra Modi focussed on the promise to restore Statehood and hold Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir at a rally for the Lok Sabha election on Friday, though he did not offer any concrete timeline for the same. Instead, the Prime Minister extolled the positive impact of the abrogation of Article 370 and targeted the Opposition INDIA bloc's leaders for their "Mughal mindset". "The time is not far for the Assembly elections and restoring of Statehood to J&K. People will soon have their Ministers and legislators. It's through them that people will fulfil their dreams and dreams and walk on a new path of development," he said at a rally in the Udhampur-Doda constituency in Jammu. "This is the first time after August 2019 that he has referred to the restoration of Statehood. His statement comes at a time

when Jammu voters, especially in Hindu-majority areas, have started growing resentful of the downgrading of J&K into a Union Territory and the failure to

hold Assembly elections. Congress leader Chaudhary Lal Singh has already started tapping into this growing anger in a bid to defeat his BJP's Jitendra Singh. In an indirect reference to the viral video of Kash-triya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav eating meat, Mr. Modi said: "I don't have a problem with whatever one eats, but I oppose those who instigate beliefs. They eat non-vegetarian food during Navratri and tease people. By show-

U.S. must play 'constructive role' in West Asia: China

Agence France-Presse BEIJING

China urged the United States to play "a constructive role" in the West Asia on Friday after its top diplomat Wang Yi spoke with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken over the phone. Mr. Blinken asked Beijing to use its influence to dissuade Iran from striking Israel, officials said. Concerns of retaliation by Iran have grown after an Israeli strike on April 1.

FULL REPORT > PAGE 12

China urged the United States to play "a constructive role" in the West Asia on Friday after its top diplomat Wang Yi spoke with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken over the phone. Mr. Blinken asked Beijing to use its influence to dissuade Iran from striking Israel, officials said. Concerns of retaliation by Iran have grown after an Israeli strike on April 1.

IN BRIEF



Vodafone Idea announces FPO of ₹18,000 crore

The Board of Directors of Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL), at its meeting held on April 11 approved a further public offering (FPO) of equity shares, aggregating up to ₹18,000 crore. "The Capital Raising Committee in its meeting held today, i.e., April 12, 2024, approved the price band for the FPO issuance," the company said. The price band is fixed at ₹10-11 per share with face value of ₹10 each. Applicants can bid for 1,298 shares in one lot or in multiples of 1,298 shares thereafter.

TAI seeks release of 'pending' subsidies from Tea Board

The Tea Association of India (TAI) on Friday sought the release of "pending subsidies" from the Tea Board to carry out developmental activities undertaken at various gardens. The industry body said in a statement that gardens under its fold had undertaken substantial developmental activities under the scheme, and a large portion of the amount due to the estates on account of this "still remains unreleased by the Tea Board."

Godfrey Phillips to exit from retail business 24Seven

Cigarette maker Godfrey Phillips India on Friday said it has decided to exit from its loss-making retail business 24Seven. The board of the company, in a meeting held on Friday, "decided to exit from carrying out the business operations of its Retail Business Division," according to a regulatory update. Godfrey Phillips India was operating 150 stores/kiosks of 24Seven as of December 2023. The exit will be subject to completion of necessary formalities, it said.

TRAI moots allowing only Indian entities in 'regulatory sandboxes'

Press Trust of India

Only Indian nationals or entities should be eligible to participate in telecom regulatory sandboxes that can provide real-time but regulated access to network and customer resources during product or technology tests, TRAI recommended on Friday.

The Telecom Regulations Act, 2023, has introduced the provision of setting up multiple regulatory sandboxes. The regulatory sandboxes (RS) will allow the testing of new products, services, processes, and business models in a live testing environment on a limited set of users for a specified period of time after obtaining specified regulatory approvals.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommended that the Department of Telecom shall put in place an end-to-end digital process to handle RS applications and all related activities including intimations, approvals, sharing of information, monitoring, etc.

"Only Indian nationals or entities will be eligible," TRAI said in its recommendation on "Regulatory Sandboxes for Innovative Technologies, Services, Use Cases, and Business Models through the Regulatory Sandbox in Digital Communication Sector."

TRAI has mooted a non-discriminatory company size of ₹10,000 for the applications. During the testing period, applicants will need to demonstrate ways to prioritise the protection of consumer interests.

Industrial output grew 5.7% in Feb.; production levels at 3-month low

Index of Industrial Production points to year-on-year output hitting a four-month high, led by an 8% growth in mining activity and a 7.5% surge in electricity generation; non-durables' output shrank again while durables grew by double digits

Vikas Dhoot

NEW DELHI

India's year-on-year industrial output rebounded to a four-month high of 5.7% in February, from January's 4.3%, upgraded 4.3% pace, led by an 8% growth in mining and a 7.5% surge in electricity generation, even as consumption remained uneven with non-durables' output contracting again while durables grew in the double digits.

However, the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) slid to a three-month low

Uneven consumption

IIP data shows consumption remains uneven; non-durables' output contracted while durables saw double-digit growth

The IIP slid to a three-month low of 147.2, with output dipping 4.1% from January. Sequential contractions were recorded in manufacturing, mining and elec-



Consumer durables output surged the most YoY, at 12.3%

tricity, as well as the six use-based classifications of factory output.

Year-on-year manufacturing growth picked up

slightly to 5%, from January's 3.6%, but base effects skewed the trends in four of the six use-based classifications. Consumer durables output surged the most at 12.3% aided by a 4.1% contraction in February 2023 while non-durables shrank 3.8%, impacted by the year-earlier period's 12.5% increase.

Capital goods output grew just 1.2%, following an 1% rise in February 2023. Primary goods and infrastructure/construction goods, by contrast rose 5.9% and 8.8%, respectively, on top of healthy

upticks last year. However the two segments posted output lower than January, with primary goods at a three-month low.

"The IIP growth is impressive although not broad-based," remarked Bank of Baroda chief economist Madan Sabnavis, adding that consumer goods were still to recover while infrastructure-linked industries had done better.

Despite positive base effects from March 2023, ICRA's Aditi Nayyar noted that IIP growth was likely to have eased to a range of 4.5%-5.5% last month.

TCS Q4 net rises 9% as margins improve, proposes ₹28 dividend

The Hindu Bureau

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) reported fourth-quarter net profit grew 9.1% year-on-year to ₹12,434 crore on better margins and performance.

Revenue increased 3.5% to ₹61,237 crore. Operating margin at 26% saw an expansion of 150 basis points (bps) while net margin climbed 6.8% to 20.3%, the company said. The growth was led by India (+37.9%), UK (+6.2%), and Manufacturing (+9.7%). The board proposed a final dividend of

FATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

firm plans to hire about 40,000 freshers in FY25. "We are very pleased to close Q4 and FY24 on a strong note with the highest-ever order book and a 26% operating margin, validating the robustness of business model," said CEO and MD K. Krihivasan.

He added North America and Europe 'de-growth' 2.3% and 2% respectively reflecting uncertainties in demand. "In FY 2024, our disciplined approach to operations has helped us expand our industry-leading margins," CFO Samir Sekaria said.

₹28 per share. For the full year, net profit rose 10.5% to ₹46,588 crore while revenue climbed 6.8% to ₹2,40,893 crore. TCS announced a pay rise for its more than six lakh staff in the range of 4.5% to 7%. "Top performers secured a double-digit rise. The

Moody's Analytics says India GDP to grow at 6.1% in 2024

Expects India to exceed several years' trend

Moody's Analytics projected India's economy to expand 6.1% in 2024, lower than the 7% growth in 2023.

