

# Daily Current Affairs



**जनसत्ता**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

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**The Indian Express**



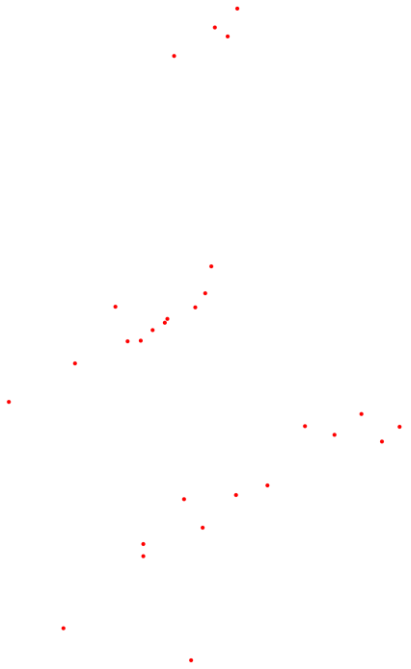
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**Financial Express**



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PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ



10 MCQ





**With reference to recent developments in US-China trade relations, consider the following:**

- 1.The US imposed a 125% tariff on Chinese goods.
- 2.The European Union retaliated against the US with tariffs on soybeans and motorcycles.
- 3.A flat 10% tariff on all countries remains in place.

• **Which of the above are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. All of the above

**Consider the following statements about the RBI's monetary policy:**

- 1.The RBI reduced the repo rate to 6% in April 2025.
- 2.The policy stance was changed from neutral to accommodative.
- 3.The GDP growth forecast was increased to 6.9%.

• **Which of the statements are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the above



**Which of the following statements about Tahawwur Rana is/are correct?**

1. He was extradited to India from Canada for the 26/11 terror attack trial.
  2. His friend David Headley was involved in reconnaissance for the Mumbai attacks.
  3. The US delayed Headley's extradition using a plea bargain.
- A. 1 only
  - B. 2 and 3 only
  - C. 1 and 3 only
  - D. 2 only

**Consider the following statements about India's Rafale-M fighter jet deal:**

1. The ₹63,000-crore deal was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
  2. The Rafale-M jets are meant for the Indian Air Force.
  3. The jets are being procured from France.
- **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**
    - A. 1 and 2 only
    - B. 2 and 3 only
    - C. 1 and 3 only
    - D. All of the above



**Consider the following about Kerala's legislative process and recent Supreme Court judgment:**

- 1.The Governor is required to act on Bills within a specific timeframe.
- 2.The Supreme Court clarified that the Governor must act within the Constitutional framework under Article 200.
- 3.The Governor can sit indefinitely on a Bill without acting.

**• Which of the above are correct?**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the above



“The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.”

– Isaac Asimov





**MAOIST OUTFIT REPLIES**  
**'Surrender not a complete solution'**  
NEWS » PAGE 4



**PM-POSHAN SCHEME**  
**Centre to bear added cost of ₹954 crore**  
NEWS » PAGE 6



**MANIPUR TENSION**  
**Kukis tell Meiteis not to cross 'buffer zone'**  
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**PARLEY**  
**How do we combat judicial corruption?**  
*The in-house procedure needs to be strengthened*  
OPINION » PAGE 9



**BACK IN CHARGE**  
**Dhoni to lead CSK for the rest of the season**  
SPORT » PAGE 16

## NEARBY

**Beijing furious over 'Zelensky accusations'**  
China warned parties in the Ukraine war on Thursday against making "irresponsible remarks" after President Volodymyr Zelensky said Beijing knows its citizens are being recruited to go to fight in the conflict. » PAGE 14

**Rape victim invited trouble: Allahabad HC**  
The Allahabad High Court has granted bail to a rape accused noting that the victim herself invited trouble. In her FIR, the woman had alleged that she was raped when she went to take rest at a friend's place after they consumed alcohol at a bar. » PAGE 4

**Salt pan land to resettle Dharavi slum residents**  
The Maharashtra government has cleared the allocation of 256 acres of salt pan land in Mulund, Karguram, and Bhandup for the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) to rehabilitate eligible slum dwellers. » PAGE 6

**SC addresses 'silence in the Constitution'**  
The Supreme Court's deadlines for Governors to decide the fate of Bills sent to them for assent is a bid to plug a "Constitutional Silence". Absence of time limits had led Governors in many non-BJP-ruled States to sit on Bills. » PAGE 6

# Rana extradited to Delhi, arrested by NIA

Extradition linked to 2008 Mumbai terror attacks case | Fugitive produced before Special NIA judge at Patiala House Court | Judge reserves orders on NIA plea seeking 20-day custody of Rana | Cong., BJP exchange barbs over steps taken to bring him to India

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
Tahawwur Hussain Rana, the Pakistani-origin Canadian-American wanted for his role in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks conspiracy, was brought to Delhi by a special flight on Thursday evening, following his extradition from the United States, and formally arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

**Terror trial**  
Tahawwur Rana's extradition to India was finalised in the terror case trial after years of legal hurdles.  
Nov. 13, 2009: NIA registers case against David Headley, Rana, and others.  
Dec. 24, 2011: Charge sheet filed against them and their co-accused.  
Dec. 4, 2019: India requests Rana's extradition from the U.S.

**Complex cases** NIA officials with Tahawwur Rana on his arrival in Delhi on Thursday. »

**Pakistan claims Rana is Canadian, denies any link**  
NEW DELHI  
Pakistan on Thursday tried to distance itself from Tahawwur Hussain Rana. Its Foreign Ministry spokesperson Shafiq Ali Khan told reporters that Rana was not attached to Pakistan and his Pakistani citizenship since he left the country, stressing that Rana was a Canadian citizen. » PAGE 5

**Long legal process**  
After a Ministry of Home Affairs directive, the NIA registered a case against Headley and Rana on November 11, 2009, alleging a criminal conspiracy among members of Pakistan-based banned terror outfits LTF and Harkat-ul-

Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), to commit terrorist acts in Delhi and other parts of India. The agency filed chargesheet against them and seven others on December 24, 2011. Based on the findings, India moved a formal request in December 2019 for Rana's extradition from the U.S., where court proceedings began on June 10, 2020.

A U.S. court approved the extradition on May 16, 2023, which was then challenged. However, on August 15 last year, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the order. The U.S. Supreme Court also denied Rana's review petition on January 24, 2025.

On February 13, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump issued a joint statement declaring that Rana would be extradited to India. He was handed over to the NIA team on April 9.

Rana was produced before Special NIA Judge Chandher Jit Singh, who is hearing arguments on Rana's custody proceedings. Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan and special public prosecutor Narendra Mann represented the NIA. The court reserved orders on the production of Rana before the court, the Delhi Police removed presspersons and members of the public from the court premises, citing security concerns.

Rana's extradition triggered a heated exchange between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress, with the ruling party asserting that it reflected new India's zero-tolerance resolve toward terrorism, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Congress, however, slammed the government for "rubbing salt in the wound" by claiming that the extradition was the result of years

of diplomatic groundwork started in the IPR era. Thar jail officials said all preparations have been made for his incarceration in a high-security ward. Born in Pakistan, Rana studied at the Pakistani military academy in Hassan Abdal in Pakistan's Punjab province where he became friends with David Coleman Headley aka Daood Gilani, the Lashkar-

e-Taiba (LeT) operative who conducted reconnaissance for the Mumbai attacks between November 26 and 29, 2008. The attacks left 166 people dead and 238 injured. Rana had served as a doctor for the Pakistani army for several years, before he moved to Canada and then to the United States, procuring citizenship in both countries.

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## Delhi sizzles



Kartavya Path shimmers in the fierce summer heat on Thursday. Mild showers later in the day had little impact on the weather. Delhi has been reeling under heatwave conditions this week, with temperatures shooting past 40 degrees Celsius in many parts of the city. *ISHA KHANNA*

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## RTI Act will not restrict disclosure, says Minister

**Aroon Deep**  
NEW DELHI  
The upcoming amendment to the Right to Information Act, 2005, will maintain "the need for transparency in public life", and will "not restrict disclosure of personal information groups, spanning the gamut from digital rights activists to privacy transparency outfits, have raised an alarm over this amendment for years. Over 120 Opposition MPs have now signed a letter to Mr. Vaishnav, seeking a repeal of the amendment.

The amendment - which will kick in when the coming weeks to enforce the Act - will be a significant blow to the RTI Act, according to activists. Civil society groups, spanning the gamut from digital rights activists to privacy transparency outfits, have raised an alarm over this amendment for years. Over 120 Opposition MPs have now signed a letter to Mr. Vaishnav, seeking a repeal of the amendment.

Mr. Vaishnav had raised civil society concern that the Digital Personal Data Protection Act's amendments to the RTI Act would allow the government to deny information on subsidy allocations and other

schemes if the personal information of citizens and officials are involved. The amendment - which will kick in when the coming weeks to enforce the Act - will be a significant blow to the RTI Act, according to activists. Civil society groups, spanning the gamut from digital rights activists to privacy transparency outfits, have raised an alarm over this amendment for years. Over 120 Opposition MPs have now signed a letter to Mr. Vaishnav, seeking a repeal of the amendment.

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## Scrap data law provision that 'dilutes' RTI: INDIA bloc

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI  
More than 120 leaders of the INDIA bloc have written to Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnav demanding repeal of a provision in the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act that dilutes the right to information (RTI) Act, allowing personal information to be disclosed for the larger public interest.

Mr. Vaishnav said that information that is specifically required to be disclosed "under legal obligations" would continue to be disclosed, insisting that the amendments were carried out to "prevent potential misuse of the law".

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## Beijing to restrict imports of movies from Hollywood

**Reuters**  
Associated Press  
BEIJING  
China said on Thursday it would immediately restrict imports of Hollywood films in retaliation for U.S. President Donald Trump's escalation of Washington's tariffs on imported Chinese goods, though analysts say the impact is likely to be minimal.

After three decades during which China annually imported 10 Hollywood movies, its National Film Administration said Mr. Trump's increase of tariffs on Chinese imports would further sour domestic demand for U.S. cinema in China after years of decline.

"We will follow market rules, respect the audience's choices, and moderately reduce the number of American films imported," the NFA said on its website. Meanwhile, China is reaching out to other nations at the United States layers on more tariffs in what appears to be an attempt to form a united front to compel Washington to retreat.

China has thus far focused on Europe, with a phone call between Premier Li Qiang and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Tuesday. Vaishnav's message to the outside world.

That was followed by a video conference between Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and EU Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Thierry Borchers on Tuesday to discuss the U.S. "reciprocal tariffs".

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Fugitive produced before Special NIA judge at Patiala House Court

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Cong., BJP exchange barbs over steps taken to bring him to India

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Rana was produced before Special NIA judge Chander Jit Singh, who is hearing arguments on Rana's custody proceedings. Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan and special public prosecutor Narender Mann represented the NIA. The court reserved orders on the NIA plea seeking 20-day custody of Rana.

Advocate Piyush Sachdeva from the Delhi Legal Services Authority is Rana's lawyer.

## Terror trail

Tahawwur Rana's extradition to India was finalised in the terror case trial after years of legal hurdles

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**Feb. 11, 2025:** U.S. approves extradition, a day before Narendra Modi-Donald Trump meet

**Feb. 13, 2025:** Rana seeks relief again; Modi and Trump issue joint extradition statement

**Apr. 7, 2025:** Chief Justice rejects final appeal

**Apr. 10, 2025:** NIA brings Rana to New Delhi for prosecution

**Complex case:** NIA officials with Tahawwur Rana on his arrival in Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Rana was brought to the Patiala House Court in a cavalcade of vehicles, including a jail van, an armoured Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) vehicle and an ambulance. Ahead of the production of Rana before the court, the Delhi Police removed presspersons and members of the public from the court premises, citing security concerns.

Rana's extradition trig-

gered a heated exchange between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress, with the ruling party asserting that it reflected new India's zero-tolerance resolve toward terrorism, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Congress, however, slammed the government for "rushing to take credit" claiming that the extradition was the result of years

of diplomatic groundwork started in the UPA era.

Tihar Jail officials said all preparations have been made for his incarceration in a high-security ward.

Born in Pakistan, Rana studied at the Pakistani military academy in Hassan Abdal in Pakistan's Punjab province where he became friends with David Coleman Headley aka Daood Gilani, the Lashkar-

## Pakistan claims Rana is Canadian, denies any link

**NEW DELHI**

Pakistan on Thursday tried to distance itself from Tahawwur Hussain Rana. Its Foreign Ministry spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan told reporters that Rana had not attempted to renew his Pakistani citizenship since he left the country, stressing that Rana was a Canadian citizen. » PAGE 5

e-Taiba (LeT) operative who conducted reconnaissance for the Mumbai attacks between November 26 and 29, 2008.

The attacks left 166 people dead and 238 injured. Rana had served as a doctor in the Pakistani army for several years, before he moved to Canada and then to the United States, procuring citizenship in both countries.

It is alleged that Headley made eight visits to India for reconnaissance of potential targets. During those visits, he contacted Rana 231 times and kept him in the loop on the attack plans.

Headley also opened a Mumbai branch office of Rana's immigration law business for use as a front, and Rana helped him secure an Indian business visa. Days before the terror strikes, in November 2008, Rana and his wife had travelled to Mumbai, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Kerala during an 11-visit to India.

### Long legal process

After a Ministry of Home Affairs directive, the NIA registered a case against Headley and Rana on November 11, 2009, alleging a criminal conspiracy among members of Pakistan-based banned terror outfits LeT and Harkat-ul-

Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), to commit terrorist acts in Delhi and other parts of India. The agency filed a chargesheet against them and seven others on December 24, 2011.

Based on the findings, India moved a formal request in December 2019 for Rana's extradition from the U.S., where court proceedings began on June 10, 2020.

A U.S. court approved the extradition on May 16, 2023, which was then challenged. However, on August 15 last year, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the order. The U.S. Supreme Court also denied Rana's review petition on January 21, 2025.

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# RTI Act will not restrict disclosure, says Minister

**Aroon Deep**

NEW DELHI

The upcoming amendment to the Right to Information Act, 2005, will maintain “the need for transparency in public life”, and will “not restrict disclosure of personal information”, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a letter to Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Thursday.

Mr. Ramesh had raised civil society concern that the Digital Personal Data Protection Act’s amendments to the RTI Act would allow the government to deny information on subsidy allocations and other

schemes if the personal information of citizens and officials are involved.

The amendment – which will kick in when the DPDP Rules are notified in the coming weeks to enforce the Act – will be a significant blow to the RTI Act, according to activists. Civil society groups, spanning the gamut from digital rights advocates to pro-transparency outfits, have raised an alarm over this amendment for years. Over 120 Opposition MPs have now signed a letter to Mr. Vaishnaw, seeking a repeal of the amendment.

In his letter defending the amendment, Mr. Vaishnaw cited the Supreme Court’s right to privacy judgment in 2017, which



Ashwini Vaishnaw

held the right to informational privacy as fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. There is a “need for harmonious provisions between the right to information and the right to privacy” laws, he said.

However, activists say that this balance has already

been achieved in the RTI Act. Section 8(1)(j), the exemption for personal information that is in the existing version of the RTI law, “was very nuanced because it stopped any vicarious seeking of information,” said Anjali Bhardwaj, co-convenor of the National Campaign for the People’s Right to Information (NCPRI). She noted that “there was a lot of care that was taken to balance out the right to privacy and the right to information” even before the law was finalised in 2005.

Ms. Bhardwaj said on Thursday that Mr. Vaishnaw’s response “does not acknowledge the amendments”, which “will severely curtail people’s

right to access information that they need to expose corruption and abuse of power and to hold governments accountable.”

Another RTI amendment in the DPDP Act deletes a provision that states that “any information that cannot be denied to the Parliament and State legislature cannot be denied to citizens.” Mr. Vaishnaw’s response is silent on that front too, Ms. Bhardwaj said.

Mr. Vaishnaw said that information that is specifically required to be disclosed “under legal obligations” would continue to be disclosed, insisting that the amendments were carried out to “prevent potential misuse of the law”.