It said output in India remains 4% below than it would have been without the COVID-19 pandemic impact. In its report titled 'APAC Outlook: Listening Through the Noise', Moody's Analytics said looking

With regard to inflation, Moody's unit said the outlook for China and India is more uncertain

at GDP relative to its trajectory prior to the pandemic showed India and South-east Asia have seen some of the largest output losses worldwide and are only beginning to recover. With regard to inflation, it said the outlook for China and India is more uncertain.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

Index	% Change
Sensex	76,245
Nifty 50	22,262
BSE Mid Cap	95,920
BSE Small Cap	1,487

NIFTY 50

Stock	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	2,600.00	-1.14
Adani Power	1,144.25	-8.18
Adani Wilmar	2,400.00	-8.29
Axis Bank	2,004.00	-42.25
Axis Finance	2,004.00	-42.25
ICICI Bank	2,004.00	-42.25
ICICI Finance	2,004.00	-42.25
Infosys	1,508.00	-3.49
ITC	1,508.00	-3.49
Maruti Suzuki	1,235.00	-3.85
ONGC	601.25	-3.85
Reliance Ind	4,793.75	-36.99
Reliance Power	1,508.00	-3.49
Tata Steel	3,176.50	-40.04
Wipro	1,508.00	-3.49
Yashwantrao Chavan	4,932.25	-22.89
Zee Entertainment	2,400.00	-12.86
Zoex Tech	1,102.00	-17.00
Adani Enterprises	1,144.25	-8.18
Adani Wilmar	2,400.00	-8.29
Axis Bank	2,004.00	-42.25
Axis Finance	2,004.00	-42.25
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Zoex Tech	1,102.00	-17.00

EXCHANGE RATES

(Exchange rates as on 12 April 2024)

Currency	TD	TD BBL
US Dollar	83.13	83.53
UK Pound	77.08	77.08
Japan Yen (100)	54.24	54.49
Chinese Yuan	17.28	17.28
Saudi Riyal	11.18	11.44
Indian Rupee	100	100
Canadian Dollar	80.04	80.79
Swiss Franc	77.08	77.08
South African Rand	54.03	54.24

Indian realty market to reach \$1.5 tn by 2034: Knight Frank

The Hindu Bureau

The Indian real estate market is expected to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2034, contributing 10.5% to economic output, according to a joint study by Knight Frank India and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

According to the report titled 'Indian Real Estate: A Decade from Now', the residential market is expected to lead with a value of \$906 billion, followed by the commercial market contributing \$125 billion.

Also, land for manufacturing activities is estimated to generate a value of \$28 billion, driven by rising demand in India, while warehousing is projected to yield revenues of \$8.9 billion.

India's economic growth in the next decade would depend heavily on several factors, including a

Wipro must focus on creating value, cut low-cost services: Everest Group

Mini Telangani

BENGALURU

Wipro Ltd. has a long way to go to attain a balanced position in the global tech market, industry analyst Bendor-Samuel, founder and CEO of Dallas-based Everest Group.

The global analyst in an interaction with *The Hindu* said the Bengaluru-based firm has helped us expand with its peers as the company has positioned itself as a low-cost provider over the decades while its peers remained more balanced and focused on value.

"20 years of decline" "Wipro has had a slowly deteriorating market position for almost 20 years," Mr. Samuel said. He observed that Wipro's focus on providing low-cost services has been at the expense of investing in capabilities and assets that help clients get value.

But he added that "Thier-



Peter Bendor-Samuel

ment into new capabilities. But, there is still a long way to go," he said.

Mr. Samuel added that Srinivas Palli, who resigned from Wipro on April 6, "must continue the transformation journey that he began as CEO."

New CEO's task: "Wipro is faced with continuing the transformation of adding higher value services at Wipro, and getting Wipro back to a high level of performance, its biggest challenge in the immediate future will be the poor tech and tech services macro environment," he said.

Fortunately, the new leader will have at least a year's runway, as investors

'Firm must invest over several years' and accept profit margins below industry norms'

should be signing the final MoU with Congo," he told *Businessline*.

Copper and cobalt have been identified as critical minerals by the Indian government. Copper is used in power cables, wind turbines, solar panels, and is the key material for energy transition (three months or so).

The MoU will allow India to conduct mineral exploration and commercial offtake in case of success-

ful finds. V.L. Kantha Rao, Secretary, Union Ministry of Mines, said the government-MoU will be finalised through the lines of what was done in the Yukon blocks in Argentina).

"Around June, we

India explores Congo for copper and cobalt access

should be signing the final MoU with Congo," he told *Businessline*.

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"Around June, we

Omega Seiki introduces 'fast-charging' 3-wheeler EV

The Hindu Bureau

MUMBAI

Electric Vehicles (EV) manufacturer Omega Seiki Mobility in a tie up with battery manufacturer Exo-vent Energy has introduced OSM Stream City Qik, a passenger electric three-wheeler that can be fast-charged in 15 minutes.

Exported to the rapid-charging network. "Targeted at auto drivers, the EV is priced at ₹3,24,999 (ex-showroom).

The vehicle comes with a warranty of 2,00,000 km or five years - whichever comes first, paving the way for better financing options and ease of ownership.

The product is expected to cater to the growing demand of drivers as the 15-minute charging capability would minimise the time between rides and maximise the efficiency on the road, the company said.

lition raised in Q4 2023. The seed and early-stage funding saw a massive decline. The seed-stage funding saw a massive decline by 75% to \$9.9 million while early-stage funding saw a massive decline by 75% to \$14 million.

Year-on-year, the funding stands at \$1.4 billion of calendar year 2024 stood at \$551 million compared with \$1.4 billion of calendar year 2023. The funding increased by 59% compared with the \$346 mil-

India explores Congo for copper and cobalt access

Abhishek Law

NEW DELHI

India will tap Congo for critical mineral access, mostly copper and cobalt. A draft MoU has been shared with the officials of the Democratic Republic of Congo and a final agreement is expected in 'another three months or so.'

The MoU will allow India to conduct mineral exploration and commercial offtake in case of success-

MoU will allow India to explore for the mineral and begin commercial offtake in case if it is found

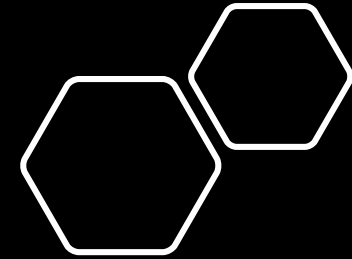
ful finds. V.L. Kantha Rao, Secretary, Union Ministry of Mines, said the government-to-government MoU will be finalised (much on the lines of what was done for lithium blocks in Argentina).

"Around June, we

should be signing the final MoU with Congo," he told *businessline*.

Copper and cobalt have been identified as critical minerals by the Indian government. Copper is used in power cables, wind turbines, electric vehicles and solar panels, and is the key material for energy transition. Cobalt is a key car-battery metal with Congo being the largest supplier.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)





- Show globe
 Show map of Africa
 Show all

Capital and largest city [Kinshasa](#)
🌐 4°19′S 15°19′E

Official languages [French](#)
Recognised national languages [Kikongo ya leta](#)^[a]
[Lingala](#)
[Swahili](#)
[Tshiluba](#)

Religion (2021)^[1] 95.4% [Christianity](#)
2.6% [traditional faiths](#)
1.5% [Islam](#)
0.5% [others / none](#)

Demonym(s) [Congolese](#)

Government Unitary [semi-presidential republic](#)

• [President](#) [Félix Tshisekedi](#)
• [Prime Minister](#) [Sama Lukonde \(acting\)](#)^{[2][b]}

Legislature [Parliament](#)
• [Upper house](#) [Senate](#)
• [Lower house](#) [National Assembly](#)

Formation
• [Colonised](#) 17 November 1879
• [Congo Free State](#) 1 July 1885
• [Belgian Congo](#) 15 November 1908

Formation

- [Colonised](#) 17 November 1879
- [Congo Free State](#) 1 July 1885
- [Belgian Congo](#) 15 November 1908
- [Independence from Belgium](#) 30 June 1960^[4]
- [Admitted to the United Nations](#) 20 September 1960
- [Democratic Republic](#) 1 August 1964
- [Republic of Zaire](#) 27 October 1971
- [First Congo War](#) 17 May 1997
- [Current constitution](#) 18 February 2006

Area

- [Total](#) 2,345,409 km² (905,567 sq mi) ([11th](#))
- [Water \(%\)](#) 3.32

Population

- [2023 estimate](#) ▲ 111,859,928^[5] ([14th](#))
- [Density](#) 46.3/km² (119.9/sq mi)

GDP (PPP)

- [Total](#) ▲ \$150.883 billion^[6] ([90th](#))
- [Per capita](#) ▲ \$1,509^[6] ([188th](#))

GDP (nominal)

- [Total](#) ▲ \$67.512 billion^[6] ([86th](#))
- [Per capita](#) ▼ \$675^[6] ([190th](#))

Gini (2012)

▼ 42.1^[7]
medium

HDI (2022)

▲ 0.481^[8]
low ([180th](#))

Currency

[Congolese franc \(CDF\)](#)

West Asia on edge amid fears of Iran's hit

Iran's Foreign Minister says a response to 'Israel's attack' on its consular premises in Damascus is a 'necessity', Israel says it is ready for any response from Tehran and vows to strike back; several countries, including India and the U.S., issue security and travel advisories to their citizens in the region

Stanly Johny
JERUSALEM

West Asia continued to stay on edge on Friday amid fears of an imminent attack by Iran targeting Israel in retaliation against the April 1 air strike on Iran's consular annex in Damascus, Syria, with several countries, including India, the U.S. Russia and France, issuing travel and security alerts to their citizens.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has vowed to punish the "evil regime" of Israel after the attack on the consular building in which Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a high-ranking commander of the Quds Force, the elite wing of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was assassinated. Iran and Syria immediately blamed Israel for the strike. Israel

has neither confirmed nor dismissed its role in the attack. "The question is not if but when. The Supreme Leader, the government and senior military leaders have all warned that a response is coming. Iran cannot back off this time," a strategic analyst based in Tehran with close links to the regime told *The Hindu* on the phone, requesting anonymity.