# Balancing Transparency and Privacy in RTI and DPDP Acts

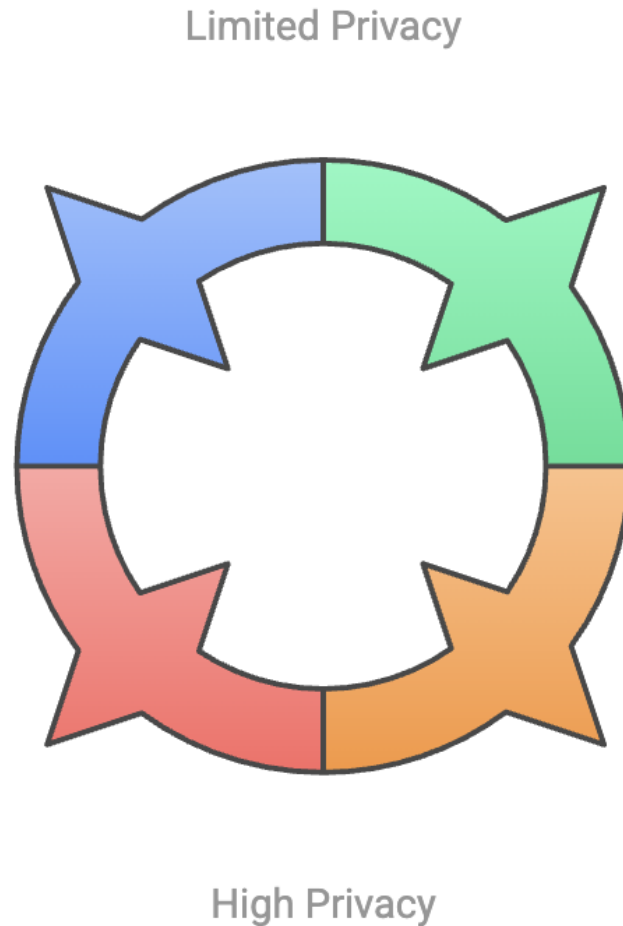
## Privacy Concerns Addressed

Amendments prioritize privacy, addressing civil society fears.

Limited Transparency

## Potential Privacy Overreach

DPDP Act risks excessive privacy, limiting information access.



Limited Privacy

## Continued RTI Transparency

RTI Act maintains public interest transparency despite concerns.

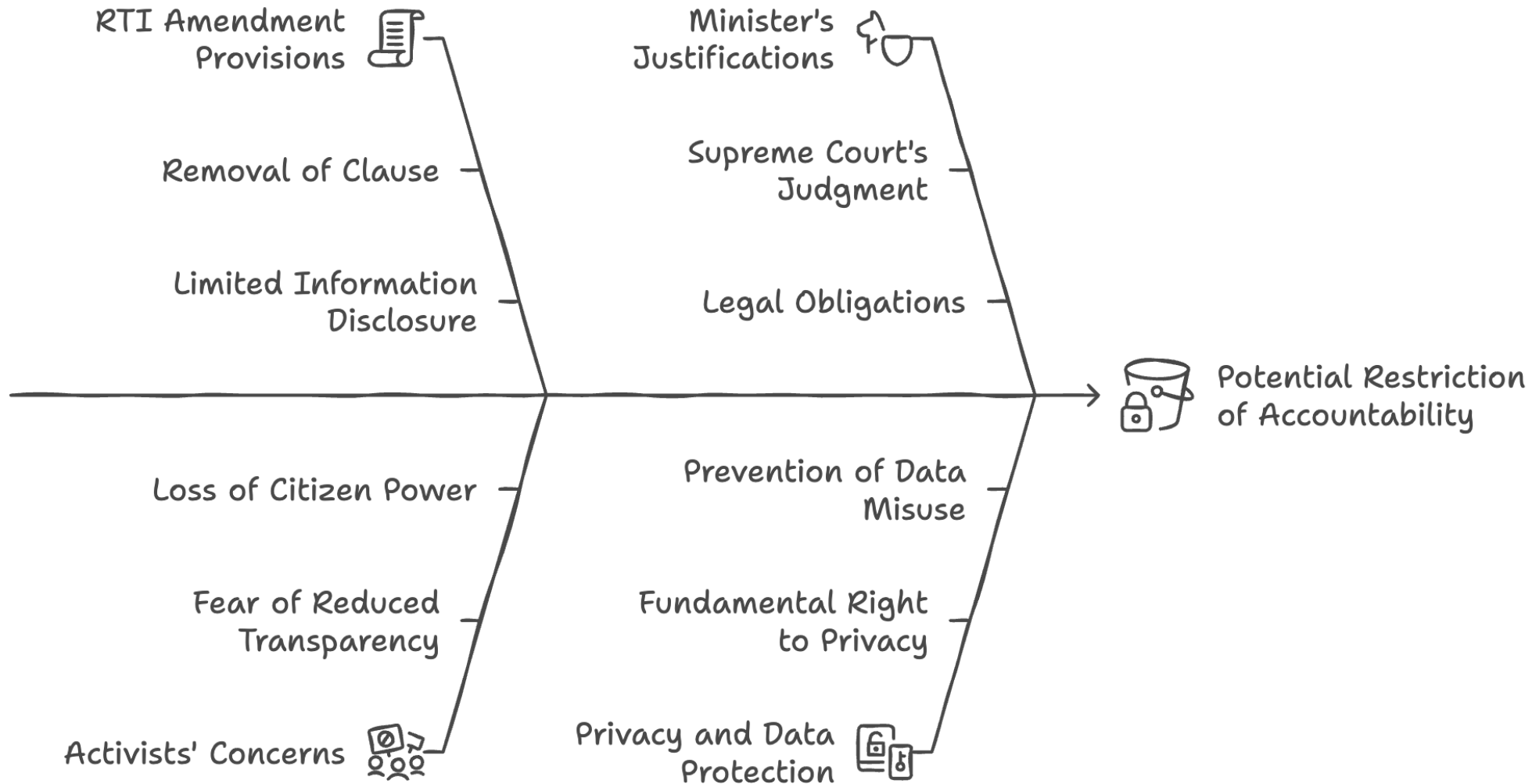
High Transparency

## Transparency Compromised

Opposition fears RTI transparency compromised by DPDP Act.



# Analyzing the Impact of RTI Amendment on Transparency



## RTI Act 2005 vs. RTI (Amendment) Act 2019 – Comparison Table

Aspect	Original RTI Act, 2005	RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019
<b>Tenure of Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and State Information Commissioners (SICs)</b>	Fixed term of 5 years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier	<b>Term and age limit removed;</b> now determined by central government
<b>Salary of CIC/SICs</b>	Equivalent to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners respectively	<b>Salary, allowances and service conditions to be prescribed by the Central Government</b>
<b>Autonomy</b>	Ensured through fixed terms and salaries defined in the Act	Reduced due to <b>executive control</b> over tenure and salary
<b>Appointment Authority</b>	CIC/SICs appointed by the <b>President/Governor</b> on the recommendation of a committee	<b>Unchanged</b> , but impact reduced due to govt's control on service terms
<b>Power to Frame Rules</b>	<b>Defined in the Act</b>	<b>Greater rule-making power</b> shifted to central government

## Key Concerns about the 2019 Amendment

Concern	Explanation
Dilution of Independence	Executive control over tenure and salary may affect neutrality of information officers
Centralization of Power	Allows Centre to set conditions, which may vary case to case
Against Original Spirit of RTI	RTI aimed at transparency; this may compromise autonomy of Information Commission

## RTI Act Still Ensures:

- Right to seek information from public authorities
- Obligation of public authorities to respond within 30 days
- Appeals to First Appellate Authority and CIC/SICs

The following have held the post of the Central Information Commissioners:

#### List of Central Information Commissioners<sup>[4]</sup>

No. ↕	Name ↕	Portrait ↕	Took office ↕	Left office ↕
1	<a href="#">Wajahat Habibullah</a>		26 October 2005	19 September 2010
2	<a href="#">A. N. Tiwari</a>		30 September 2010	18 December 2010
3	<a href="#">Satyananda Mishra</a>		19 December 2010	4 September 2013
4	<a href="#">Deepak Sandhu</a> ( <i>First women CIC</i> )		5 September 2013	18 December 2013
5	<a href="#">Sushma Singh</a>		19 December 2013	21 May 2014
6	<a href="#">Rajiv Mathur</a>		22 May 2014	22 August 2014
7	<a href="#">Vijai Sharma</a>		10 June 2015	1 December 2015
8	<a href="#">Radha Krishna Mathur</a>		4 January 2016	24 November 2018
9	<a href="#">Sudhir Bhargava</a>		1 January 2019	11 January 2020
10	<a href="#">Bimal Julka</a> <sup>[5]</sup>		19 February 2020	31 October 2020
11	<a href="#">Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha</a> <sup>[6]</sup>		7 November 2020	3 October 2023
12	<a href="#">Heeralal Samariya</a> <sup>[7]</sup>		6 November 2023	13 September 2025



# Text & Context

THE HINDU

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**GRAPHICALLY SPEAKING**

## Democracies in decline

Across the world, liberal democracies are in decline, while closed autocracies are on the rise. This trend, which began in the 2010s, has worsened in the 2020s

Kushal Varma 1 V  
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The number of closed autocracies has increased in the 2020s—reversing the steady decline seen since the 1980s, according to the V-Dem Institute. The most significant rise in closed autocracies has occurred in West Asia and North Africa, as well as in South Asia. In Europe and Central Asia, liberal democracies are rapidly shrinking, while electoral democracies are gaining ground.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, both trends—democratic erosion and autocratic consolidation—are evident.

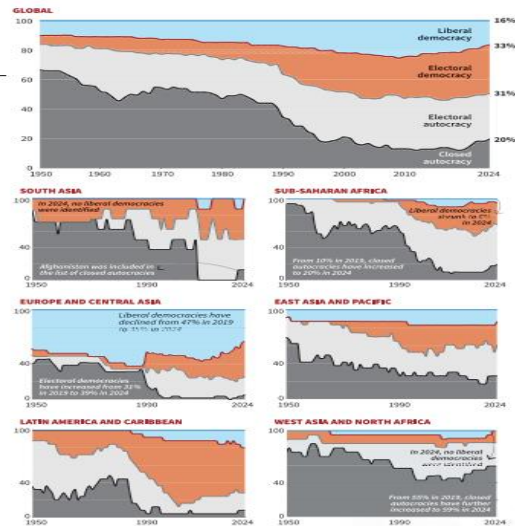
While the Latin American & Caribbean and East Asia & Pacific regions have not reflected the recent erosion of democratic values to the same extent,

their existing state is far from ideal. Closed autocracies are defined by the absence of multiparty elections and a lack of fundamental democratic principles such as freedom of speech and expression. Electoral autocracies, while allowing multiparty elections, fall short in upholding these core freedoms. Electoral democracies offer both elections and some civil liberties, but only to a moderate degree. Liberal democracies, by contrast, ensure a robust balance of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, along with strong protections for civil liberties. India has been classified as an electoral autocracy since 2017 and has remained the same since then.

The following graphs and conclusions are based on the V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report 2025.

**TRENDS ACROSS REGIONS**

As of 2024, 20% of the 179 countries assessed are closed autocracies, up from 12% in 2019. In the same period, the share of liberal democracies has declined to 16% from 21%.



**DEMOCRACY IN PERIL**

According to the V-Dem's latest report, the aspect of democracy that has seen the most significant decline is freedom of expression. This includes key components such as government censorship of the media, restrictions on academic and cultural expression, and the harassment of journalists. A total of 44 countries, including India, have experienced a deterioration in this area.

- Equally concerning is the growing use of disinformation and political polarisation by governments worldwide. Disinformation tactics have also been employed by governments in 31 countries, including El Salvador, Georgia, Hungary, India, and Serbia, the report added.
- More widespread, however, is the surge in political polarisation, which has intensified in 45 countries. The report highlights that "most autocratising countries have toxic levels of polarisation," citing Hungary, India, and Peru as key examples.
- Additionally, the report notes a sharp rise in government intimidation repression tactics during election periods. This trend has worsened in 23 countries, including India.
- Another area of concern is the increasing threat to the autonomy of election management bodies. Attacks have become more common in 11 of the 43 autocratising countries, including Russia and Indonesia.

DESIGN: SANJAY GARHESH T

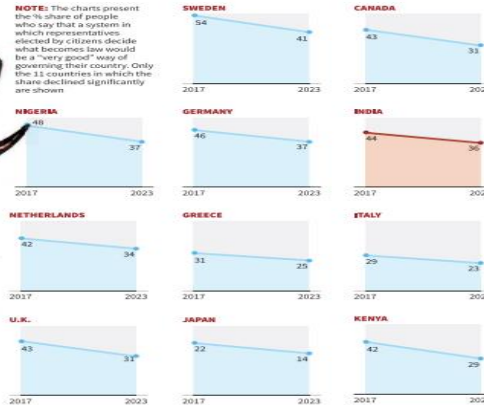


**PUBLIC OPINION**

Public opinion surveys also indicate a growing preference for strong leaders who can make decisions without interference from courts or Parliaments in some countries, including India. At the same time, support for representative democracy has declined in many countries, including India. The following findings are based on data from a Pew Research Center survey.

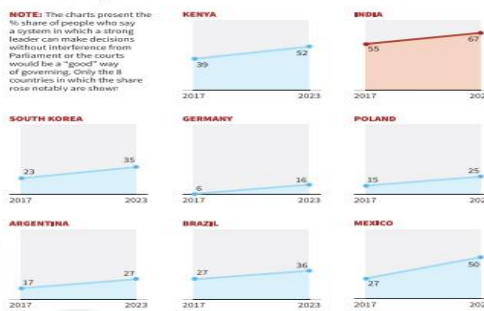
**SUPPORT FOR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY**

In 11 of the 22 countries where comparable data from 2017 is available, the share of people who describe representative democracy as a "very good" way to govern has declined significantly by 2023. For example, in India, 46% of respondents viewed representative democracy very positively in 2017, compared to just 36% in 2023.



**SUPPORT FOR RULE BY AUTOCRATIC LEADER**

Support for a system in which a strong leader can make decisions without checks from courts or Parliaments has risen in 8 of the 22 countries surveyed. This increase is particularly notable in all three Latin American countries included in the study, as well as in Kenya, India, South Korea, Germany, and Poland. For example, in India, 55% of respondents had said a strong leader is good in 2017, this increased to 67% by 2023.



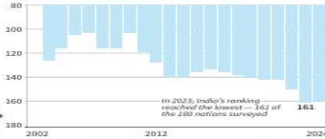
India is part of both the groups. In which, the share of people who described representative democracy as "very good" declined, while the share of people who said that a strong leader deciding without interference was a "good" way of governing has increased.

According to the survey, strong support for representative democracy was common among people with higher education and those with lower incomes.

The survey also noted that support for the strong leader model was more likely to support the rule of a strong leader than those who identify themselves as "left"; the survey noted.

**PRESS FREEDOM IN INDIA**

As of 2024, India ranked 139 out of the 180 countries surveyed by Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF). The last time India ranked within the top 100 countries was in 2002. The decline in rankings became steeper since 2022, with India's ranking plummeting below 150.



DESIGN: SOUMYADIP SINHA

GRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

# Democracies in decline

Across the world, liberal democracies are in decline, while closed autocracies are on the rise. This trend, which began in the 2010s, has worsened in the 2020s

Kushal Varma | V  
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

**T**he number of closed autocracies have increased in the 2020s—reversing the steady decline seen since the 1980s, according to the V-Dem Institute. The most significant rise in closed autocracies has occurred in West Asia and North Africa, as well as in South Asia. In Europe and Central Asia, liberal democracies are rapidly shrinking, while electoral democracies are gaining ground.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, both trends—democratic erosion and autocratic consolidation—are evident.

While the Latin American & Caribbean and East Asia & Pacific regions have not reflected the recent erosion of democratic values to the same extent,

their existing state is far from ideal.

Closed autocracies are defined by the absence of multiparty elections and a lack of fundamental democratic principles such as freedom of speech and expression. Electoral autocracies, while allowing multiparty elections, fall short in upholding these core freedoms. Electoral democracies offer both elections and some civil liberties, but only to a moderate degree. Liberal democracies, by contrast, ensure a robust balance of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, along with strong protections for civil liberties. India has been classified as an electoral autocracy since 2017 and has remained the same since then.

The following graphs and conclusions are based on the V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report 2025.

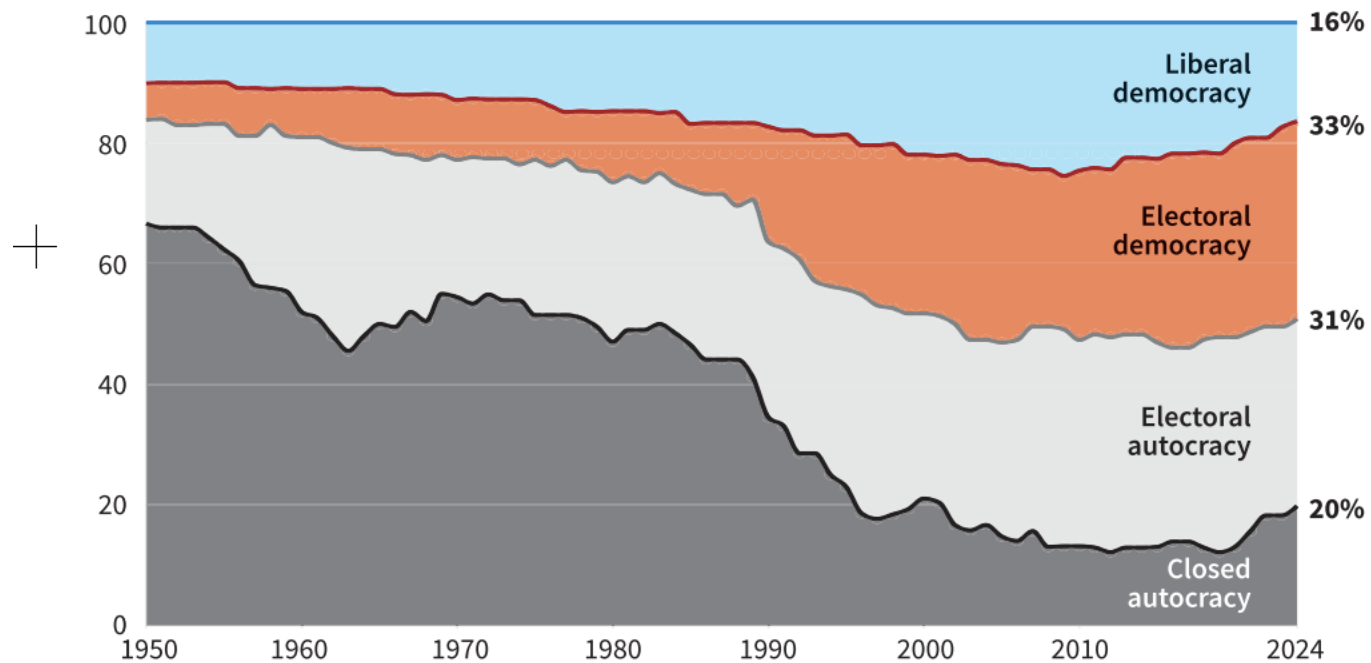




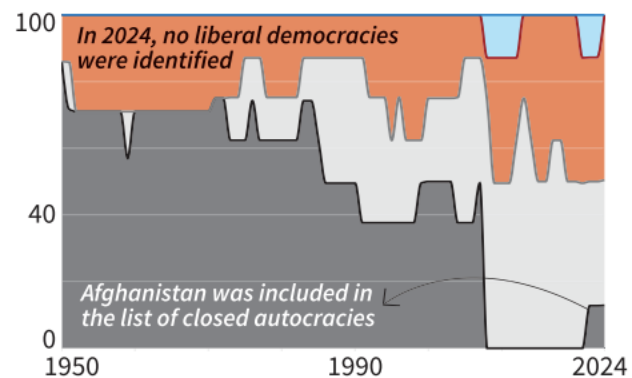
## TRENDS ACROSS REGIONS

As of 2024, 20% of the 179 countries assessed are closed autocracies, up from 12% in 2019. In the same period, the share of liberal democracies has declined to 16% from 21%

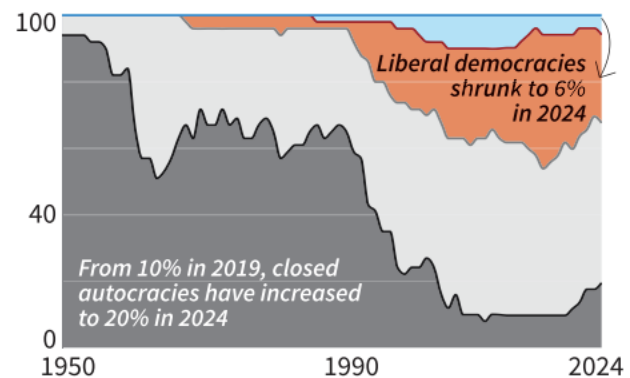
### GLOBAL



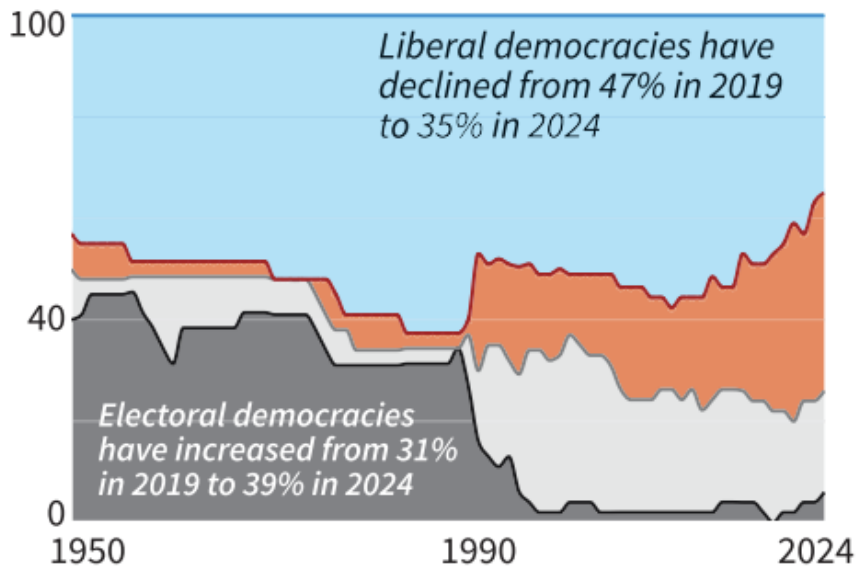
### SOUTH ASIA



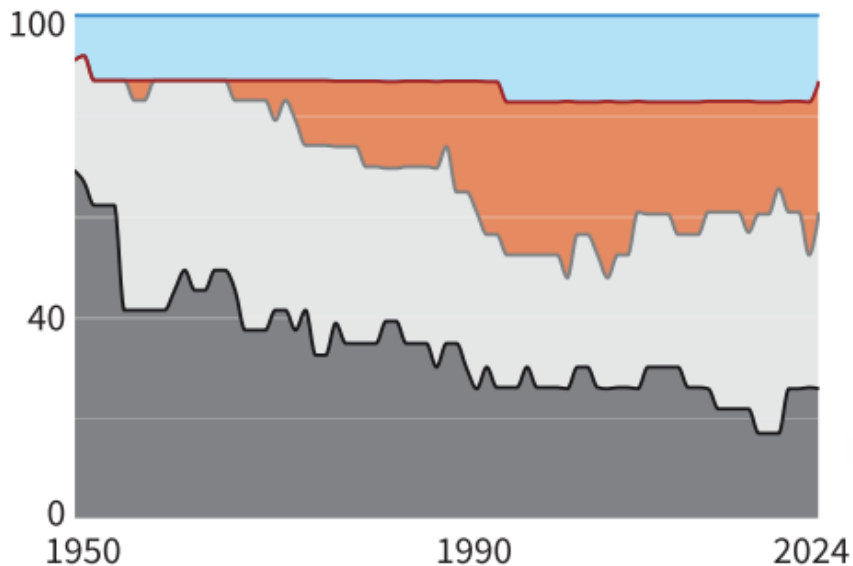
### SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



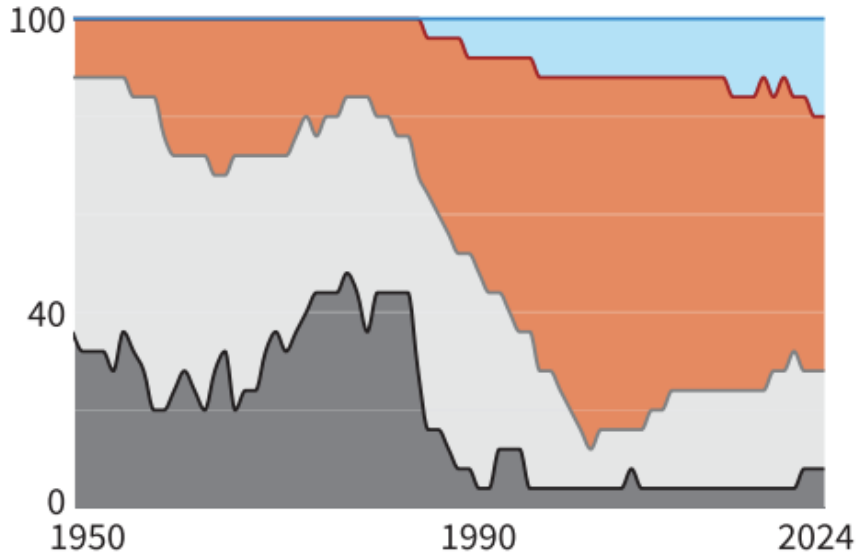
### EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



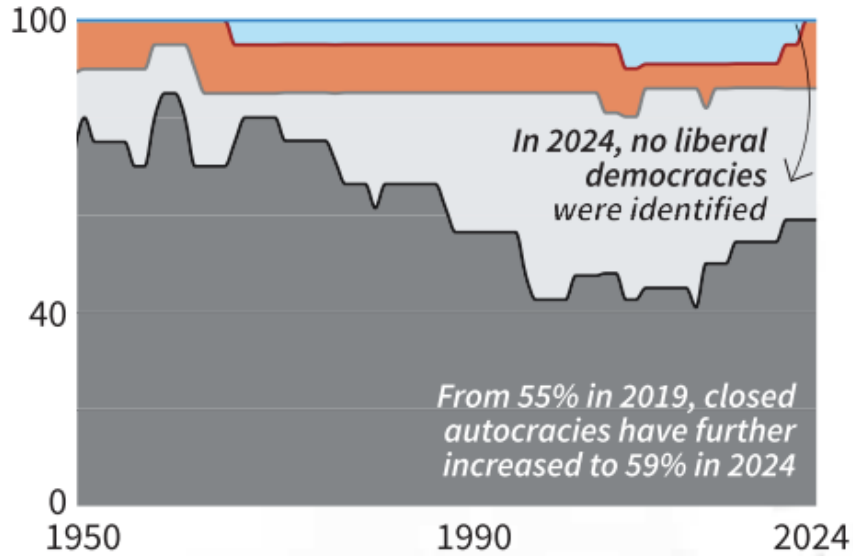
### EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC



### LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN



### WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA





## DEMOCRACY IN PERIL

According to the V-Dem's latest report, the aspect of democracy that has seen the most significant decline is freedom of expression. This includes key components such as government censorship of the media, restrictions on academic and cultural expression, and the harassment of journalists. A total of 44 countries, including India, have experienced a deterioration in this area.

■ Equally concerning is the growing use of disinformation and political polarisation by governments worldwide. Disinformation tactics have been employed by governments in 31 countries, including El Salvador, Georgia, Hungary, India, and Serbia, the report added.

■ More widespread, however, is the surge in political polarisation, which has intensified in 45 countries. The report highlights that “most autocratising countries have toxic levels of polarisation,” citing Hungary, India, and Peru as key examples.

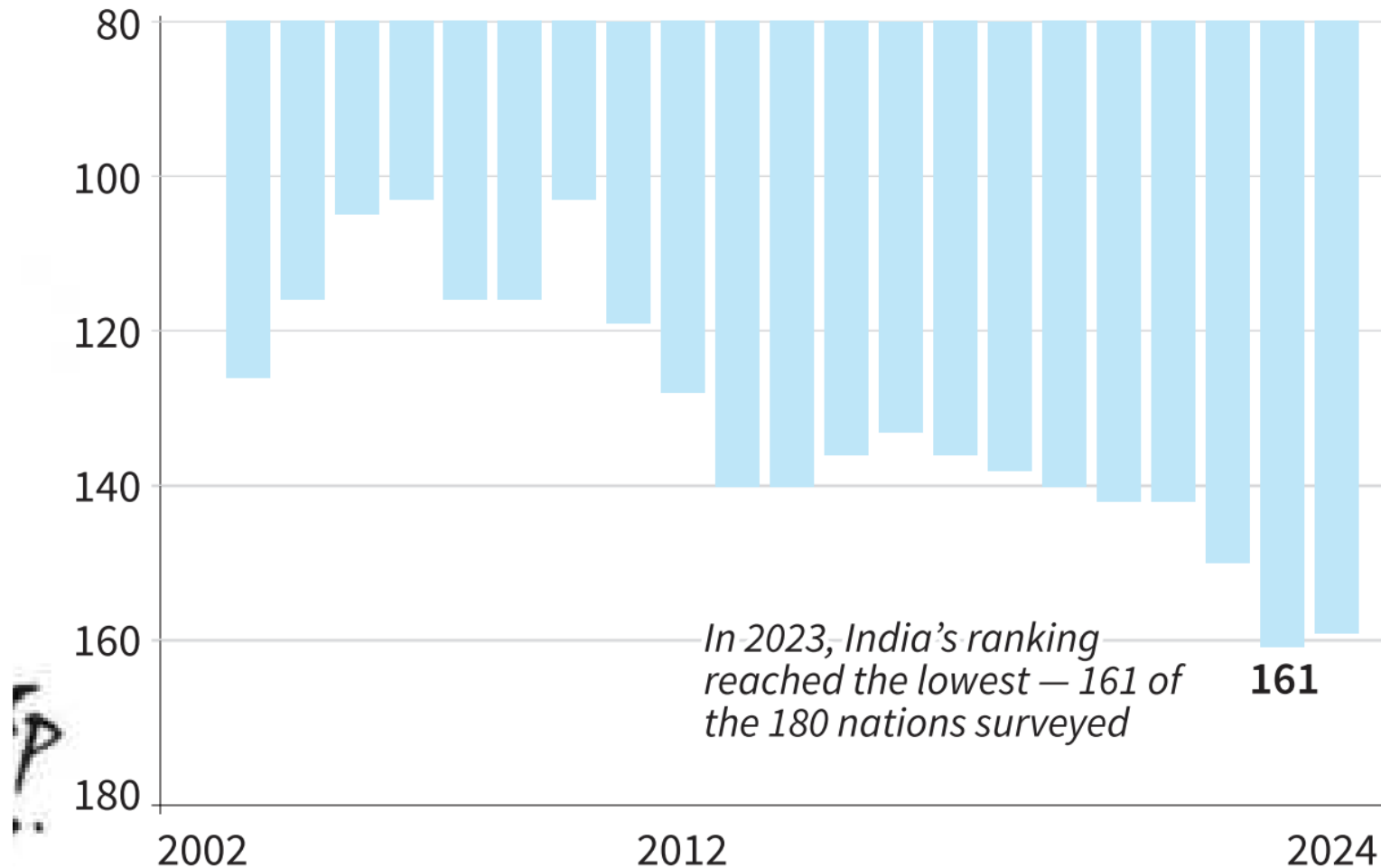
■ Additionally, the report notes a sharp rise in government intimidation of opposition parties during election periods. This trend has worsened in 21 countries, including India.

■ Another area of concern is the increasing threat to the autonomy of election management bodies. Attacks have become more common in 21 of the 45 autocratising countries, including Russia and Indonesia.



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# Phule: a constant gardener of social revolution

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule continues to be a source of inspiration to many progressives even today, we look back at his actions and opinions from his life and writings, where he envisions a society liberated of orthodox shell

Prathmesh Kher

Jyotiba Phule was born on April 11, 1827, in the Mali caste, a community traditionally occupied with gardening and floristry. In 1848, Phule was invited to attend a wedding of one of his Brahmin friends. The relatives of the groom insulted and abused him while referring to his 'lower' caste. Phule left the procession, having made up his mind to defy the prevailing social system and its incumbent caste oppression. He visited a girls' school in Ahmednagar run by missionary Cynthia Farrar, and also came into contact with Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, which had criticised Christian orthodoxy much in the same way as Phule would come to contend with his Hindu counterpart.

The very same year, Phule and his wife Savitribai cofounded the first school for girls in India. Phule was only 21 years old at the time; the couple opened 18 more schools in the next three years. By 1855, Phule had also opened night schools in Pune, intended as a centre of learning for workers, farmers, and working women who were busy during the day. Phule's rapid success in this emancipatory revolution was opposed by the orthodoxy.

In his later years, Phule had vociferously opposed first Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, and then his protégé Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Phule preferred to work with the British government to improve the lot of the untouchables and the depressed castes and the emancipation of women, while Tilak and other orthodox nationalists saw the British government as an occupying force intent on changing what they felt was the fundamental character of the Hindu religion. Nonetheless, Phule had the discernment to aid the deliverance of an opponent when he bailed out an imprisoned Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar from Mumbai's Dargul Jail.

Phule also founded the *Satyashodhak Samaj* (Society of Truth-Seekers) in September 1873. The body was intended as an alternative to the largely upper-caste dominated reform movements that had been surging in India. These included the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, as well as the Arya Samaj movements.

**Breaking the chain**  
Revolution is a vehicle for change—social, economic, and political. The *Bombay Times* and *Journal of Commerce* had in 1857 called the sepoy revolt "a deadly national rebellion". However, Phule could not continue to affiliate with the sepoy revolt, seeing it as a retrogression towards the ascendant theocracy of the Peshwa rule. He could not see a way to reconcile his social revolution with the tempest of 1857. Phule felt that the obstinacy of the orthodox upper-caste Hindus would consign the Dalits back into a state of deprecation.