On Thursday, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian reiterated that Iran's response is a necessity. "When the Israeli regime completely violates the immunity of individuals and diplomatic places in violation of international law and the Vienna Conventions, legitimate defence is a necessity," Mr. Abdollahian told his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock in a phone call, Iran's *Mehr* news agency reported.



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pays tributes to the members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps killed in the Damascus attack. REUTERS

In Israel, political leaders as well as military and diplomatic officials said they were ready for any scenario. Asked if it was Israel that carried out the Damascus attack, Michael Ronen, head of South and Southeast Asia Division at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "They say Israel carried out the strike. Well, I don't know. What I can say is that Israel is ready for any response from

Iran." American media reported on Friday, citing U.S. and Iranian sources, that an Iranian attack could come within the next 48 hours.

Mr. Khamenei is considering different options, from launching direct strikes using drones and missiles on Israel from Iran to attacking Israeli assets in the region, either directly or through proxies, according to these reports.

Israeli leaders have warned that they will strike inside Iran if the origin of the attack is Iran.

'Godfather of militias'

" Hamas, Houthis, Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad... what do all these terrorist entities have in common? Iran is the godfather of all of them," Yossi Zilberman, deputy spokesperson of the MFA, told *The Hindu* here. "Unless Iran is reined in, there won't be peace in the Middle East," he said.

Israel has frozen all leaves for combat units "in accordance with the situational assessments" and drafted reservists to strengthen for air defences. The IDF has also scrambled the GPS system, which could be used to confuse incoming weapons. On Thursday, those who turned on their GPS in Tel Aviv found that their location was shown in Bei-

rut. In the northern settlement of Tefen in the Upper Galilee region, close to the Lebanese border, the GPS showed the location of Syrian Golan.

The U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem on Friday told American citizens in Israel that the "security environment remains complex". U.S. government employees and their family members were asked not to travel "outside the greater Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Be'er Sheva areas until further notice".

India's Ministry of External Affairs advised Indians not to travel to Iran and Israel until further notice. "All those who are currently residing in Iran or Israel are requested to get in touch with Indian Embassies there and register themselves," it said.

(The reporter was in Israel as part of a media delegation)

Israel says it is under attack in a 'multi-arena war'





Israel ready for war?

- Israel turned off their GPS system.
- Leaves of all the soldiers were also cancelled.
- Air Defence Command has been put on alert.
- Anti bomb shelters have been started in many cities.



इजराइल हमास जंग के बीच अब तक अरब सागर और 4 देशों में हमले

लेबनान में हमला

इजराइल ने लेबनान में हिजबुल्लाह के ठिकानों पर हमले किए।

वजह

हमास हमले के बाद लेबनान की तरफ से भी इजराइल में हमले शुरू हो गए थे।

यमन में हमला

अमेरिका और ब्रिटेन ने यमन में हूतियों के ठिकानों पर हमले करना शुरू किया।

वजह

अमेरिका ने कहा यमन में अटैक कर वो अरब सागर में जहाजों पर हो रहे हमलों का बदला ले रहा है।

इराक-सीरिया पर हमले

ईरान ने इराक के एरबिल शहर और सीरिया के इदलिब शहर में अमेरिका और इजराइल के ठिकानों पर हमले किए।

वजह

इजराइल के सीरिया और लेबनान में किए गए हमलों में ईरानी फौज के कमांडर मारे गए थे। ईरान ने इनका बदला लिया।

सीरिया में हमला

इजराइल ने सीरिया के दमिश्क में एक इमारत पर एयरस्ट्राइक की। इसमें ईरानी सेना के कई अधिकारी मारे गए।

वजह

ईरान ने इराक में इजराइल की खुफिया एजेंसी मोसाद के ठिकानों पर हमला किया था। इजराइल ने उसी अटैक का बदला लिया।

इराक में हमला

पश्चिमी इराक में अमेरिका के एयरबेस पर ईरान के समर्थन वाले शिया गुट पर हमला।

वजह

इजराइली एयरस्ट्राइक में मारे गए ईरानी सैनिकों की मौत का बदला लिया। इजराइल हमास जंग के बीच अब तक अरब सागर और 4 देशों में हमले।

अरब सागर में हमला

यमन के हूती विद्रोहियों ने अरब सागर में जहाजों पर हमले शुरू किए।

वजह

हूतियों ने गाजा के समर्थन में हमले करना शुरू किया। हूतियों का कहना है कि जब तक इजराइल हमले नहीं रोकेगा वो अटैक जारी रखेंगे।



COMMANDER
Swachata Badhao, Tandrusti Badhe

5 YEARS

Slim Hide Flush Tank Kahan...?
Space Saving

o Badi Todfod + Deewar Ko Leakage Se Bachayen

Slim Hide Flush Tank Kahan...?
Space Saving

o Badi Todfod + Deewar Ko Leakage Se Bachayen

RETAIL INFLATION 4.85% IN MARCH

Inflation cools to 10-month low but food prices under heat wave pressure

IIP at four-month high of 5.7% in Feb

AANCHAL MAGAZINE NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

RETAIL INFLATION slipped to a 10-month low of 4.85 per cent in March, primarily led by a moderation in food and fuel prices, especially lower petrol, diesel and LPG rates, showed data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) Friday.

The Consumer Food Price Index-based inflation, while easing to 8.52 per cent in March from 8.56 per cent, continued to remain elevated above the 8 per cent mark for the fifth month in a row, with rural areas persistent in showing a higher increase in food inflation than urban areas.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED Fed stand, tax treaty shadow

THE DOWNTREND in headline inflation has been positive but food inflation continues to be a worry given the risks from an early onset of a heat-wave. The data print came on a day when there was a sell-off in stock markets, with FTSE offloading \$5,802.7 crore worth of equities on a net basis amid concerns over the US Fed's stance on interest rate cuts and the agreement with Mauritius tax treaty.

RELATED REPORTS, P 17

DUO TRACED TO HIDEOUT NEAR KOLKATA: NIA

Bengaluru blast mastermind, bomber arrested from Bengal



An accused in the Bengaluru cafe blast case being produced at a Kolkata court by NIA officers on Friday.

Shazib and Taha had been living in state for past 3 weeks; used aliases, checked into small hotels: Officials

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
SWEETY KUMAR & KIRAN PARASHAR
NEW DELHI, KOLKATA, BENGALURU, APRIL 12

THE MAN who planted an IED at Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe on March 1 as well as the mastermind who planned the blast have been arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) from West Bengal.

The absconders in the Bengaluru cafe blast case, Abdul Matheen Taha and Mussavir Hussain Shazib, were traced to their hideout near Kolkata and were apprehended by the NIA team. Early morning on April 12, the NIA was successful in tracing the accused, who were hiding under false identities, an NIA spokesperson said.

"Shazib is the accused who placed the IED at the cafe, and Taha is the mastermind behind



Arrested suspects Mussavir Hussain Shazib (left) and Abdul Matheen Taha.

the planning and execution of the blast and subsequent evasion from the clutches of law," the spokesperson said.

Sources in the state police and the central agency said the two men had been in West Bengal for roughly three weeks — checking into small hotels and living under aliases — until their back ran out. The West Bengal police maintained that the two were arrested as part of a joint operation.

The NIA had last month released photographs and details

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In Nagpur, Gadkari banks on his track record; Cong bets on bread-butter issues

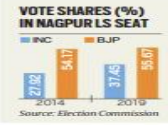


Union Minister and BJP candidate Nitin Gadkari campaigns in Nagpur Lok Sabha constituency, Saturday.

VALLABH OZARKAR NAGPUR, APRIL 12

A FORMER Congress stronghold and the seat of the RSS headquarters, the BJP has coasted to victory in Nagpur in the last two Lok Sabha polls with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari winning both times. But with its vote share having gone up 10 percentage points in 2019, people in the city talking about local issues such as unemployment and civic amenities, and given the caste dynamics, the Congress believes it is in a chance this time around.

National leader, Gadkari is regularly cited as one of the best-performing Union Ministers and is seeking votes based on the de-



velopment work done by the Narendra Modi government and his track record in the last two terms. "There is no doubt about the story but we should strive for 75% vote share for the BJP in Nagpur," a confident Gadkari

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Don't travel to Iran, Israel: India advises its citizens

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

AMID APPREHENSIONS of Iran avenging the April 1 attack on its embassy in Syria, India on Friday advised its citizens to not travel to Iran and Israel "in view of the prevailing situation in the region".

Iran has been threatening to avenge the death of two of its Generals who were those killed in an airstrike in Syrian capital Damascus on April 1. Tehran has blamed Israel for the strike, although Israel has not commented yet.

New Delhi's advisory comes at a time when countries like the US and France have also issued similar advisories for their respective citizens and officials.

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said, "In view of the prevailing situation in the region, India advises its citizens to not travel to Iran and Israel."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Dhoti-kurta and tilak: Police in priest attire while on duty at Kashi Vishwanath temple



A policeman in red kurta directs devotees at the temple.

Devotees will feel more comfortable, says Varanasi police chief

MANISH SAHU LUCKNOW, APRIL 12

THE VARANASI police have, on a trial basis, asked policemen stationed at the gates of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple's sanctum sanctorum to wear dhoti and kurta and sport a tilak on their forehead like temple priests.

The move is aimed at fostering a more welcoming environment at the temple in Varanasi, police said.

Varanasi Police Commissioner said the initiative has been rolled out for a 15-day trial period, after which it will be reviewed. This was tested in 2018 as well, but was discontinued after the trial period.

"We need to ensure that devotees feel respected, especially during times of large gatherings and visits of VIPs,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

As poll race heats up, a turtle becomes mascot in Cooch Behar

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA & ATRI MITRA
BANE SWAR, COOCH BEHAR, APRIL 12

IN THE village of Baneswar in north Bengal, about 10 km from the city of Cooch Behar, lies a Shiva temple that Koch dynasty King Nara Narayan is said to have built during his reign in the 17th Century. Devotees believe the temple came up on the ruins of a temple built by Asura king Banasura. But, Shiva is not the

sole resident deity in the temple. The temple pond is also home to 'Mohans', the native locals have given to the endangered black softshell turtles that are revered as an incarnation of the Hindu deity Vishnu. The turtles are so vulnerable — the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists them as "critically endangered" — that locals have been waging a battle to protect them, even calling a banhali last November in protest against the state administrator's perceived lack of efforts.

Recognising this strong bond, the Election Commission (EC) has adopted 'Mohan Babu' as its poll mascot to get people out to vote. The mascot is a black softshell turtle that is revered as an incarnation of the Hindu deity Vishnu. The turtles are so vulnerable — the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists them as "critically endangered" — that locals have been waging a battle to protect them, even calling a banhali last November in protest against the state administrator's perceived lack of efforts.

Local people revere the tur-



A poster of EC mascot Mohan Babu, an endangered black softshell turtle. (top) A turtle in the temple pond. (bottom) A turtle in the temple pond.

So, we thought it was a good idea to use them to reach out to the people and spread voter awareness." Cooch Behar District Magistrate Arvind Kumar Meena told *The Indian Express*.

The EC has taken note of the turtles' importance. Baneswar residents allege the government has done little to protect the reptiles apart from setting up boardings for them in Cooch Behar-Alipurduar Road and Baneswar, and in the "turtle corridor".

"We always know that there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

J&K will get back statehood, day not far for Assembly elections, says PM

Attacks Opp for skipping Ayodhya ceremony, 'making video of mutton during Saawan to hurt sentiments'

ARUN SHARMA LUCKNOW, APRIL 12

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi told the people of Jammu & Kashmir Friday that statehood will be restored and "the day is not far" when Assembly elections will be held there.

Underlining that there has been a lot of change in J&K in the last 10 years and "development has replaced militancy" — J&K lost its special status in August 2019 and its statehood in October that year when it was divided into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh — Modi, addressing a BJP rally, said, "Aap logo ne bahar saare kashtr jhakar kar ke aapko apne apne badu sapno dekha hai. Hum rajya badhane ki baat kar rahe hain. You have suffered a lot. I have a very big dream for you. We will restore statehood."

2 creators get YouTube notice on EVM videos, monetisation curbed

DAMINI NATH NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

NINE MONTHS AFTER YouTube started adding additional content under videos pertaining to the efficacy of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), the online platform has also started placing curbs on monetisation of some four videos, meaning that created from such content.

At least two creators — Mehargad and independent journalist Sohini Mishra — were reportedly alerted by YouTube about the monetisation limits placed on some of their videos pertai-

BUSINESS AS USUAL By UNNY



The rally was held to mobilise support for BJP's Lok Sabha candidates Dr Jitendra Singh (Lucknow) and Jugal Kishore Sharma (Jammu).

"The day is not far when Assembly elections will be held in J&K. Everybody will be visiting Cooch Behar."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ing to EVMs and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines. The platform cited its advertiser-friendly guidelines for its decision, stating that videos containing demonstrably false content or videos pertaining to false information are not eligible for ad revenue.

Mishra's YouTube channel Sohini Mishra Official has over 3.68 lakh subscribers, and Mehargad's channel has over 42,000 subscribers.

Mishra told *The Indian Express* that four of his videos on the subject of EVMs were placed under "limited monetisation". Of these monetisation was eventually restored for only one video, upon Mishra's request for a review.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

How a new platform will instantly disburse subsidies to farmers

HARIKISHAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

THE UNION government has developed a new digital platform to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers under the Cluster Development Programme (CDP), an initiative by the Centre to promote horticulture crops. The platform is known as CDP-SURAKSHA.

In recent years, the total production of horticulture crops has spiked in India. While in 2010-11, their production stood at 240.53 million tonnes, production increased to 334.60 million tonnes in 2020-21.

The horticulture sector makes a substantial contribution to the Indian economy as it contributes nearly one-third to the agriculture gross value added (GVA) — the measure of the value of goods and services produced by an industry, sector, manufacturer, area or region.

What is the CDP-SURAKSHA?

The acronym SURAKSHA stands for “System for Unified Resource Allocation, Knowledge, and Secure Horticulture Assistance.” The CDP-SURAKSHA will allow an instant disbursement of subsidies to farmers by utilising the e-RUPI voucher from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The e-RUPI voucher is a cashless and no-contact electronic payment mechanism, which can be shared with the beneficiaries for a specific purpose or activity by organisations or government via SMS or QR code, according to NPCI.

The platform will have features such as database integration with the PM-Kisan scheme, cloud-based server space from National Informatics Centre (NIC), content management system, geotagging, etc.

How will the CDP-SURAKSHA work?

The platform will allow access to farmers, vendors, implementing agencies (IA), cluster

development agencies (CDAs), and officials of the National Horticulture Board (NHB).

A farmer can log on to the platform using her mobile number and place an order for planting materials such as seeds, seedlings, and plants, based on her requirement.

Once the demand has been raised by the farmer, the system will ask her to contribute her share of the cost of the planting material. The subsidy amount paid by the government will appear on the screen automatically.

After the farmer pays her contribution, an e-RUPI voucher will be generated. This voucher will then be received by a vendor, who will provide the planting material to the farmer.

After the planting material gets delivered to the farmer, she will have to verify the delivery through geo-tagged photos and videos of her field. Once the verification is done, the

IA will release the money to the vendor, who will have to upload an invoice of the payment on the portal.

The IA will collect all the documents and share them with the CDA, after which the latter will release the subsidy amount to the IA.

However, the farmer, who raised the demand for the plant material using the platform, can avail of the subsidy amount at the first stage of the platform.

How is the new system different from the old one?

In the old system, a farmer had to give the full amount to buy planting materials. She would then have to approach the officials concerned for the release of the subsidy amount.

The new platform, however, will provide the subsidy amount to a farmer upfront, at the time of purchasing planting materials. Vendors will receive their payment only after

the farmer verifies the delivery of her orders.

How many farmers and banks have come on board?

While the platform is yet to be unveiled at the national level, around 8,400 farmers' details have been uploaded on the platform so far. These include 8,000 farmers of Sahyadri Farms Private Ltd, which is implementing the grape cluster in Nashik, Maharashtra. The rest of the 400 farmers are from the Meghalaya Basin Management Agency (MBMA), which is implementing the turmeric cluster in Meghalaya.

Four banks — HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India (SBI) and Bank of Baroda — have also been onboarded on the platform. These banks will generate e-RUPI vouchers for fund disbursement.

What is the CDP?

The CDP is a component of the central

sector scheme of NHB. It is aimed at leveraging “the geographical specialisation of horticulture clusters and promoting integrated and market-led development of pre-production, production, post-harvest, logistics, branding, and marketing activities”.

So far, 55 horticulture clusters have been identified, out of which 12 have been selected for the pilot. These clusters are in various stages of development.

According to the Union government, about 9 lakh hectares of area will be covered through all 55 clusters, covering 10 lakh farmers. It is estimated that the initiative will attract private investment of Rs 8,250 crore, in addition to the government's assistance, which is fixed according to the size of the cluster — up to Rs 25 crore for mini cluster (size up to 5,000 hectares), up to Rs 50 crore for medium clusters (5,000 to 15,000 hectares), and up to Rs 100 crore for mega clusters (more than 15,000 hectares).