Writing in *Gulamgiri* (Slavery), Phule says, "This system of slavery, to which the Brahmins reduced the lower classes, is in no respects inferior to that which obtained a few years ago in America. In the days of rigid Brahmin dominancy, so lately as that of the time of the Peshwa, my Sadra brethren had even greater hardships and oppression practised upon them than what the slaves in America had to suffer. To this system of selfish superstition and bigotry, we are to attribute the stagnation and all the evils



Defiant spirit: In 1848, Phule and wife Savitribai cofounded the first school for girls in India. FILE PHOTO

under which India has been groaning for many centuries past."

"Only slaves can understand what it is to be a slave and what joy it is to be delivered from the chains of slavery. Now the only difference between them and the slaves in America is that whereas the blacks were captured and sold as slaves, the shudras and atshudras were conquered and enslaved by the bhats and brahmins," he states.

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"Brahman: But Tatya (younger brother), which religion do you belong to? Shudra: Forget God and serve the brahmins! Do you think this ought to be our religion? We shall adopt Christianity or Islam whenever we feel like for our convenience. Or perhaps we shall ask for a religion for us from our Creator. You do not have to worry about us."

**A constructive approach**  
In his *Shetkarvanchhe Asud* (Farmer's Whip), Phule argues for a constructive

approach on the part of the administration.

Many of his ideas therein provide a secular alternative to resolving the extant questions of cow slaughter, the increase in crop production, and the development of civil infrastructure.

"The benevolent government should educate all the farmers, and until they become mature enough to use machines to do the usual things on the farms like European farmers, all the white people and the Mussalmins should slaughter goats and sheep instead of slaughtering cows and oxen; or they should import cattle and slaughter and eat them here, because otherwise there will not be sufficient supply of cattle for the farms, and there will not be enough compost and other fertiliser as well, and so neither the farmer, nor the government will benefit," Phule writes.

Arguing for the involvement of military administration in the work of civil construction, Phule says, "...construct small dams and bunds in such a way that this water would seep into the ground, and only later go and meet streams and rivers. This would make the land very fertile, and the soldiers in general, having got used to working in open air, will also improve their health and become strong. Even if they labour to the value of one anna every day, this will mean an increase in the government's earnings to the tune of twenty-five lakh per year, because our careful government has, including the police department, at least two lakh sepoys."

"... the government should allow the farmer to collect all the silt and other things extracted from rivers and lakes, as in the olden times, and it should also return all the cow pastures to the villages, which it has included in its 'Forest'. It should, however, make sure that no firewood is collected, or land tilled in the areas that belong to it, and it should also forbid the cutting of wood for selling as wood for construction and destroy the

oppressive the Forest Department," Phule contends.

**The flowering of a true faith**  
Phule shared a complex and evolving relationship with both doctrinal religion and the idea of God. In his early years, he credits his childhood Muslim friends for revealing to him the fallacy of the Brahminical faith, and later still the work of the Christian missionaries likewise provides him with a robust critique of Hindu orthodoxy. Phule even wrote an abhang titled *Munaz Mahammadana* (Muhammad the man), which extolls the prophet of Islam as having liberated his people from the yoke of superstition and orthodoxy of his age. But Phule was also inspired by Paine's *Age of Reason*, and in his later years drew on the esoteric strain of humanistic faith therein.

An echo of this rationalist tendency is most evident in his *Sarvasanjik Satya Dharma Pustak*, a sort of last testament of his beliefs and convictions. In it, Phule responds to a query regarding the existence or lack thereof of a true scripture in this manner, "All the religious and revelatory books that man has produced on our planet, one and all, do not contain a consistent universal truth. This is so because in every such book are to be seen passages interpolated into those texts by certain groups of individuals as the situation in their view warranted and as their dogmatism and mulishness dictates. Consequently, those religions or faiths did not see the final analysis work towards the good of all. This in turn resulted in sects and sectarianism. Small wonder that these sects hated and turned against each other."

Rejecting sectarianism and supremacism, Phule reminds the reader that, "In sum, this material system and naturally the planet earth which we inhabit are created by one Creator. Why is it then that the human beings living in different States and nations hate each other? How and why do the folk of different passions of religions and national hatreds generated? There are any number of rivers on our planet, and they eventually meet the sea. How and why, then can only one of these rivers be sacred? Does that sacred river ever hesitate to carry dogs' excreta to the sea?"

"The character of the material sacredness of some human beings over others, Phule stipulates that this is "clearly untenable". "All human beings are created by one Creator, equipped with similar physical and intellectual faculties, and the crime of one man being 'sacred' generation after generation? Are they not born and do they not die like everyone else?"

Writing against the unevenness of polygamy, Phule presents a polyandrous alternative to offer his readers. "Some lustful men who marry more than once, maintain almost a harem; justify their action with reference to some senseless religious text written by equally men. How would it be if some women were to marry more than one man to satisfy their lust? Would not even think of such a thing, and would be critical of their behaviour?" Phule contends therein.

Phule reminds the reader that the pernicious practice of caste is a human invention. Of it he opines, "Animals, birds, etc., all differ from each other anatomically. Likewise, two-legged human beings are different from the four-legged animals. It is said that the Arya Brahmins have created the four castes. He would have done so for animals as well. Can you tell me then who are the brahmins among the donkeys, crows, etc.?"

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Phule's life and times continue to be a source of inspiration to many progressives even today. His struggles, sometimes at risk to his own life and limb, and his tenacious pursuit of the ideal of a society liberated of its orthodox shell, are something worth learning from for our own age.

Please send in your answers to [dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in](mailto:dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in)

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:**  
1. Which team has played the most finals without winning a title? **Ans: Kerala Blasters**  
2. Which is the most successful ISL team considering both league shields and ISL Trophies? **Ans: Mumbai City FC (2 shields and 2 trophies)**  
3. Which continental tournament does the shield winner qualify to play in? **Ans: AFC Champions League 2**  
4. Name the first team to defend the League Shield? **Ans: Mohun Bagan SG**  
5. 13 teams compete in this season's ISL. How many teams participated in the inaugural edition of the competition? **Ans: 8**  
Visual: This team became the first team to be promoted to the ISL, establishing the competition status as India's top-tier league. Name the team and the league it was promoted to. **Ans: FC Goa**  
Early Birds: Priyadarshini Singh | Sunny Kumar



FROM THE ARCHIVES

## Know Your English

K. Subrahmanian  
S. Viswanathan

"Looks like the hawala case has made many politicians antsy."  
"Antsy? What does it mean?"  
"It means 'nervous' or 'restless'. For example, 'You look a little antsy today. What's the matter?'"

"Meaning, why are you so nervous?"  
"Exactly. Here's another example. I get antsy before exams."

"Who doesn't? My grandmother gets antsy whenever she has to visit the doctor."

"It's the doctor who gets antsy when I take my grandmother to him! How is your grandmother feeling now?"

"Pretty bad. She's still got the pneumonia."

"You don't use 'the' before 'pneumonia'. You usually say, 'Prem has pneumonia', or 'Shashi has pneumonia'."

"I see. What are the other diseases where I don't have to use the definite article 'the'?"

"Good question. Let me see now. You don't use an article with 'cancer'. You have to say, 'my teacher has cancer'."

"Cancer has become very common these days."

"I know! 'Malaria' is another disease which doesn't take 'the' before it."

"I had malaria when I was young. But tell me, what about 'chicken pox'? Do you use an article before it?"

"It depends. You can either say, 'My neighbour has chicken pox' or 'My neighbour has the chicken pox'."

"So both are possible."

"Yes. That's right."

"How about...?"

"... I've had enough of diseases. Chill out, will you?"

"Chill out?"

"It means 'to calm down, relax'."

"So, if somebody is shouting at me, can I say, 'Hey, chill out!'"

"Yes, certainly can. Here's another example. 'The captain asked the team to chill out before taking the field.'"

"When the players started fighting, the umpires asked them to chill out."

"May be that's what we should ask our antsy politicians to do. Instead of accusing one another, they should just chill out."

Published in *The Hindu* on February 13, 1996

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) with the subject 'Text & Context'

## THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on Dalit activists on Jyotiba Phule's birth anniversary

Srinivasan Ramani  
Prathmesh Kher

**QUESTION 1**  
On 20 March 1927, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar led an agitation to allow Dalits to use water in a public tank in a paigad district. Name the place.

**QUESTION 2**  
Savitribai Phule wrote a collection of poems in 1854. Name the collection.

**QUESTION 3**  
This Dalit freedom fighter was India's Defence Minister during the Bangladesh War of Liberation. Name him.

**QUESTION 4**  
This Dalit activist from the then Madras Presidency represented Dalits in the two Round Table Conferences held with the British in the early 1930s alongside Dr. Ambedkar. Name him.

**QUESTION 5**  
This social reformer launched the Sadujana Paripalana Sangham to campaign for the education of Dalits in Kerala in 1907. Name him.



**Visual Questions** Identify this Dalit activist and politician who coined the popular slogan, "Gonye nu juchhale tozme tereko, gonye tozme gonye" (you keep the cow's tail, give us our land) in a protest movement in Gujarat in mid-2016. FILE PHOTO



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Rejecting sectarianism and supremacism, Phule reminds the reader that, "In sum, this solar system and naturally the planet earth which we inhabit are created by one Creator. Why is it then that the human beings living in different States and nations hate each other? How and why are the foolish passions of religions and national hatreds generated? There are any number of rivers on our planet. All of them eventually meet the sea. How and why, then can only one of those rivers be sacred? Does that sacred river ever hesitate to carry dogs' excreta to the sea?"

Denying any fundamental sacredness of some human beings over others, Phule stipulates that this is "clearly untenable". "All human beings on our planet are equipped with similar physical and intellectual facilities. How can some of them be 'sacred' generation after generation? Are they not born and do they not die like everyone else, and do they not have qualities good and bad like everyone else?" he writes.

Writing against the unevenness of polygamy, Phule presents a polyandrous argument to offset his counterposition. "Some lustful men who marry more than once, maintain almost a harem; justify their action with reference to some senseless religious text written by equally mulish men. How would they take it if some women were to marry more than one man to satisfy their lust? Would not these men think of right and wrong and be critical of their behaviour?" Phule contends therein.

Phule reminds the reader that the pernicious practice of caste is a human invention. Of it he opines, "Animals, birds, etc., all differ from each other anatomically. Likewise, two-legged human beings are different from four-legged animals. It is said that the Arya Brahma has created the four castes. He would have done so for the animals as well. Can you tell me then who are the brahmins among the donkeys, crows, etc.?"

Phule's life and times continue to be a source of inspiration to many progressives to date. His struggles, sometimes at risk to his own life and limb, and his tenacious pursuit of the ideal of a society liberated of its orthodox shell, are something worth learning from for our own age.

# Key Milestones in Social Reform by Jyotirao Phule



**April 11, 1827**



Birth of Jyotirao Phule

**1848**



Insult at Brahmin wedding sparks caste system questioning

**1848**



Opening of the first school for girls in India

## Pioneering Educational Reforms in India

1848



Opening of the first school for girls in India

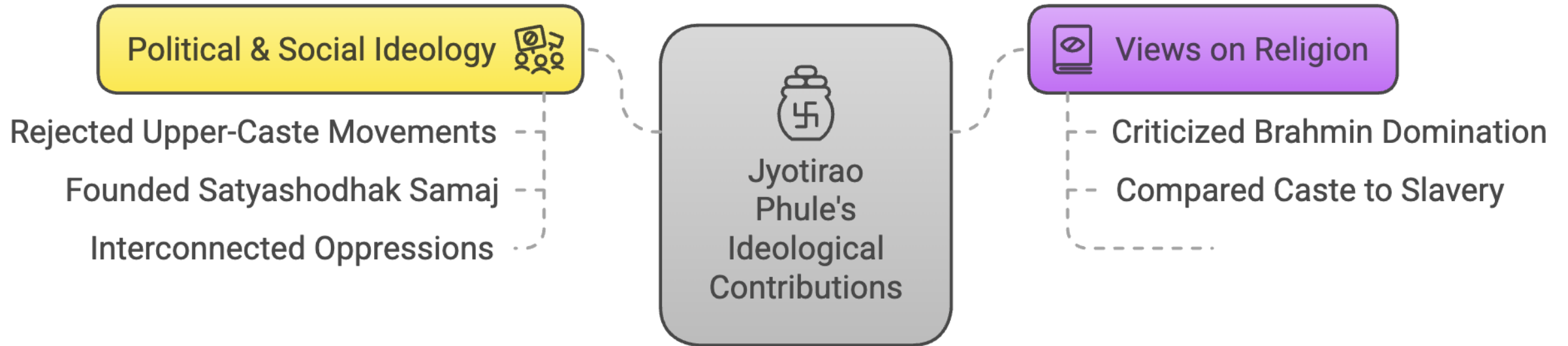
1848



Founding of a center for widow remarriage, Started night schools for workers, farms, and the poor.



# Jyotirao Phule's Ideological Contributions





# Ideological Influences on Panchayat Development

1

Paine's work promotes rational thought and progress.

**Thomas Paine's  
\*Age of Reason**

2

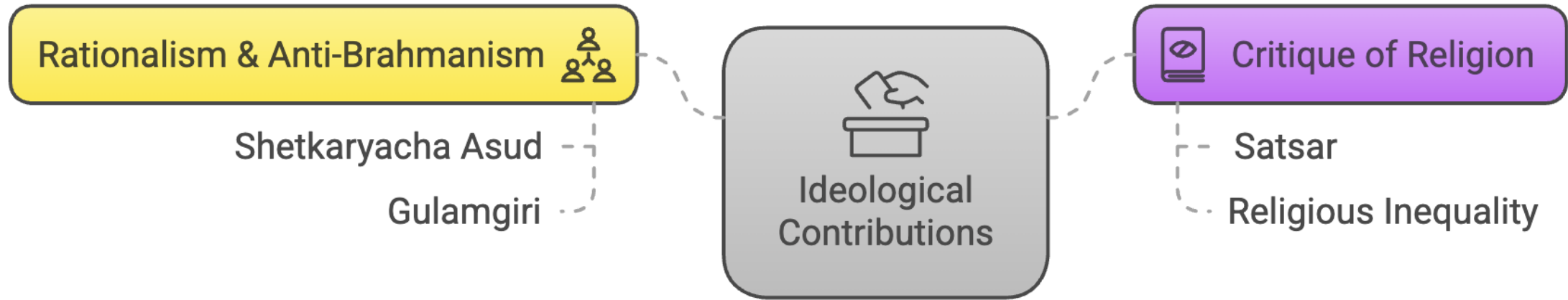
Colonial ideologies impact panchayat structures and policies.

**Colonial  
Ideologies**

**Panchayat  
Advancement  
Index**



# Ideological Contributions and Critiques



# Advocating Sustainable and Equitable Land Reforms



## **Secular Reforms**

Promotes land reforms based on equality and justice, free from religious bias.



## **Scientific Practices**

Encourages modern agricultural techniques like composting and irrigation for sustainability.



## **Equitable Ownership**

Advocates for fair distribution and ownership of land and livestock among farmers.

“All the religious and revelatory books... fail to offer consistent universal truth.”

“Only slaves can understand what it is to be a slave and why it is to be delivered from chains of slavery.”



## *On the draw*





# Sensational Barcelona destroys Dortmund

Lewandowski bags a brace to reach 40 goals for the season while Yamal proves unstoppable for the visitors; Kvaratskhelia's wonder-goal gives Paris Saint Germain the edge over Aston Villa

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

### Agence France-Presse

#### BARCELONA

**R**obert Lewandowski hit a brace to help a devastating Barcelona pour Borussia Dortmund 4-0 in a one-sided Champions League quarterfinal first leg on Wednesday.

Hansi Flick's Barca is a step away from reaching the semifinals for the first time since 2019 and extended its unbeaten run to 23 matches.

The five-time winner took the lead against last year's runner-up through red-hot winger Raphinha before Lewandowski reached 40 goals for the season with his double.

Teenager Lamine Yamal was an unstoppable force throughout and deftly prodded home Barcelona's fourth as Dortmund collapsed.

Barca, which last lifted the trophy in 2015 is aiming to seal a final four clash against Inter Milan or Bayern Munich when it visits Germany next Tuesday.



Sliding it in: Raphinha scores Barcelona's opener against Dortmund. AFP

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scored one of the great Champions League goals as Paris Saint-Germain came from behind to beat Aston Villa 3-1 in the first leg of their quarterfinal tie.

Morgan Rogers had given Villa a 55th-minute lead at the Parc des Princes to silence the home fans, but PSG was quickly back level through a fine strike by Declan Rice.

Kvaratskhelia then took

centre stage with a stunning strike on 49 minutes, before Nuno Mendes added a crucial third in stoppage time, giving PSG a significant two-goal cushion to take into the return in Birmingham next Tuesday.

Having eliminated Liverpool in the last 16, Luis Enrique's team is now in a very strong position to go on and reach the semifinals for the second season running.

Villa will need to produce a memorable fight-back at home if it is to make the last four of Europe's elite club competition for the first time since it lifted the trophy in 1982.