**EXPLAINED
POLICY**

Vi to raise ₹ 18,000 cr via India's largest ever FPO

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

VODAFONE IDEA, which has been struggling financially for a long time and trying to raise funds to stay afloat, on Friday said it plans to raise up to ₹18,000 crore through share sale in India's biggest follow-on public offer till date.

The company's shares will be issued, under the FPO, in a price band of ₹10-11 apiece against Friday's closing price of ₹12.96 on the BSE. The higher end of the price band of ₹11, is at a discount of 26% compared to recently approved preferential issue price to the promoter entity at ₹14.87.

The share sale will open on April 18 (for anchor investors on April 16) and close on April 22, Vodafone Idea, which is the country's third-largest telecom service provider, said in a stock exchange filing.

This will be the largest FPO after the ₹15,000-crore share sale by Yes Bank in 2020.

The fundraising, which comes close on the heels of a ₹2,075-crore capital infusion by Aditya Birla group via a preferential share issue last weekend, will help the company shore up its position in the domestic telecom market, where peers Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel are miles ahead of it.

The funds would also help it arrest its subscriber churn owing to its weak 4G coverage, which is not available on a pan-India basis. The same will also be used to launch 5G services, and



Vodafone Idea also plans to raise an ₹250 bn through debt for which it has been in talks with lenders. Reuters

clear government debts related to spectrum.

Vodafone Idea has been losing subscribers month after month, has a gross debt of ₹2.15 trillion crore, and has been posting quarterly losses in the range of ₹6,000-8,000 crore.

The fundraise through FPO is part of the company's plan to raise ₹20,000 crore through a combination of equity and equity-linked instruments. It plans to raise another ₹25,000 crore via debt.

"Today, our main reason for subscriber loss is because we have lack of 4G coverage vis a vis competition and these funding and the investment in capex will enable us to cover and bridge these gaps," Vodafone Idea CEO Akshaya Moondra had said during the company's extraordinary general meeting with shareholders earlier this month.

During April-February,

GQG, SBI FUNDS EYE INVESTMENTS IN VODA IDEA SHARE SALE

Mumbai: Investment firm GQG Partners and State Bank of India Mutual Fund are considering investing up to \$800 million in total in the Vodafone Idea FPO, according to two people familiar with the matter. US-based GQG plans to invest about \$500 million while SBI Mutual Fund is considering an investment of \$200-300 million

Vodafone Idea lost 16.2 million mobile subscribers, taking its total base to 220.5 million, according to data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai).

From the proceeds of the FPO, Vodafone Idea will utilise ₹5,720 crore for 5G launch, according to the red herring prospectus (RHP) filed by the company. To get started with 5G, the company will first set up 22,000 5G sites — 10,000 sites in the current financial, and 12,000 in FY26 — across 17 priority circles.

Besides 5G, Vodafone Idea will utilise ₹3,770 crore for purchasing equipment towards setting up 26,000 new 4G sites. The company said, these new 4G sites are proposed to be set up in existing 22 service areas catering to 4G technology, on locations available with passive infrastructure providers, basis long term lease agreements. **FE**

Key Differences Between an IPO AND FPO

COMPARISON	IPO	FPO
Full Form	Initial Public Offering	Follow-on Public Offering
Listing Status	Issued before company gets listed on the stock exchange	Issued after the company gets listed on the stock exchange
Issuer	Unlisted Company	Listed Company
Objective	Raising capital through public investment.	Subsequent public investment.
Raising Capital	First time from Public	Subsequent public contribution
Risk	High	More Predictable
Predictability	Less Predictable	Complex (require a long time and expert assistance)
Profit	Thought to be Higher than FPO	Thought to be Lower than IPO
Types	Equity and Preferred	Dilutive and Non-Dilutive

Voda Idea fixes ₹10-11 price band for ₹18,000-crore FPO

Will spend ₹5,700 cr to launch 5G services

JATIN GROVER
New Delhi, April 12

VODAFONE IDEA, WHICH has been struggling to stay afloat, on Friday said it plans to raise up to ₹18,000 crore through a share sale in the country's biggest follow-on public offer (FPO).

INSIDE
FPO may keep stock price muted

PAGE 8

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WHAT'S AT STAKE

Apr 10 (close)
12.93

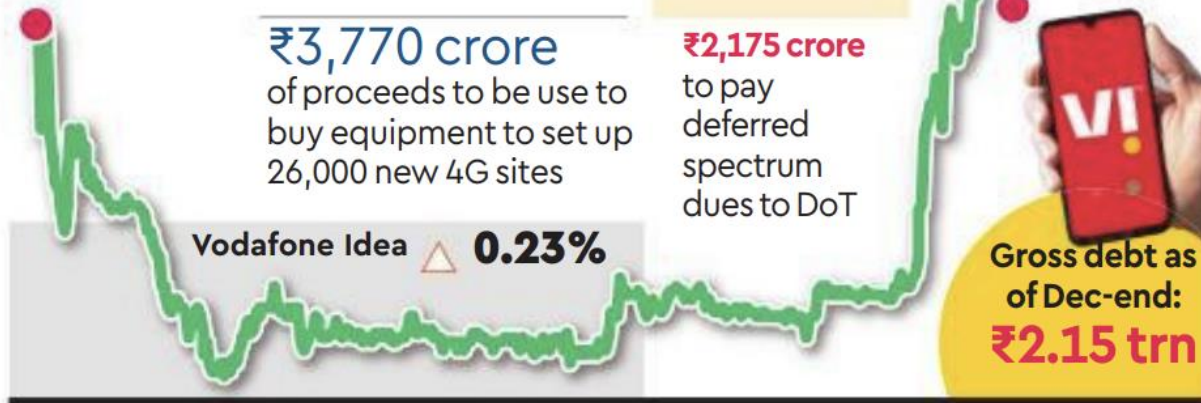
₹5,720 crore to be used for 5G launch

₹3,260 crore for expanding capacity of 40,750 4G sites

Apr 12 (close)
12.96

₹3,770 crore of proceeds to be used to buy equipment to set up 26,000 new 4G sites

₹2,175 crore to pay deferred spectrum dues to DoT



April 22, Vodafone Idea, which is the country's third-largest telecom service provider, said in a stock exchange filing.

This will be the country's largest FPO, surpassing the ₹15,000-crore share sale by Yes Bank in 2020.

The fundraising comes close on the heels of a ₹2,075-crore capital infusion by promoter Aditya Birla Group via a preferential share issue last weekend. It will help

the company shore up its position in the domestic telecom market, where peers Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel are miles ahead.

The funds would also help the company arrest its subscriber churn owing to its weak 4G coverage, which is not available on a pan-India basis.

Continued on Page 5

No-cost EMIs can hide more than they reveal

Look for processing fees, down payments & other administrative charges

● YOUR MONEY

SANJEEV SINHA

WHILE NO-COST EQUATED monthly instalments (EMIs) provide a convenient and seemingly cost-effective way, it is imperative to approach them with a discerning eye. Understanding the fine print and evaluating the overall cost is crucial for a hassle-free experience.

A no-cost EMI allows consumers to spread the cost of a purchase over several months without incurring any interest charges. However, while the interest is not directly charged, there might be other fees or adjustments involved in the overall cost calculation. Consumers must carefully read the terms and conditions to uncover any potential additional costs.

Restrictions on prepayments

While the EMI itself might be interest-free, a down payment may still be required. This initial payment reduces the principal amount that needs to be financed, impacting the overall cost of the purchase. No-cost EMIs might have restrictions or charges associated with prepayments. If you plan to pay off the entire amount before the agreed-upon tenure, penalties or adjustments may apply.

Applicability on specific products

No-cost EMIs are generally applicable to specific products or through select retailers. Usually



■ The EMI terms, including the duration and eligibility criteria, may vary based on the partnership between the retailer and the financier

■ No-cost EMIs may have predefined tenures, limiting the flexibility for consumers to choose the repayment duration

available for consumer electronics, appliances and high-value items, these EMIs may not be universally applicable across all types of purchases. Retailers offering no-cost EMIs often collaborate with financial institutions to provide this service. The terms of the EMI, including the duration and eligibility criteria, may vary based on the partnership between the retailer and the financing institution.

Limited customisation

No-cost EMIs might have predefined tenures, limiting the flexibility for consumers to choose the repayment duration. While this can simplify the process, it is essential to evaluate whether the predetermined tenure aligns with your financial preferences.

Some retailers may offer no-cost EMIs in conjunction with discounts or cashback offers. However, it is cru-

cial to understand the interplay between these incentives and the terms of the EMI, as certain discounts may be contingent on specific payment methods.

Impact on credit score

Opting for a no-cost EMI can influence your credit score, although the impact may be minimal. If payments are missed or delayed, it could negatively affect your creditworthiness. Timely payments, on the other hand, can contribute positively to your credit history.

Alternative financing

Before committing to a no-cost EMI, consider exploring alternative financing options. Traditional loans or credit cards might have lower overall costs, even if they come with nominal interest rates. It is crucial to compare the total cost of financing across different options.



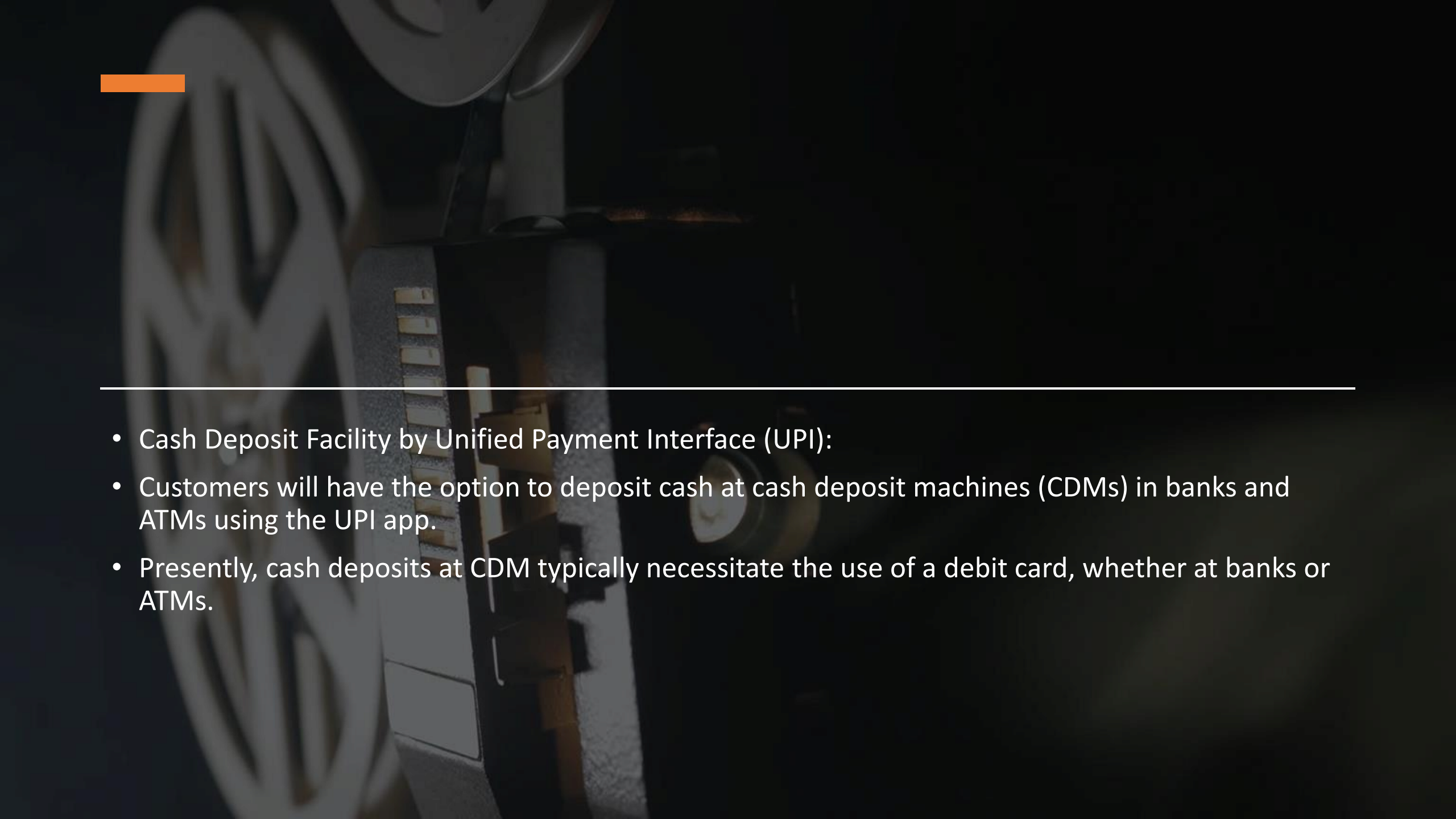


Reform by RBI for Financial Inclusion
and Digital Innovation

The background image shows a financial market display with various stock indices and a line graph. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

Index	Value	Change	Direction
OMX18	28289.06	27956.04	Buy
OMX18	599.40		
OMX18	6230.9	6230.9	Sell
OMX18	1172.94	1172.94	
OMX18	1632.51	1632.51	
OMX18	5993.7030	5993.7030	Buy
OMX18	6025.9680	6025.9680	
OMX18	57.3180	57.3180	
OMX18	984.13	984.13	
OMX18	10847.17	10847.17	Buy
OMX18	10916.69	10916.69	
OMX18	1172.94	1172.94	

- 
- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor, in a press conference on monetary policy decisions, announced several changes aimed at promoting greater economic inclusivity and enhancing the utilisation of information technology for economic activities.

- 
-
- Cash Deposit Facility by Unified Payment Interface (UPI):
 - Customers will have the option to deposit cash at cash deposit machines (CDMs) in banks and ATMs using the UPI app.
 - Presently, cash deposits at CDM typically necessitate the use of a debit card, whether at banks or ATMs.

Allowing Third Party App to access UPI for Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs):



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graph TD; A[Allowing Third Party App to access UPI for Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs):] --> B[Currently, UPI payments from PPIs require using the web or mobile app provided by the PPI issuer.]; B --> C[RBI suggested allowing users to use third-party UPI apps to make UPI payments from PPI wallets.];
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Currently, UPI payments from PPIs require using the web or mobile app provided by the PPI issuer.

RBI suggested allowing users to use third-party UPI apps to make UPI payments from PPI wallets.