**The results (quarterfinals, first leg):** Barcelona 4, Borussia Dortmund 0; Paris Saint-Germain 3, Aston Villa 1; Manchester United 2, Bayern Munich 0.

## Suruchi and Saurabh mix air pistol bronze

### Sports Bureau

Suruchi Singh and Saurabh Chaudhary beat compatriot Manu Bhaker and Ravinder Singh 16-8 to win the mixed air pistol bronze in the shooting World Cup in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Thursday.

It was the second medal for Suruchi, who had earlier won the women's air pistol gold. Suruchi and Saurabh had missed the chance to fight for the gold by one point, with their combined score of 581.

In the event, the second Chinese team beat the main team, after both had shot 582 in qualification, to fetch both gold and silver.

China thus climbed further up on top of the table (five gold, two silver and three bronze). India was a close second (four gold, two silver and two bronze).

**The results:** 1. Chin 2 (94 Quante, Zhong Weni) 16 (582); 2. Chin (Yao Qianran, Hu Kaili) 10 (582); 3. India (Suruchi Singh, Saurabh Chaudhary) 16 (581); 4. 2024 (Manu Bhaker, Ravinder Singh) 8 (576).

## Indian boys lose to Australia

### Sports Bureau

Seventh seed Australia beat India 3-0 in the second long-pending administrative match of the Asia-Oceania World Junior Tennis under-16 boys' championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday.

It was the second defeat for India, following the one against top seed Korea. India will play its last league match against Pakistan on Friday.

**The results: League: Australia 3-0 (Novak Palombo 6-1, 6-1; Shivraj Bhamidipaty 6-1, 6-1; Shivraj Bhamidipaty 6-1, 6-1); India 0-3 (Australia 6-1, 6-1; Australia 6-1, 6-1; Australia 6-1, 6-1); Korea 3-0 (Australia 6-1, 6-1; Australia 6-1, 6-1; Australia 6-1, 6-1); Pakistan 0-3 (Australia 6-1, 6-1; Australia 6-1, 6-1; Australia 6-1, 6-1).**

## Australian schoolboy Gout runs sub-10s 100m twice

### ATHLETICS

#### Agence France-Presse

#### PERTH

Australian sprint prodigy Gout Guat dipped under the magic 10-second mark for the 100m twice on Friday to showcase his burgeoning potential, but both times were wind-assisted so did not officially count.

## Hopeful of getting Sports Governance bill passed: Mandavaya

### Uthra Ganesan

#### NEW DELHI

The National Sports Code has been a tricky issue for successive governments for a long time but the Sports Ministry is confident of finally getting it cleared in the near future.

Sports Minister Manu Sukh Mandavaya, who has been proactive in trying to settle long-pending administrative issues in Indian sports, has insisted that his only interest was developing and promoting the country's sports and sports persons and that he would continue to push for the adoption of the National Sports Governance Bill 2024 at the earliest.

"I have to do what is right and good for Indian sports, my responsibility is towards the country's sports and sports persons," he made it clear during an interaction on Thursday.

The minister reiterated that he would do everything possible to convince everyone and get the Bill passed soon.

He also expressed confidence that India would be getting hosting rights for the 2030 Commonwealth Games despite Canada and Nigeria throwing their hats into the ring at the last minute. The 2030 CWG will be a preparatory event towards the real big event the government hopes to bid for - the 2036 Olympics. "Everyone is welcoming the next step to mark it but we are confident of getting it," Mandavaya said. If successful, it will be the first big-ticket multi-discipline event in India since the controversially-marred 2010 edition and a big step towards strengthening India's claims for 2036.

A decision on the same is expected to be made over the next 18 months by the IOC under the newly-elected president Kirsty Coventry.

Mandavaya also announced youth initiatives by the ministry to further social participation and the FIT India movement, including a week-long visit with cultural and sporting activities in May at border villages under the Vilest Vibrant Village Campaign led by volunteers selected through My Bharat portal applications.

The MYAS will also organise padayatra across all state and UT capitals on April 13 and cleanliness drives in every district around BR Ambedkar's statue the next day to mark his birth anniversary. The ministry is also actively organising cycling events to encourage cycling for fitness.

## Cricket to feature six teams in 2028 LA Olympics

### Press Trust of India

#### NEW DELHI

Cricket will feature six teams battling for top honours when the sport returns to the Olympics at the 2028 Los Angeles Games after a gap of 128 years.

This was confirmed by the organisers on Wednesday. At LA 2028, cricket will be played on the T20 format, with six teams competing in both the men's and women's competitions.

Qualification criteria is yet to be confirmed but USA is likely to earn a direct spot as host nation. It is expected that top five teams in the ICC rankings within a certain cut-off date will qualify apart from the USA.

## Sindhu, Rajawat lose; Kapila-Crasto pair enters quarterfinals

### BADMINTON

#### Press Trust of India

#### WUJAO (CHINA)

P.V. Sindhu and Priyanouha Rajawat crashed out in the pre-quarterfinals of the Asian Badminton Championships on Thursday.

Sindhu lost 12-21, 21-16, 16-21 to world number four and third seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in women's singles.

Rajawat lost 14-21, 17-21 against world No. 7 and fifth seed Kodai Naraoka of Japan in the men's singles.

It was curtains for Kiran George as well in men's singles, as he lost 21-19, 13-21, 16-21 against Kamlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand.

India's campaign has ended in the men's and women's singles events.

However, the mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto entered the quarterfinals, beating Ye Hongwei and Nicole Gonzalez Chan of Chinese Taipei 12-21, 21-16, 21-18.

But the other Indian mixed doubles pair of Ashish Serya and Amrutha Pramuthesh exited after losing 11-21, 14-21 against top seed Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin of China.

**The results (pre-quarter):** Women: Akane Yamaguchi (Jpn) bt P.V. Sindhu 21-12, 16-21, 21-16.

Men: Kodai Naraoka (Jpn) bt Priyanouha Rajawat 21-14, 21-17, Kamlavut Vitidsarn (Tha) bt Kiran George 19-21, 21-13, 21-16.

**Mixed doubles:** Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto bt Ye Hongwei and Nicole Gonzalez Chan (Tpe) 12-21, 21-16, 21-18; Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin (Chn) bt Ashish Serya and Amrutha Pramuthesh 11-21, 21-14.



## Ju wins sixth game, takes a commanding 4-2 lead

### Sports Bureau

Defending champion Ju Wengjun posted a third win in four games to take a 4-2 lead over Chinese compatriot Tan Zhongyi in the FIDE women's World Championship.

In the sixth game in Shanghai on Thursday, Ju clinched victory in knight endgame in 52 moves.

## Amiya and Srabani claim titles

### INDIAN OPEN

#### Sports Bureau

#### RANCHI

Amiya Mallick topped the field but the 32-year-old was far from his best, clocking 10.66 seconds to win the 100m at the third Indian open athletics meet on Thursday.

The former National record holder, with a personal best of 10.26s, was returning to action after 2024 and although he has not slipped since then - he clocked the same at the Open Nationals back then - Indian men's spirit has quickened a lot and Amiya has work to do. It was a similar story among the women with Srabani Nanda completing the sprint double in 12.33s for 100m and 24.75s for 200 - that were still good enough to beat the field.

This was followed by a heavy downpour and storm that forced the organisers to stop the competition for more than two hours. Things remained bleak on resumption with

the lights going off midway through the competition.

The tough conditions meant several sub-par performances, including Sachin Yadav's in javelin which made only two attempts and had a best of 70.62m to place second.

**The results (winners only):** Men: 100m: 1. Amiya Mallick (Orh) 10.66; 200m: 1. Raja Babu Alam (Del) 21.33; 400m: 1. Rahul Kumar Githala (Raj) 47.73; 800m: 1. Shyam Khan (Del) 94.13; 1,500m: 1. Ashok Kumar (Del) 5:53.07; 5,000m: 1. Abhishek Pal (RSPB) 14:07.17; 10,000m: 1. Suman Barwal (Del) 29:50; Long jump: Mohd. Mubashir (Her) 7.65m; Triple jump: 1. Subodh Singh (Jhpr) 15.10m; Javelin: 1. Shivam Kumar (Del) 72.27m; Shot putt: 1. Chetan Kapoor (Har) 14.35m; Hammer throw: 1. Praveen Kumar (Raj) 62.41m.

Women: 200m: 1. Srabani Nanda (Orh) 12.33; 400m: 1. Nanda (Orh) 24.75; 800m: 1. Ruman Deyi (Bih) 1:22.74; 1,000m: 1. Aarti Dhillon (Har) 2:17.53; 1,500m: 1. Vinita Gupta (Orh) 4:26.62; 5,000m: 1. Sanjivani J. Joshi (UP) 34:40.37; Long jump: 1. Priya Rathore (Raj) 7.65m; Triple jump: 1. Meeta Anush [Jhpr] 13.03m; Discus: 1. Anush Kamboj (Pun) 47.18m.

## Verstappen will be out to silence McLarens in the battle of Bahrain

### FORMULA ONE

#### Reuters

#### SABAH

Formula One leader Lando Norris has Max Verstappen breathing down his neck and only a point separating the pair ahead of a Bahrain Grand Prix that could trigger a change at the top of Sunday.

Verstappen dominated last year's race at Sakhir, the now-four-times World champion leading from pole to flag with fastest lap as Red Bull celebrated a one-two finish for the second season in a row.

McLaren will be chasing its third successive double podium, and third win in four rounds, at what is a home race for the team's Bahraini owners.

Norris has led since he won last month's opener in Australia, ending Verstappen run at the top dating back to May 2022, and he and McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri remain hot favourites.



Verstappen. GETTY IMAGES

start of a triple header that ends in Saudi Arabia next week. "But it (the Japanese GP) does show that if we really nail everything we can be up there," added the 27-year-old.

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Norris has led since he won last month's opener in Australia, ending Verstappen run at the top dating back to May 2022, and he and McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri remain hot favourites.

## Vaidehi and Shrivalli take India past Hong Kong



Top show: Shrivalli and Vaidehi starred in India's victory. KANESH SREWASAN

### TENNIS

#### Kamesh Srinivasan

#### PUNE

Shrivalli Bhamidipaty played a spell-binding game for more than two hours and a half to beat Hong Yi Cody Wong 7-6(6), 6-6, 6-3 to clinch the tie for India against Hong Kong in the Asia-Oceania Billie Jean King Cup women's tennis championship at Balewadi Stadium on Thursday.

Playing without the services of the top player Sa-

haja Yamalapati, the team was on shaky ground. Shrivalli had to step up as the No. 1 player and she did so in style, making her explosive game to a different dimension through the cheering fans.

Earlier, Vaidehi Chaudhari playing her first rubber in the event, overcame spells of nervous play to beat Ho Ching Wu 7-6(8), 6-1 in a contest that also spanned over two hours. Cody Wong was a much superior opponent and had the athleticism, craft and drop shots that

traced Shrivalli right through the match. It was courage backed by a superior game that helped Shrivalli win her third match in the current championship, from which the top two teams will qualify for the play-off.

India will play Taiwan on Friday and Korea the reafter. Even though India won the tie against Hong Kong by clinching both the singles matches, the doubles had to be played, as every rubber, set and game would count towards ranking the teams eventually in

the round-robin league format. The host won the doubles to make it 3-0.

After the loss to New Zealand 1-2, India had done well to beat Thailand 2-1 on Wednesday.

New Zealand stayed on top with its third victory in as many matches.

**The results (league):** India bt Hong Kong 3-0 (Vaidehi Chaudhari bt Ho Ching Wu 7-6(8), 6-1; Shrivalli Bhamidipaty bt Hong Yi Cody Wong 7-6(6), 6-6; 6-3; Anika Raina & Prarthana Thombare lost to Eunice Chung & Hong Yi Cody Wong 7-6(2), 3-6, (11-13).

# Cricket to feature six teams in 2028 LA Olympics

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI

Cricket will feature six teams battling for top honours when the sport returns to the Olympics at the 2028 Los Angeles Games after a gap of 128 years.

This was confirmed by the organisers on Wednesday. At LA 2028, cricket will be played in the T20 format, with six teams competing in both the men's and women's competitions.

Qualification criteria is yet to be confirmed but USA is likely to earn a direct spot as host nation. It is expected that top five teams in the ICC rankings within a certain cut-off date will qualify apart from the USA.

Sport/Event	Category	Notes
Baseball/Softball	Returning Sport	Last featured in 2020; returns to the Olympic program.
Cricket (T20)	Returning Sport	Returns after its only appearance in 1900; will feature the Twenty20 format.
Flag Football	New Sport	Makes its Olympic debut; a non-contact version of American football.
Lacrosse (Sixes)	Returning Sport	Last appeared as a medal event in 1908; will feature the fast-paced "Sixes" format.
Squash	New Sport	Debuts in the Olympics after years of campaigning for inclusion.
50m Backstroke	New Swimming Event	Short-distance backstroke race added to swimming competitions.
50m Breaststroke	New Swimming Event	Short-distance breaststroke race making its Olympic debut.
50m Butterfly	New Swimming Event	Short-distance butterfly race added to the program.
Mixed 4x100m Relay	New Athletics Event	Mixed-gender track relay introduced to promote gender equality.
Mixed Team Event	New Gymnastics Event	Mixed-gender team competition added to artistic gymnastics.
Mixed Team Event	New Golf Event	Mixed-gender team competition introduced in golf.
Obstacle Course Racing	New Modern Pentathlon Component	Replaces equestrian component with a Ninja Warrior-style obstacle course.



## Prada strikes \$1.4bn deal to buy Versace

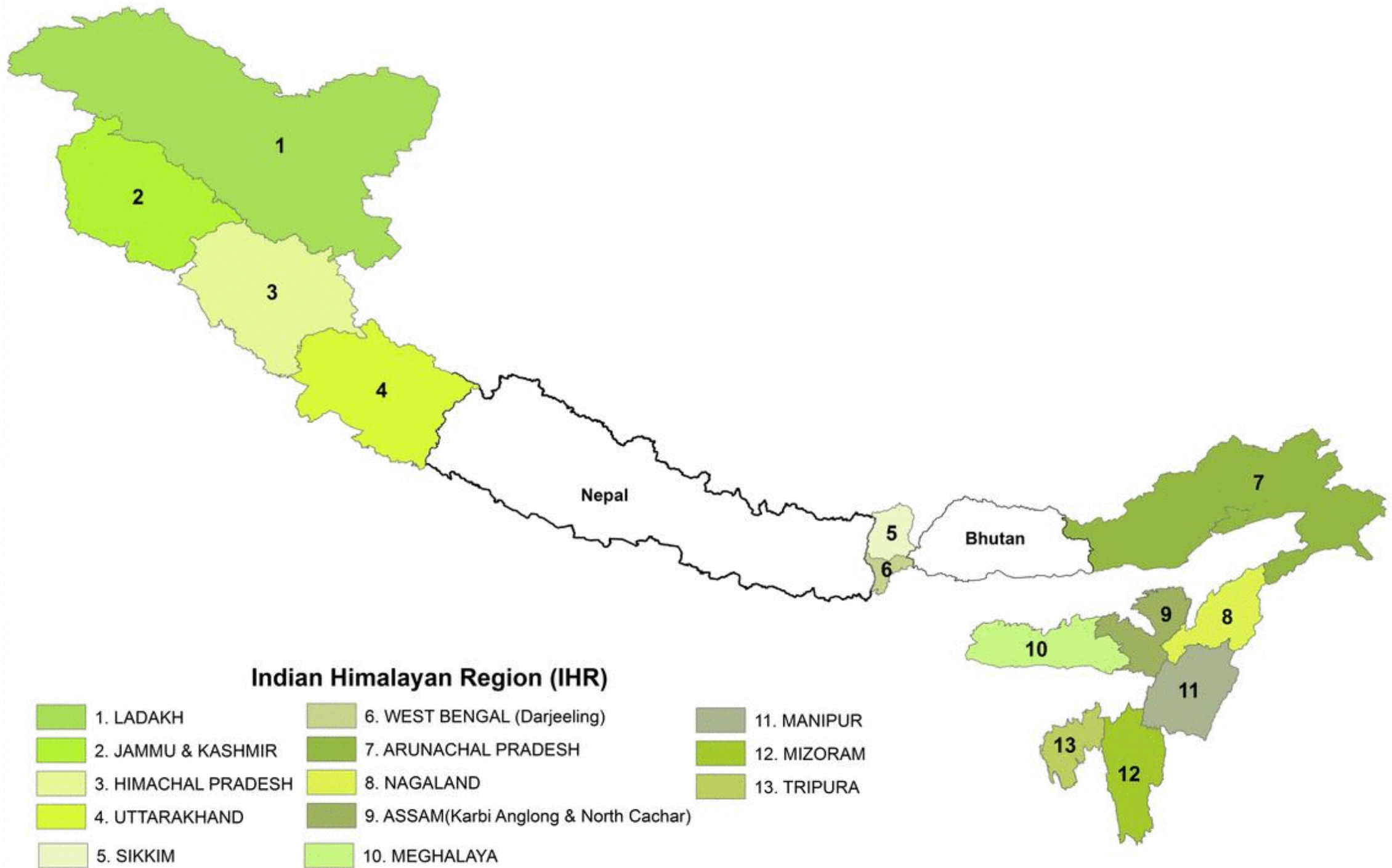
Prada struck a nearly \$1.4 billion deal to buy smaller rival Versace from Capri Holdings on Thursday, including its debt, in a move that unites two of the biggest names in Italian fashion.

Prada is seeking to expand, having defied a slowdown in luxury demand, while Versace has been operating at a loss in the last few quarters. Owning Versace, with its bold, baroque-style prints, will bring new customers to Prada, known for its minimalist style. The merger strengthens Italy's hand in a luxury industry led by French conglomerates, the biggest being Louis Vuitton owner LVMH. **P12**

## Top 10 Luxury Clothing Brands (Global)

Rank	Brand Name	Country of Origin	Known For
1	Louis Vuitton (LV)	France	Iconic monogram bags, ready-to-wear fashion
2	Gucci	Italy	Bold fashion, high-end bags, accessories
3	Chanel	France	Timeless elegance, perfume, haute couture
4	Hermès	France	Birkin/Kelly bags, leather goods, scarves
5	Rolex ( <i>watchmaker</i> )	Switzerland	Luxury timepieces (often included in fashion)
6	Dior	France	Fashion-forward couture and beauty products
7	Prada	Italy	Minimalist designs, leather bags & shoes
8	Balenciaga	Spain (HQ in France)	Streetwear-luxury blend, bold silhouettes
9	Versace	Italy	Glamorous prints, celebrity style
10	Burberry	United Kingdom	Trench coats, signature check pattern

# India's First-Ever Climate Change Station

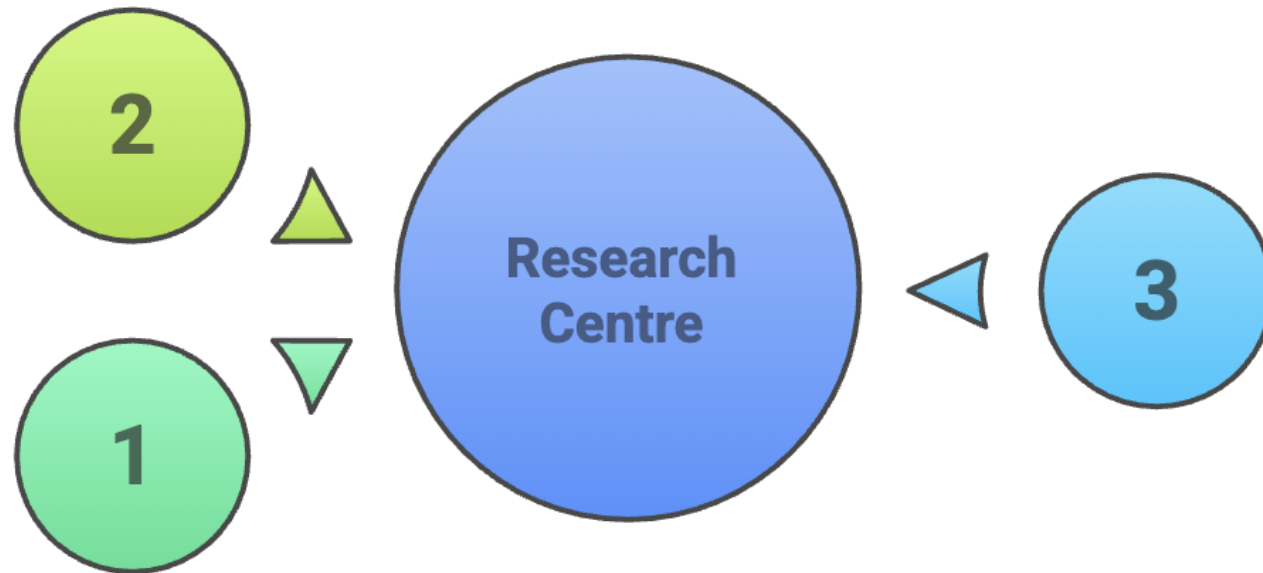




## Establishment of the Research Centre

### Altitude

The 2,250-meter elevation is crucial for atmospheric studies.



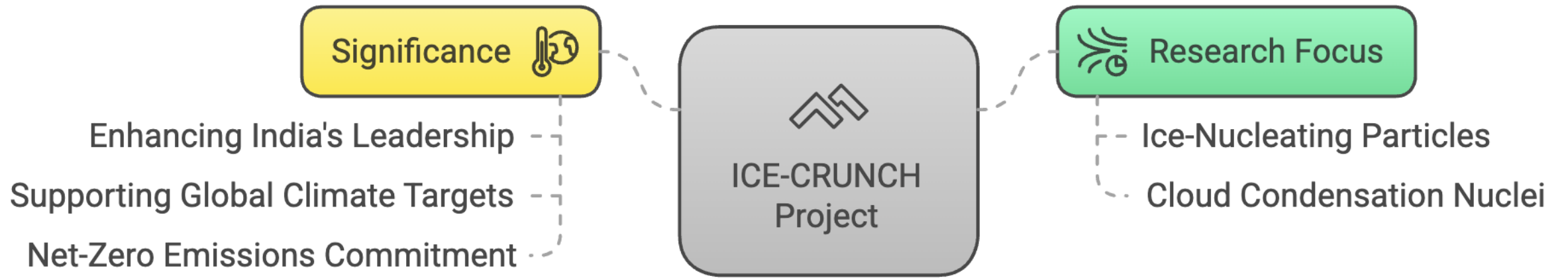
### Strategic Location

The centre's position in Nathatop enhances its research capabilities.

### Clean Air

Minimal pollution ensures high-accuracy measurements.

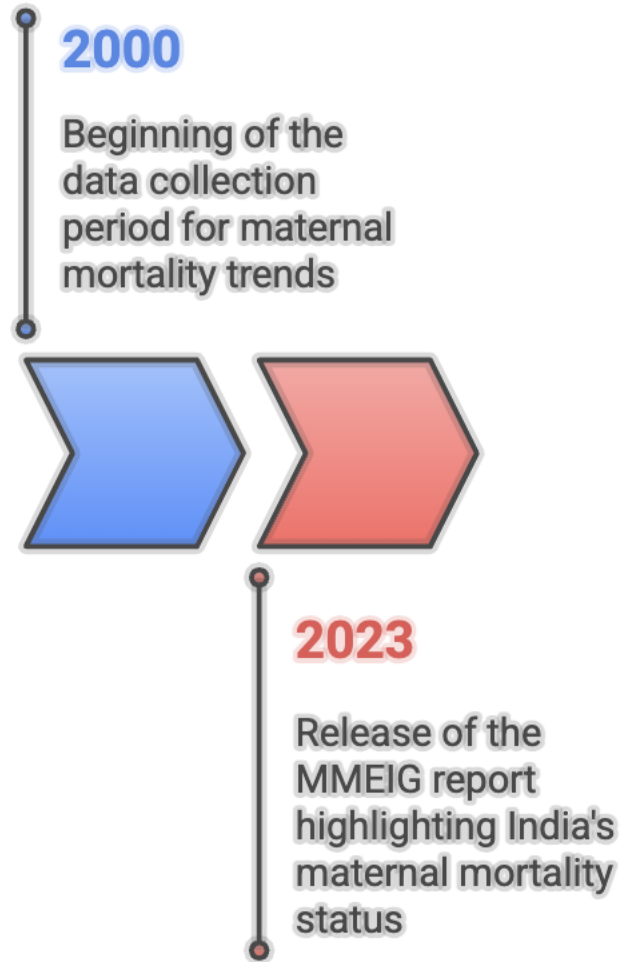
# ICE-CRUNCH Project: Climate Science and Global Targets