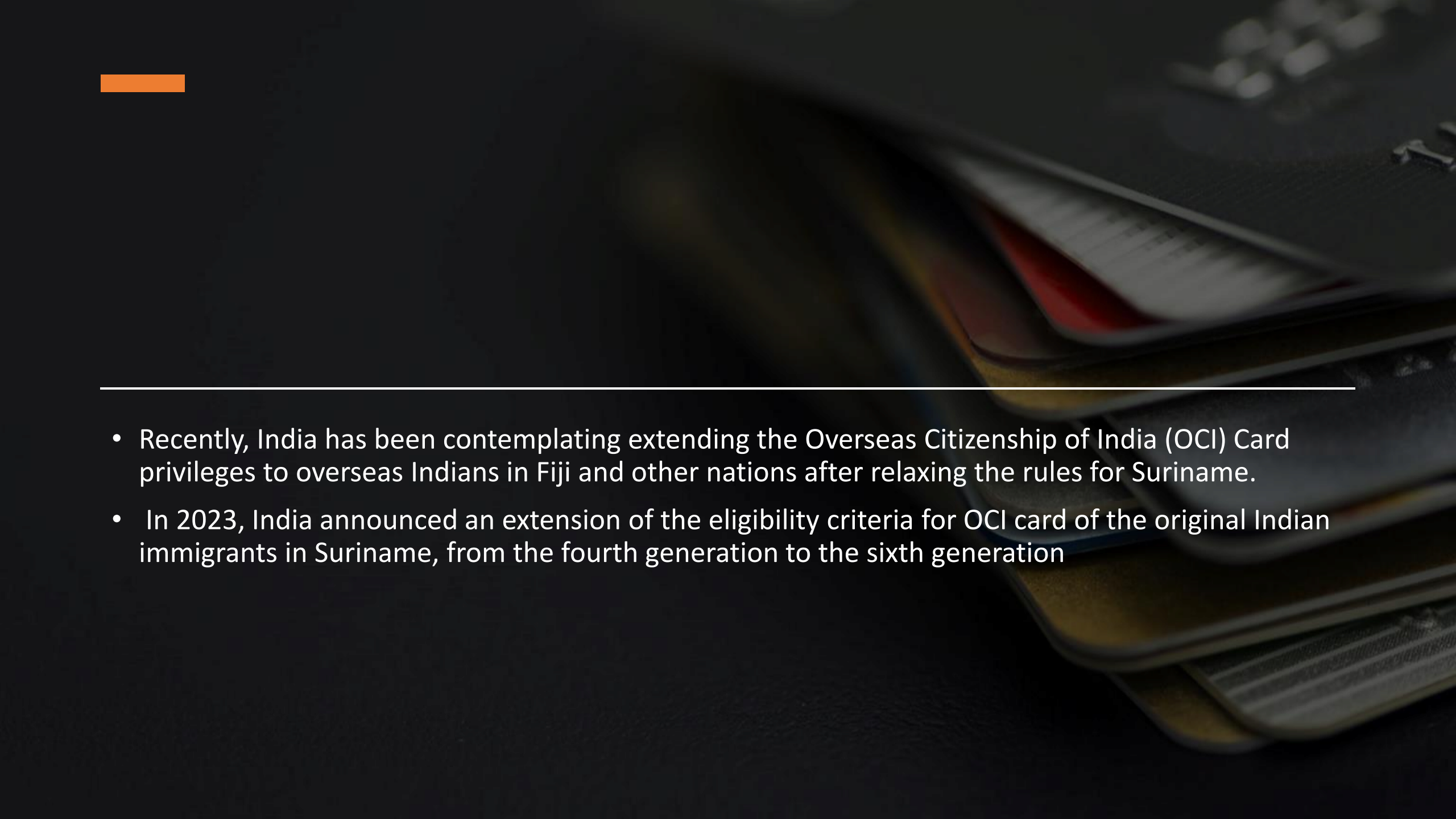
**PERMIT FPIS TO INVEST IN SOVEREIGN
GREEN BOND:**



**MOBILE APP FOR RETAIL DIRECT
SCHEME:**



Expanding the OCI Card Scheme

- 
- Recently, India has been contemplating extending the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Card privileges to overseas Indians in Fiji and other nations after relaxing the rules for Suriname.
 - In 2023, India announced an extension of the eligibility criteria for OCI card of the original Indian immigrants in Suriname, from the fourth generation to the sixth generation



- What is Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Card?
- **About:**
 - **The concept of OCI was introduced in response to demands for dual citizenship by the Indian diaspora, particularly in developed countries.**
 - **The Ministry of Home Affairs defines an OCI as a person who:**
 - **Was a citizen of India on or after 26th January 1950; or**
 - **Was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26th January 1950; or**
 - **Is a child or grandchild of such a person, among other eligibility criteria.**
 - **According to Section 7A of the OCI card rules, an applicant is not eligible for the OCI card if he, his parents, or grandparents have ever been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh.**

-



Historical Background:

The OCI Card scheme was launched during the **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** in 2005.

It was introduced as an **acknowledgment** of the persistent emotional attachment of the Indian diaspora to their country of origin.



Limitations and Restrictions:

They do not have the right to vote.

They cannot hold constitutional offices or government jobs.

They cannot purchase agriculture or farmland.

- **Benefits of the OCI Card:**

- **Multiple entry, multi-purpose lifelong visa to visit India.**
- **Exemption from registering with the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) regardless of the duration of their stay.**
- **Parity with Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in financial, economic, and educational fields.**

-

- 
- **The vast majority were issued to foreign nationals in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada.**
- **The focus on expanding the OCI card scheme highlights India's efforts to engage with and support its overseas Indian communities around the world.**
-

• |



Curative Petition

Signature _____

Date _____



- Recently, the Supreme Court of India has provided significant relief to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) by setting aside its 2021 judgement.
- **About the Curative Petition**
- It is a concept that originated in India and is used as a last resort to seek justice from the Supreme Court.
- It is a rare legal remedy for those who believe they have been wronged by the court's decision.

- **Origin:**
- A curative writ jurisdiction as a layer of appeal against a Supreme Court decision is **not prescribed in the Constitution.**
- It is a judicial innovation, designed for correcting 'grave injustices' in a ruling of the country's top court.
- The concept of a curative petition was first introduced by the Supreme Court of India in the case of ***Rupa Ashok Hurra vs Ashok Hurra and Anr (2002)***.
-

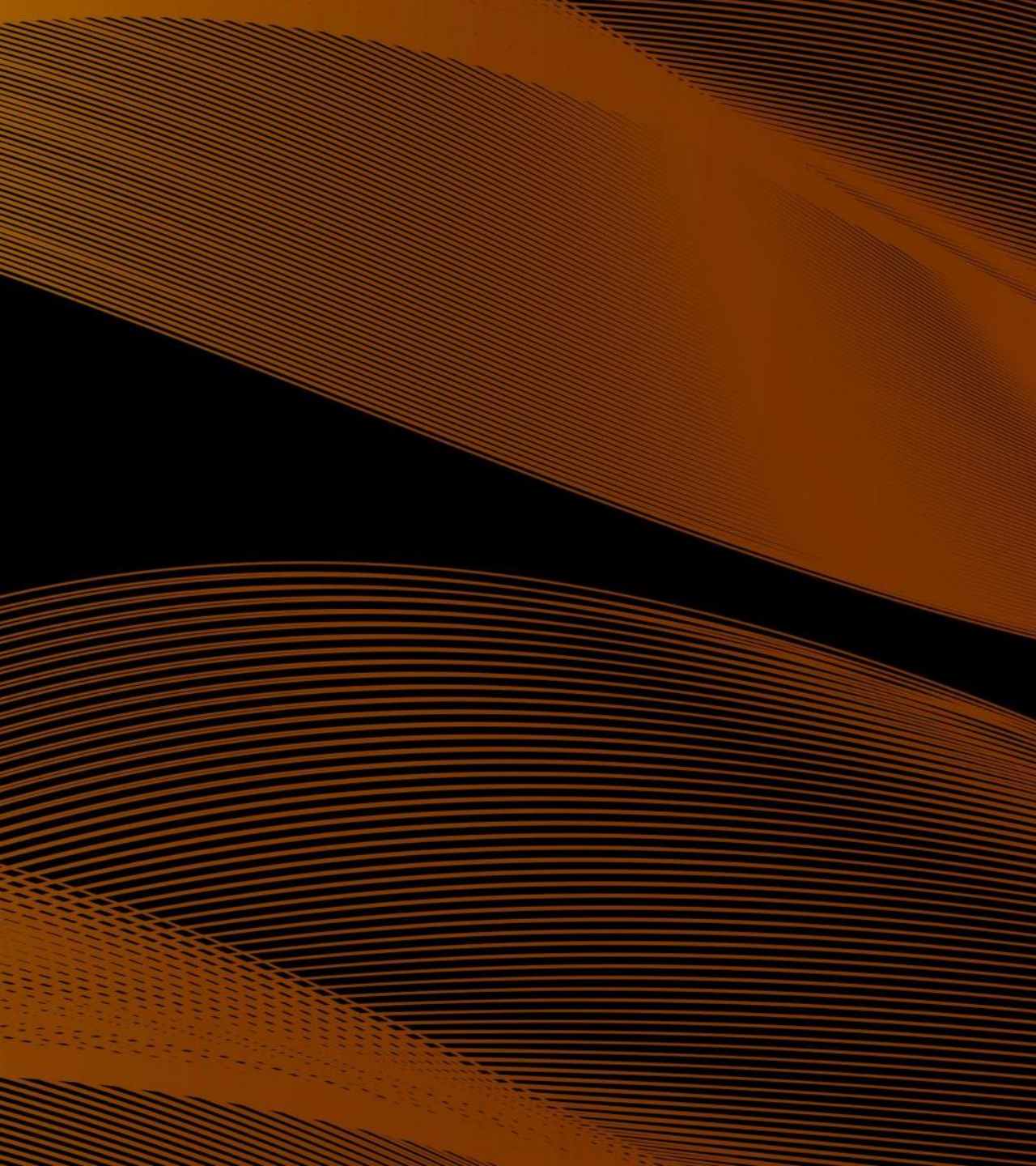
Procedure for Filing:

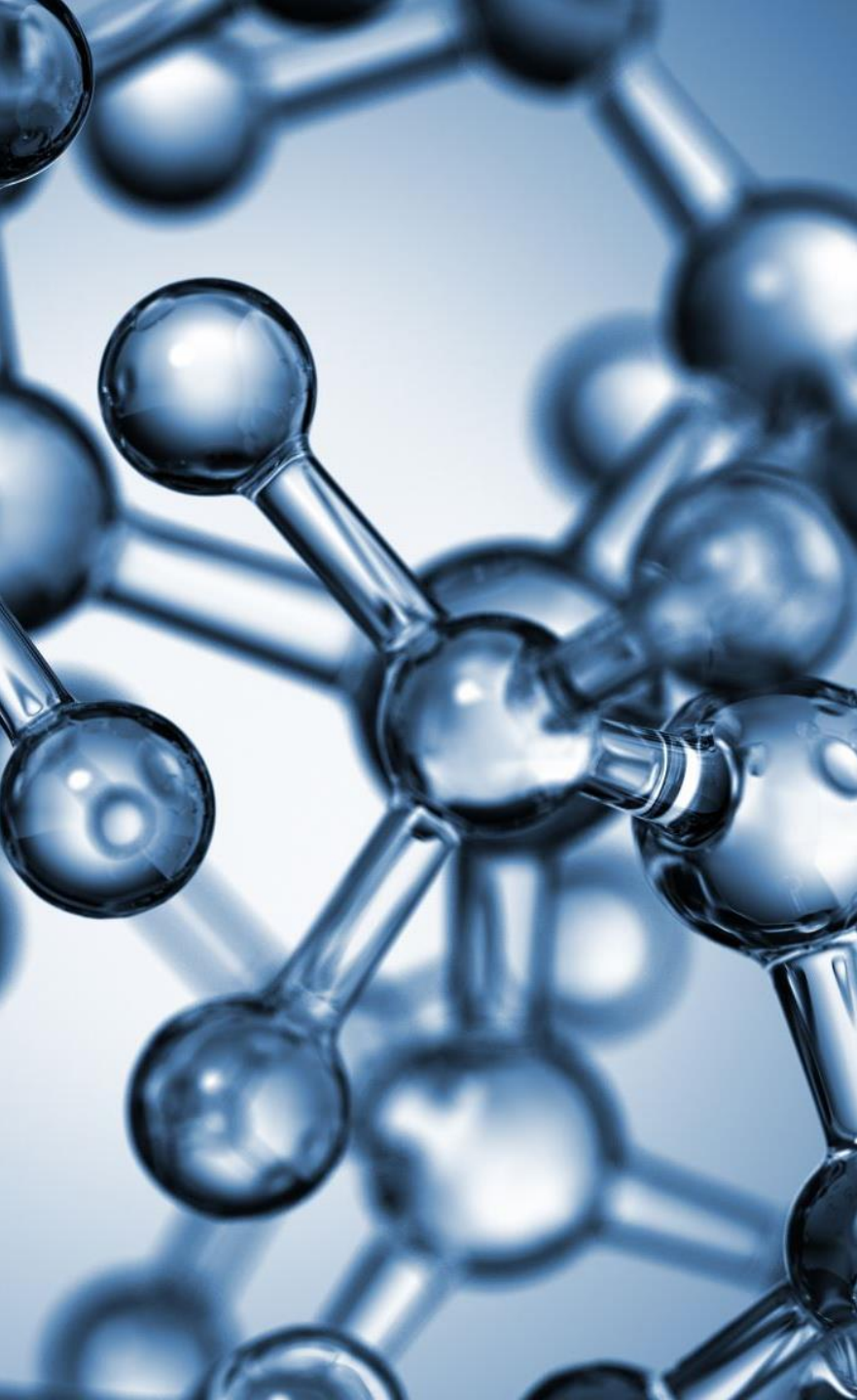
A curative jurisdiction **can only be filed after a review plea** has already been dismissed by the Supreme Court.

It must be first circulated to a Bench of three senior-most judges, and the judges who passed the concerned judgement, if available.

If the majority of the judges on this Bench agree that the matter needs hearing, then it would be sent to the same Bench (as far as possible) which passed the judgement affecting the petition.

Global Unicorn Index 2024



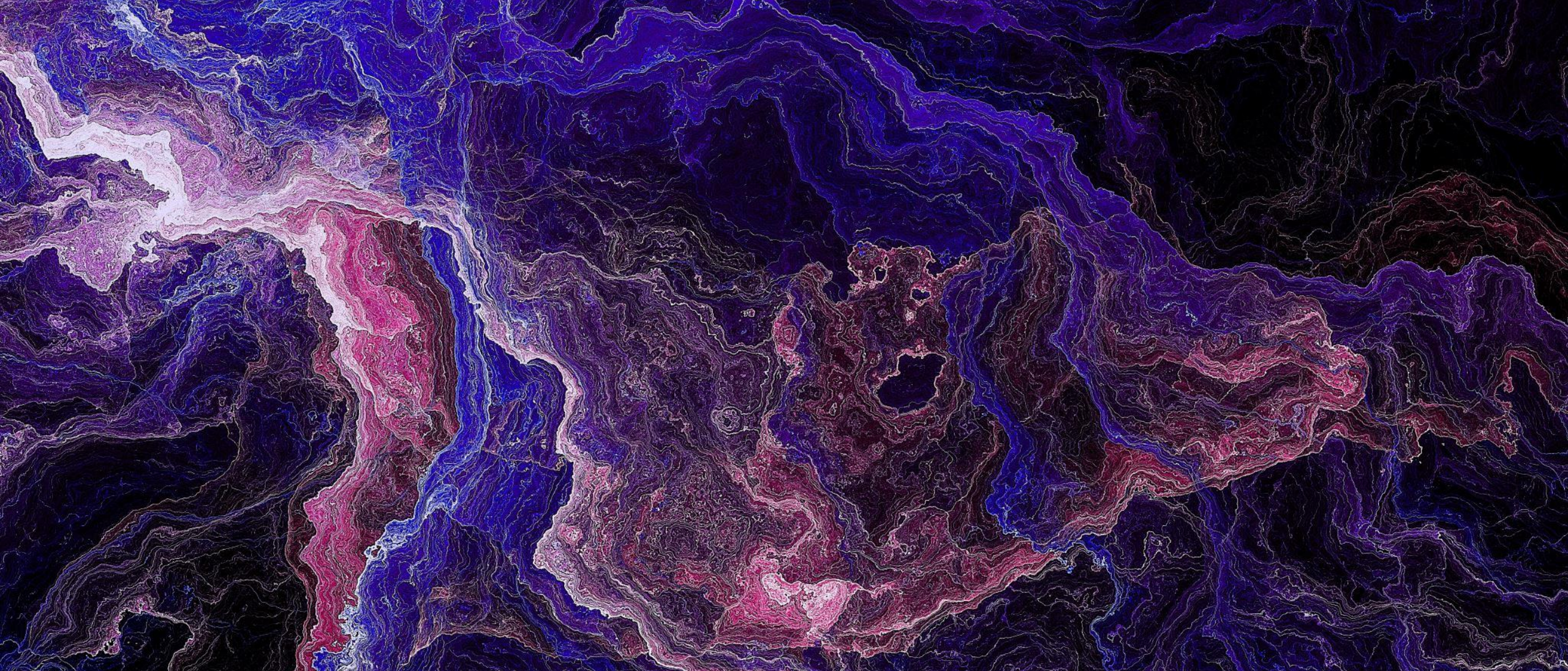


In 2023, India had 67 **unicorn** startups (68 in 2022), ranking third globally behind the USA and China. Indian founders have produced more offshore unicorns than any other country.

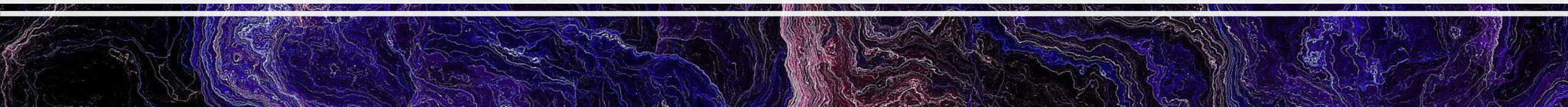
India lacks unicorns in the Aerospace or SpaceTech sector. Factors behind the decline include a slowdown in India's startup ecosystem due to insufficient investment.



- Unicorns are privately held, venture-capital-backed startups valued at \$1 billion or more. The term was coined by venture capitalist Aileen Lee in 2013



Fun fact



SELF IMPROVEMENT LANGUAGE SPEAKING

Skill24 ₹59999

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION via Singapore Academy

- Duration: 6 Months
- Live Online
- Student Handouts
- Industrial Projects
- 100% Career Assistance
- Industry Based Trainers



Software Engineering Course

Skill24 ₹59999

CYBER SECURITY PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION via Singapore Academy

- Duration: 6 Months
- Live Online
- Student Handouts
- Industrial Projects
- 100% Career Assistance
- Industry Based Trainers



Cyber Security Course

Skill24 ₹59999

DATA SCIENCE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION via Singapore Academy

- Duration: 6 Months
- Live Online
- Student Handouts
- Industrial Projects
- 100% Career Assistance
- Industry Based Trainers



Data Science Course

Skill24 ₹59999

BLOCKCHAIN PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION via Singapore Academy

- Duration: 6 Months
- Live Online
- Student Handouts
- Industrial Projects
- 100% Career Assistance
- Industry Based Trainers



Blockchain Course

Skill24 ₹20999

LET'S START TO LEARN SALESFORCE

Salesforce Admin



Salesforce Admin Course

Skill24 ₹20999

LET'S START TO LEARN SALESFORCE

Lightning Web Components



Salesforce LWC Course

Skill24 ₹14999




Skill24 ₹3999

MAKE YOUR BUSINESS THE NEXT UNICORN WITH THE



Skill24 ₹9499




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.