# Trends in Maternal Mortality



# India's Maternal Mortality Challenge: A 2023 Perspective





# India's Journey in Reducing Maternal Mortality

2000



Maternal Mortality Ratio at 384

2020



Maternal Mortality Ratio reduced to 103

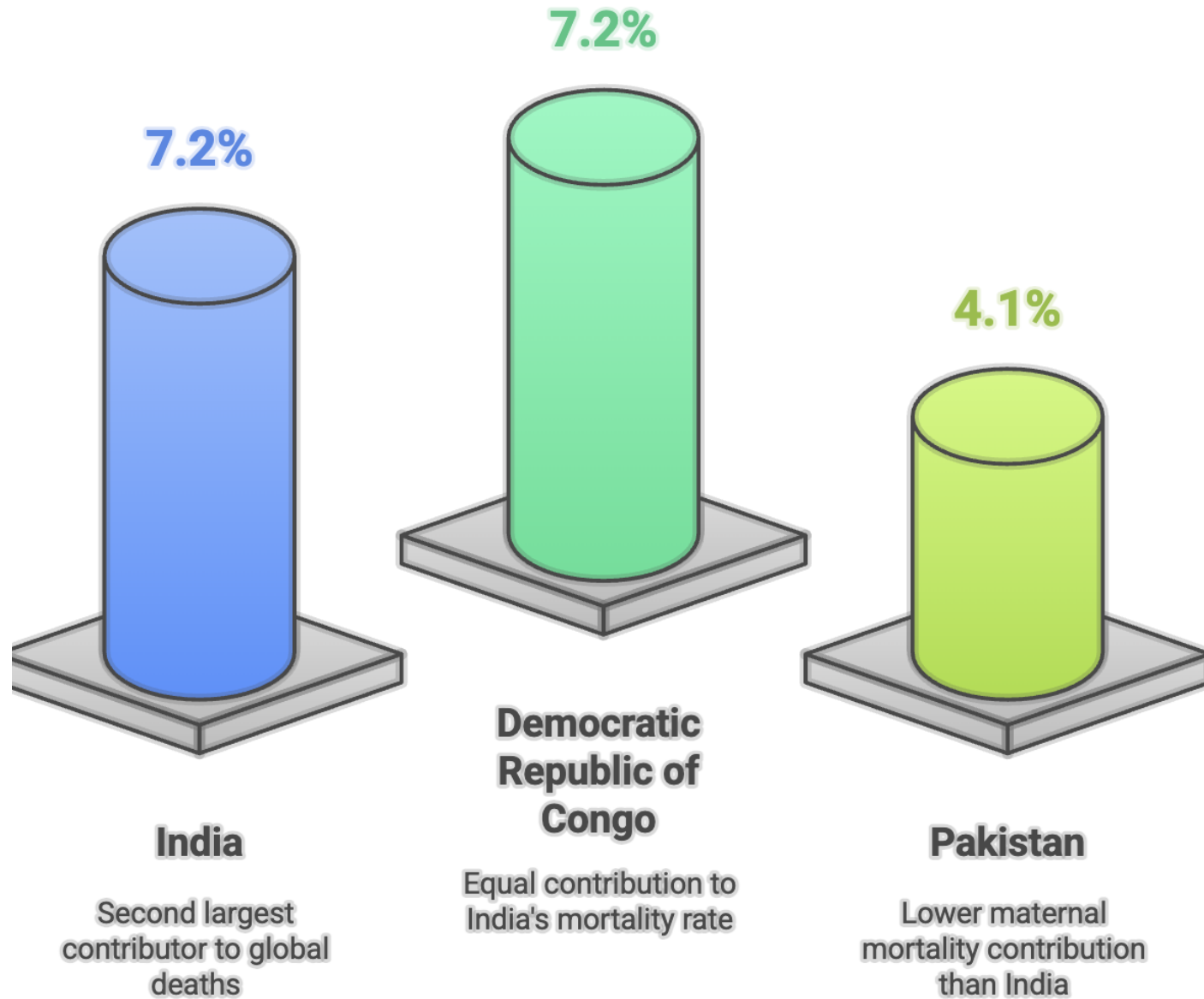
2023

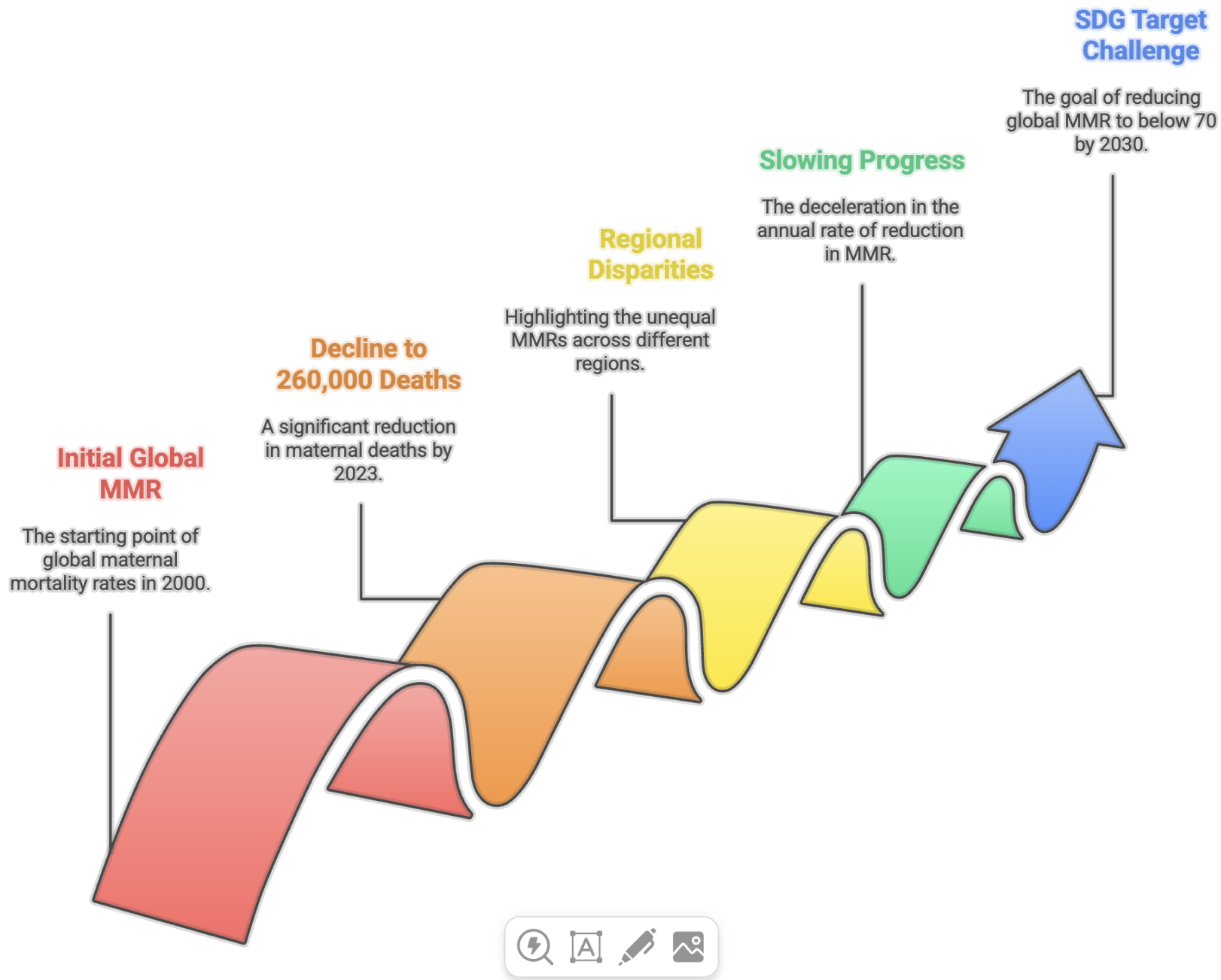


Maternal Mortality Ratio further reduced to 80

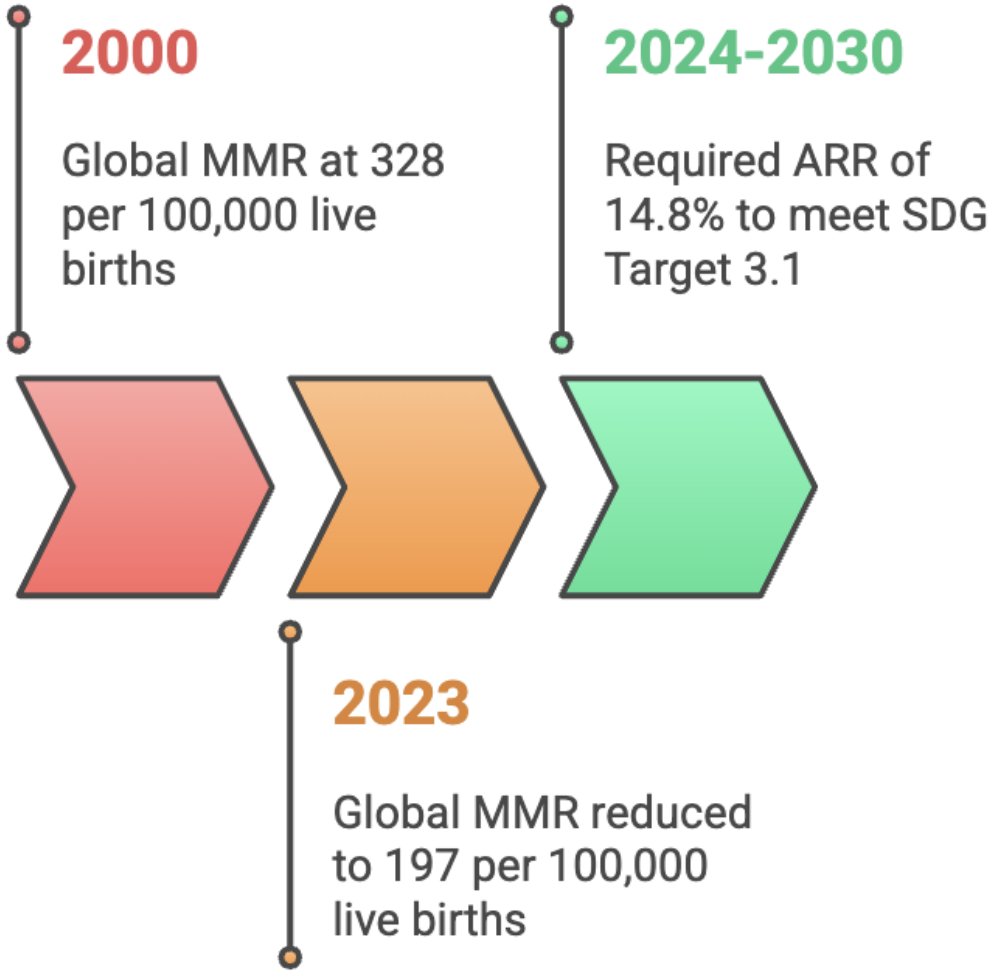


## Maternal Mortality Contribution by Country in 2023



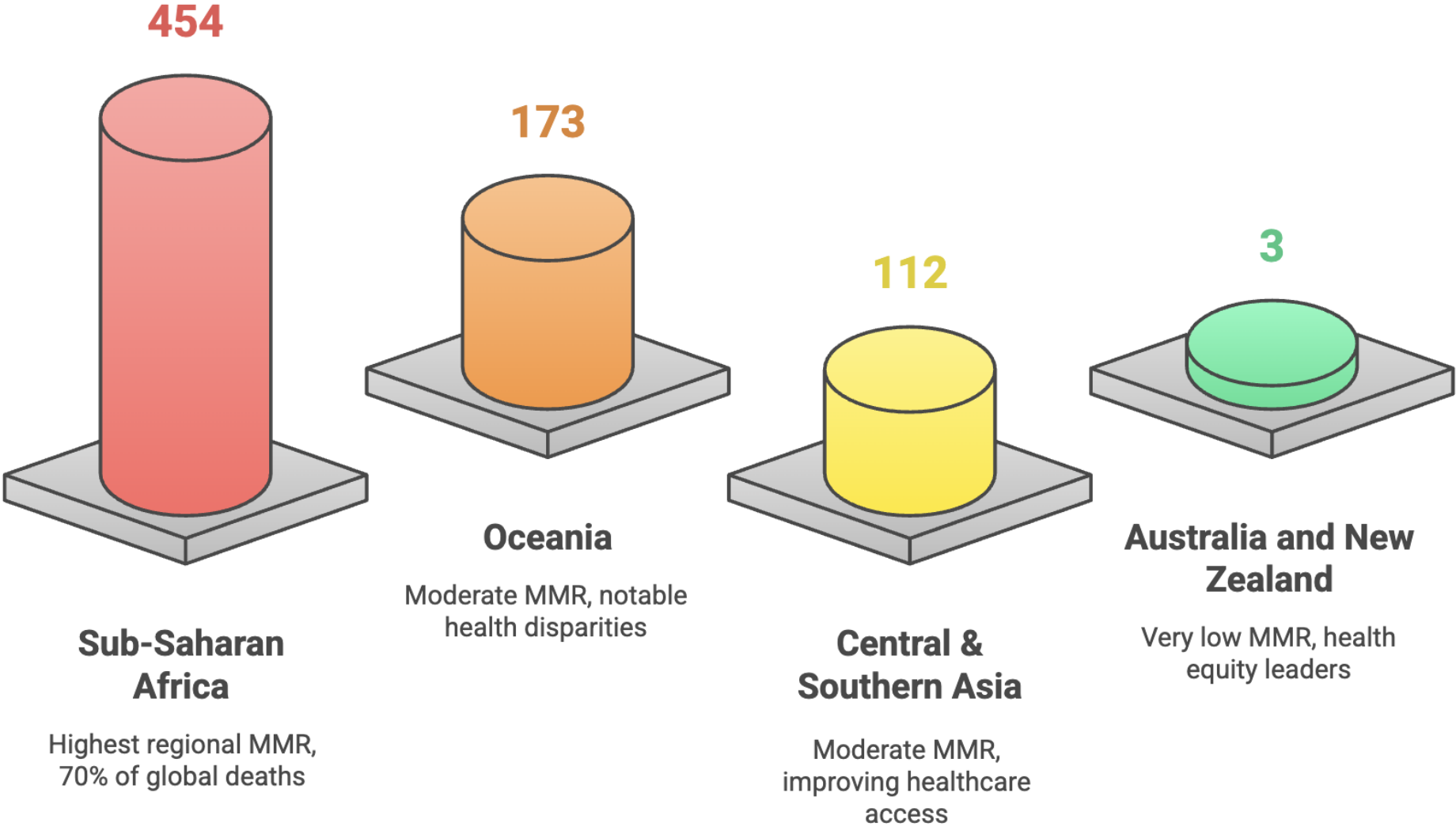


# Global Progress in Reducing Maternal Mortality



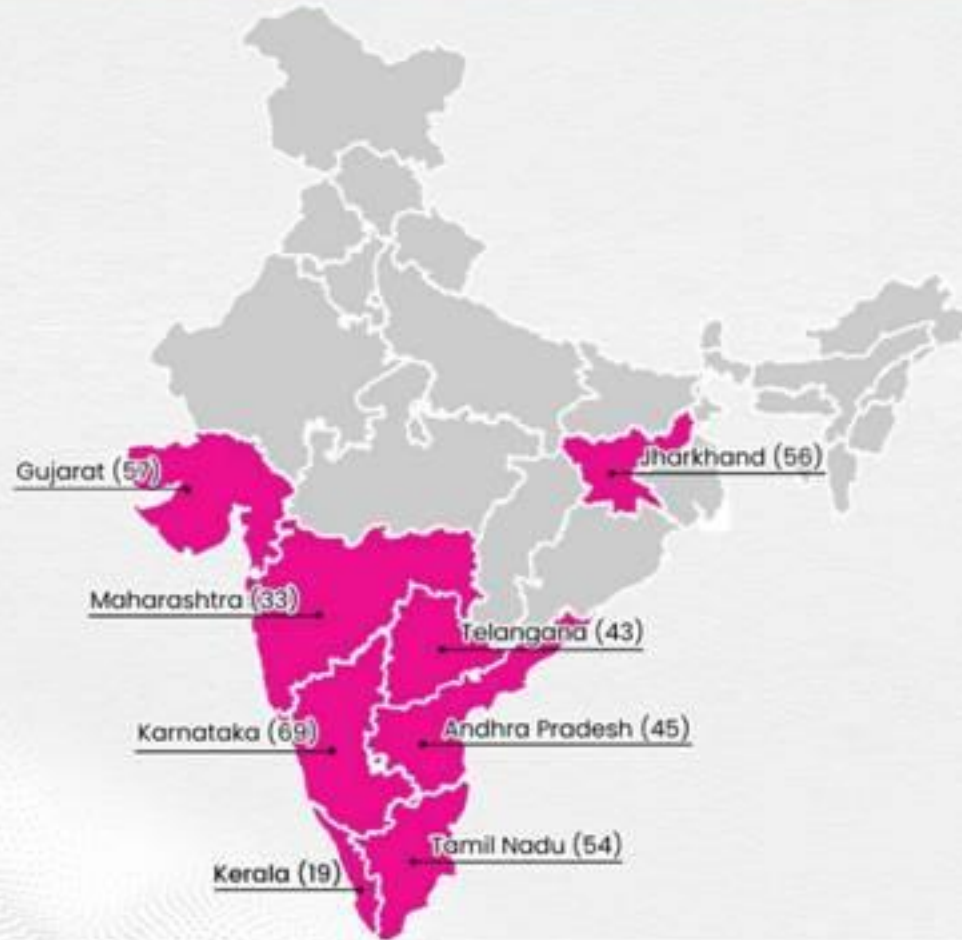


# Maternal Mortality Ratios by Region



## Maternal Mortality Ratio

States having already achieved the SDG target  
of MMR below 70/lakh live births by 2030



# India's Initiatives to Reduce Maternal Mortality Ratio



**Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) –**  
Promotes institutional deliveries for vulnerable women.



**PM Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**  
Offers cash incentives for the first and second girl child



## **Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) –**

Guarantees respectful and quality maternal care



## **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) –**

Free ANC on the 9th of every month;  
5.9 crore women have benefited



## **LaQshya**

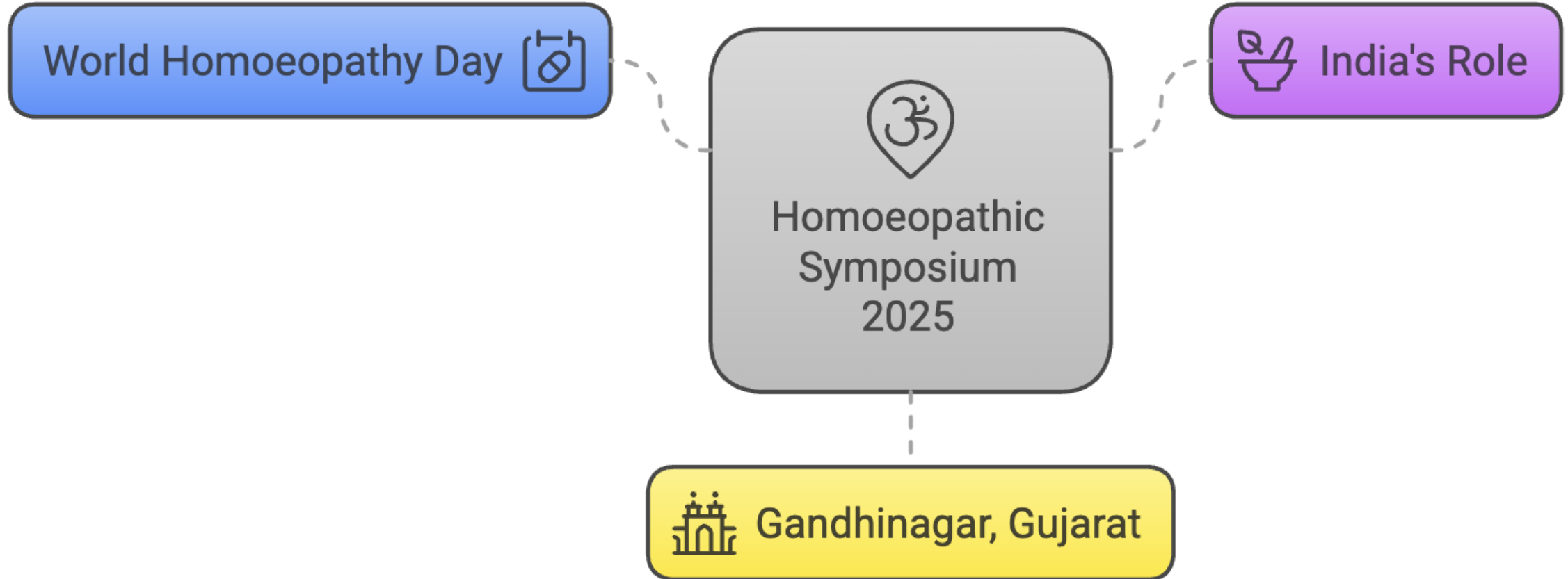
Improves labour room and maternity  
OT care



# World Homoeopathy Day



# India's Homoeopathic Symposium 2025: Significance and Impact





# Celebrating World Homoeopathy Day: A Timeline

**April 10, 1755**



Birth of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann

**April 10, 2016**



CCRH Begins Celebrating World Homoeopathy Day



# The Essence of Homoeopathy

1

World's second-largest medical system by size.

**Medical System Size**

2

Developed in late 18th century Germany.

**Historical Development**

3

Core principle: "Similia Similibus Curentur."

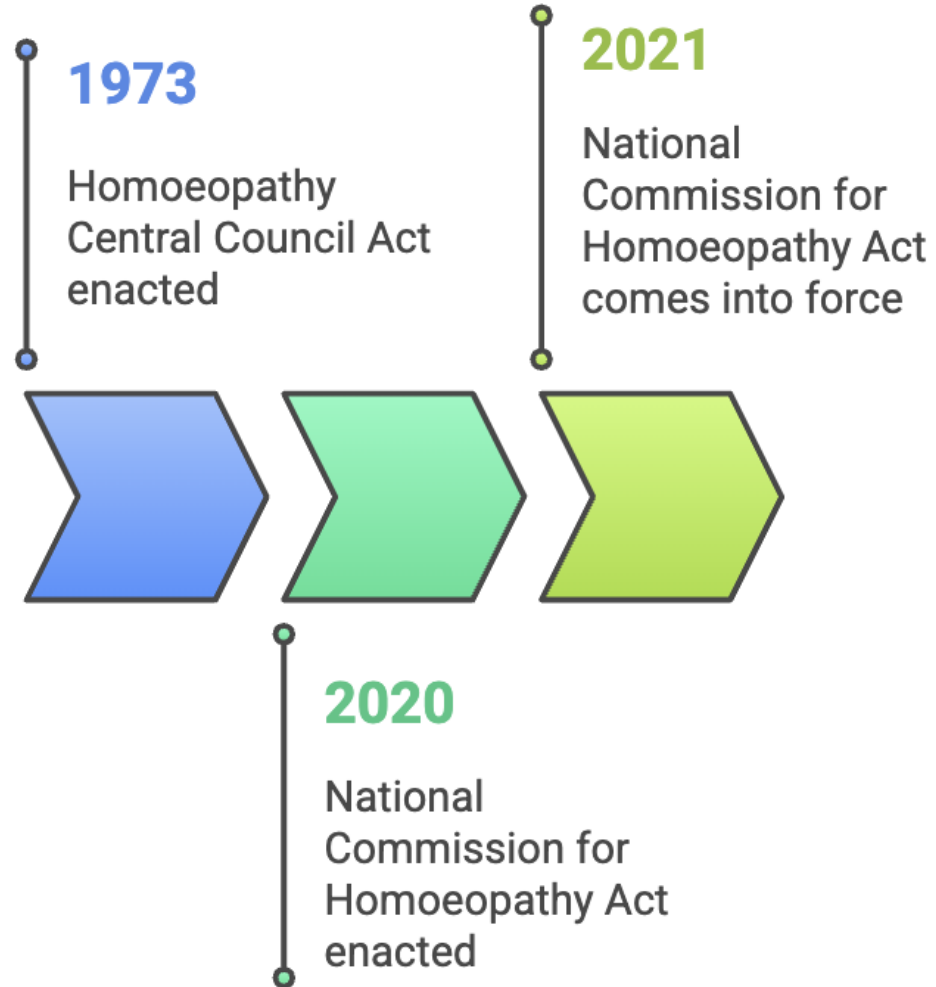
**Core Principle**

**Homoeopathy's Effectiveness**





# Evolution of Homoeopathy Governance in India





# Niveshak Didi Initiative

## Launch of Phase 2 of Niveshak Didi Initiative

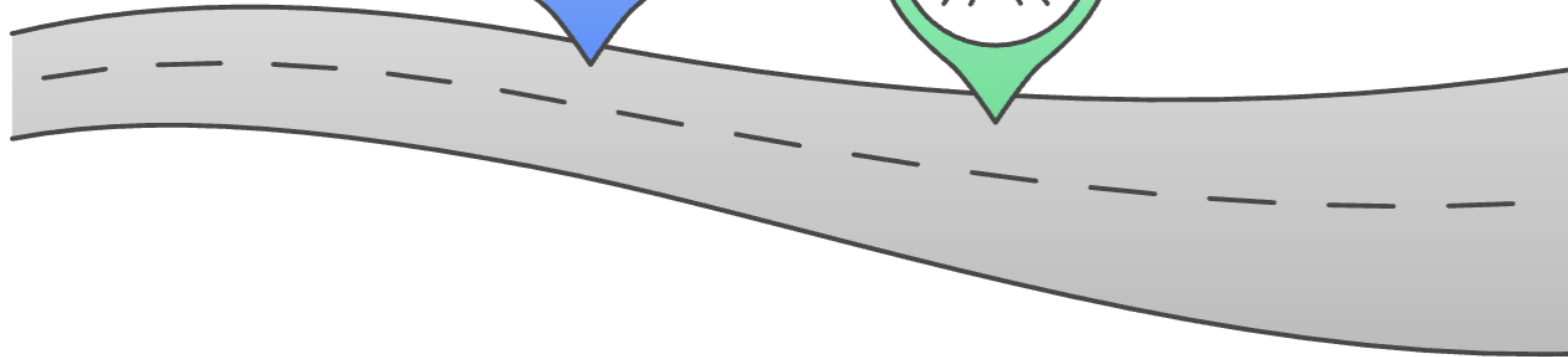
### MoA Signing

IEPFA and IPPB sign  
a memorandum of  
agreement

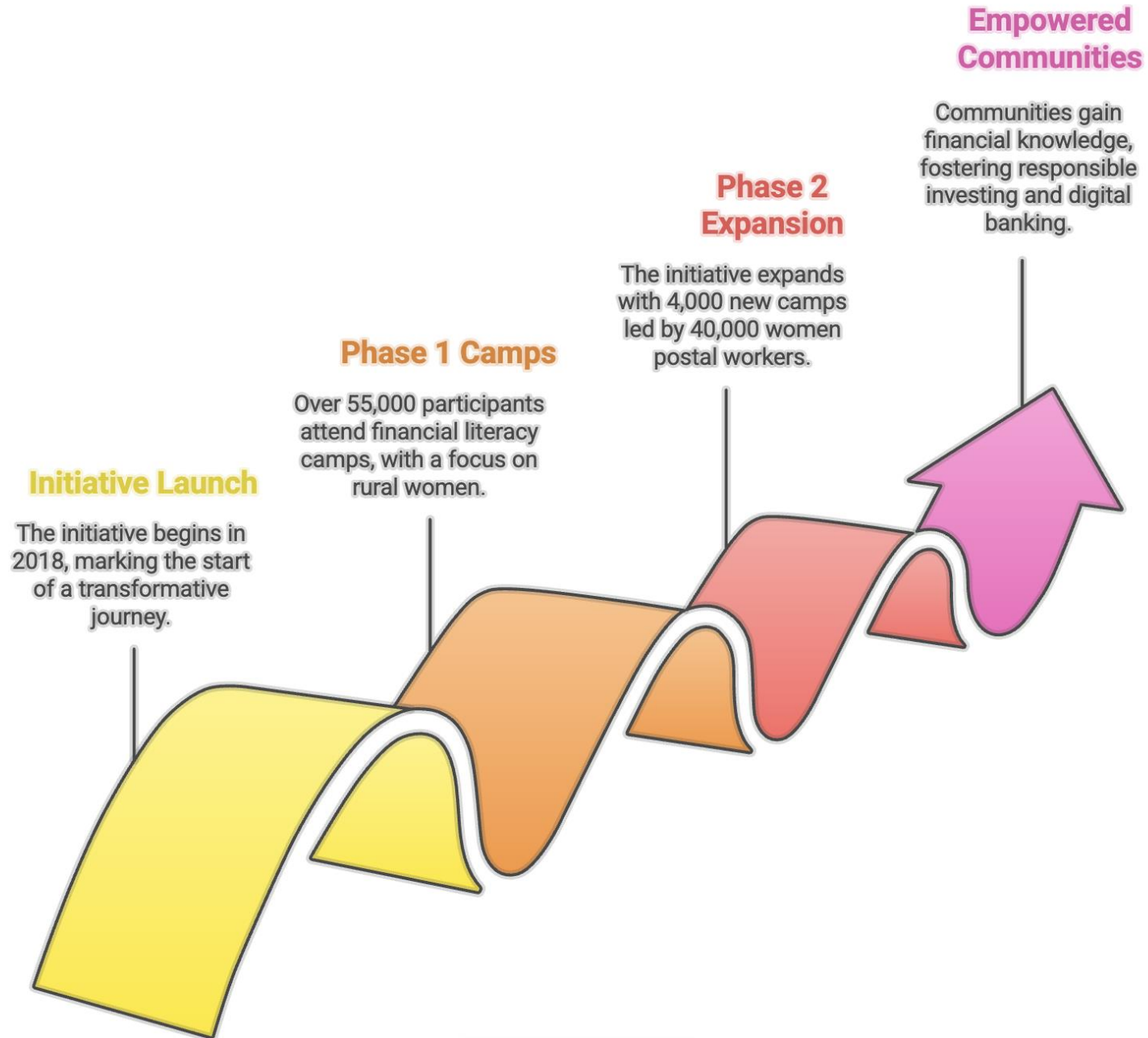


### Initiative Launch

Phase 2 of the  
initiative is launched



# Empowering Communities through Financial Literacy





## Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA):

- It is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs**, established in **2016**.
- **Role:** Promotes financial literacy, educates people on managing personal finances, and informs about rights and responsibilities as investors.
- **Focus:** Special outreach to rural and underserved communities to empower individuals with financial knowledge.

### Empowering Investors Through Education and Community Outreach



#### Financial Literacy

Educates individuals on managing personal finances effectively.



#### Investor Education

Informs investors about their rights and responsibilities.



#### Community Outreach

Focuses on empowering rural and underserved communities.

# Revolutionizing Banking Access with Technology and Inclusion



## Establishment

Founded in 2018 to enhance banking accessibility.



## Vision

Aims to provide inclusive and reliable banking services.



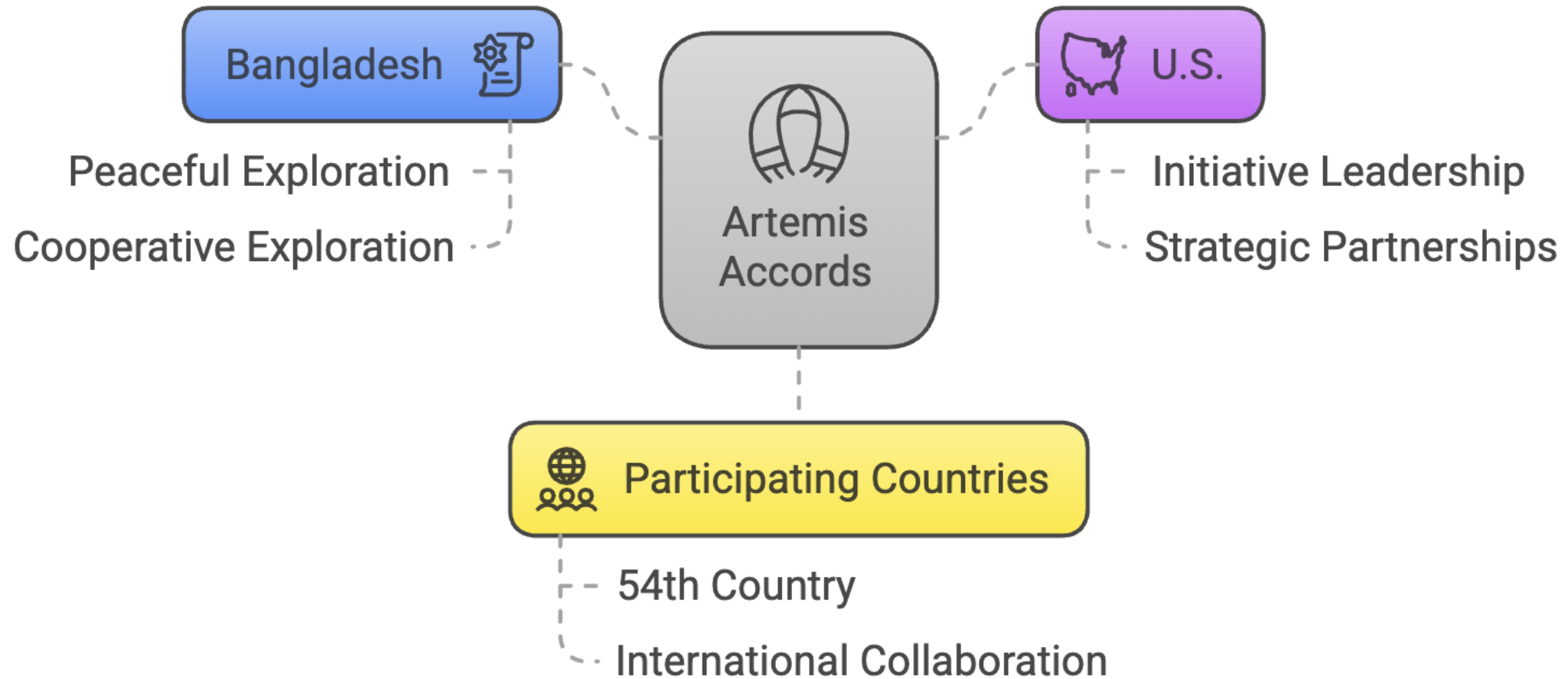
## Operating Model

Utilizes technology for efficient banking solutions.

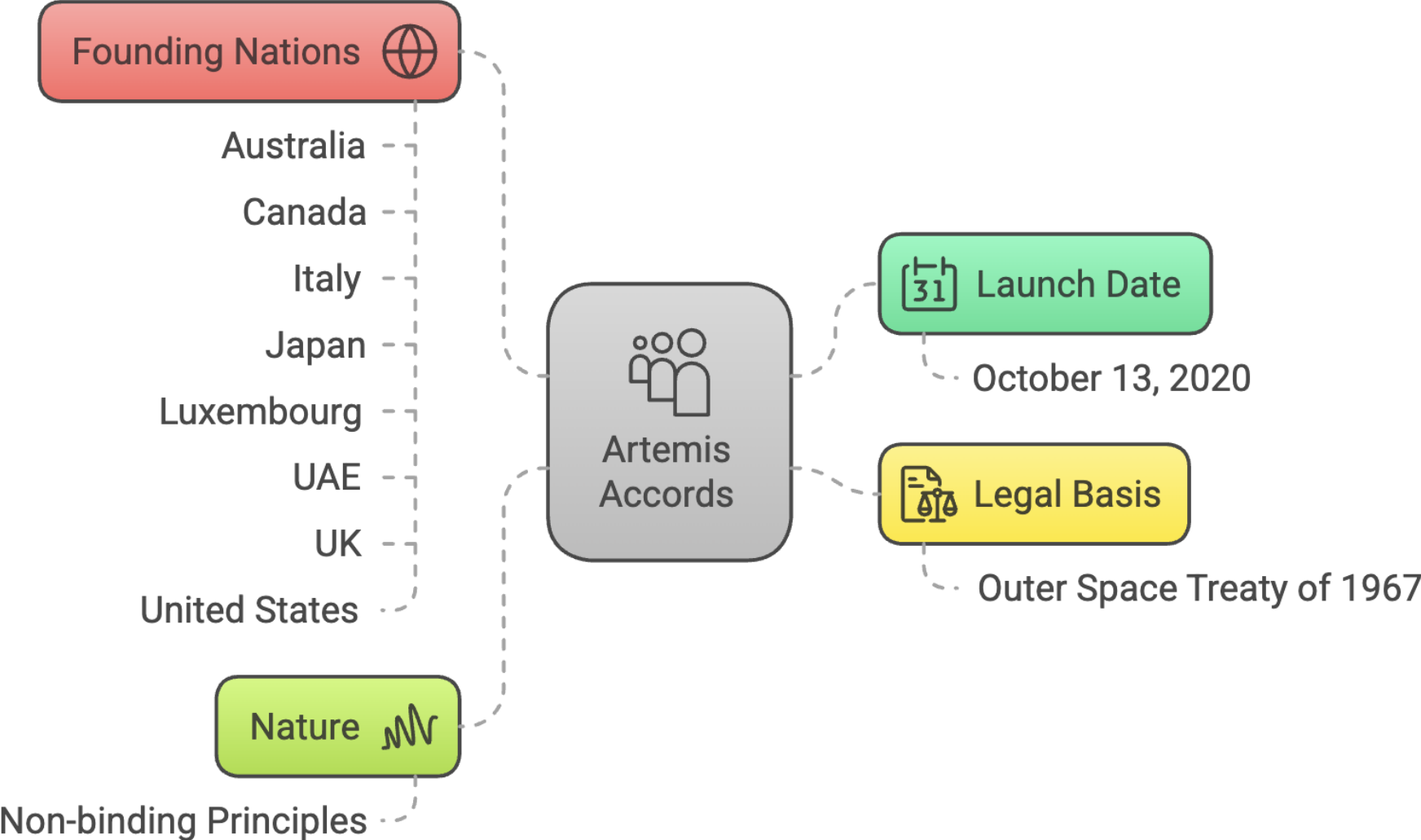
# Artemis Accords



# Bangladesh and the Artemis Accords: International Space Cooperation



# Artemis Accords: Structure and Signatories





# ARTEMIS ACCORDS



United for Peaceful Exploration of Deep Space

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the page. It features a solid yellow circle representing the sun's disk, with several short, thick yellow dashes above it representing rays. The sun is partially obscured by a large white semi-circular shape that frames the text.

# Report-Death Sentences and Executions 2024

# Global Surge in Executions: 2024

**2024**



1,518 people executed across 15 countries

**2024**



32% increase in executions compared to 2023

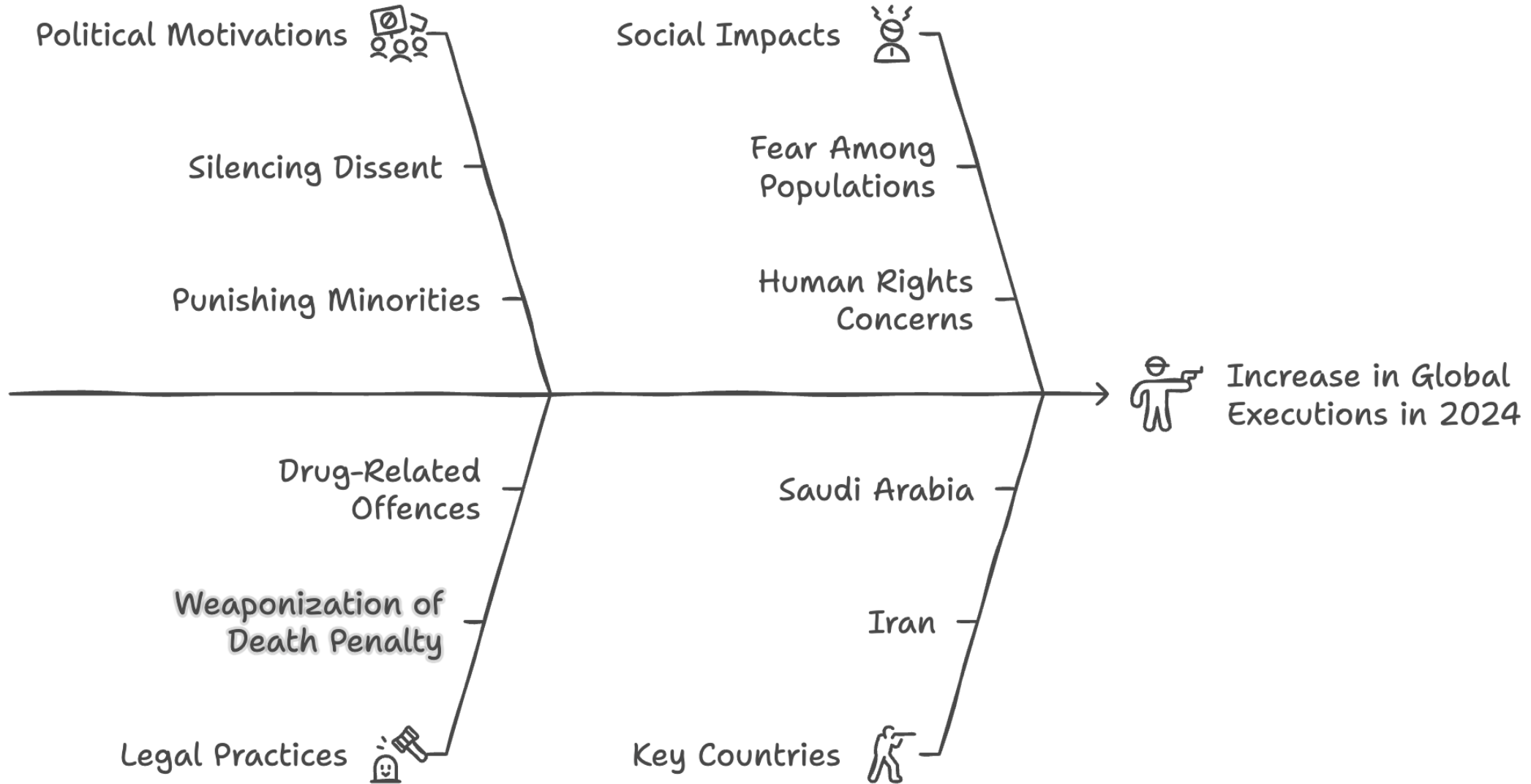
**2024**



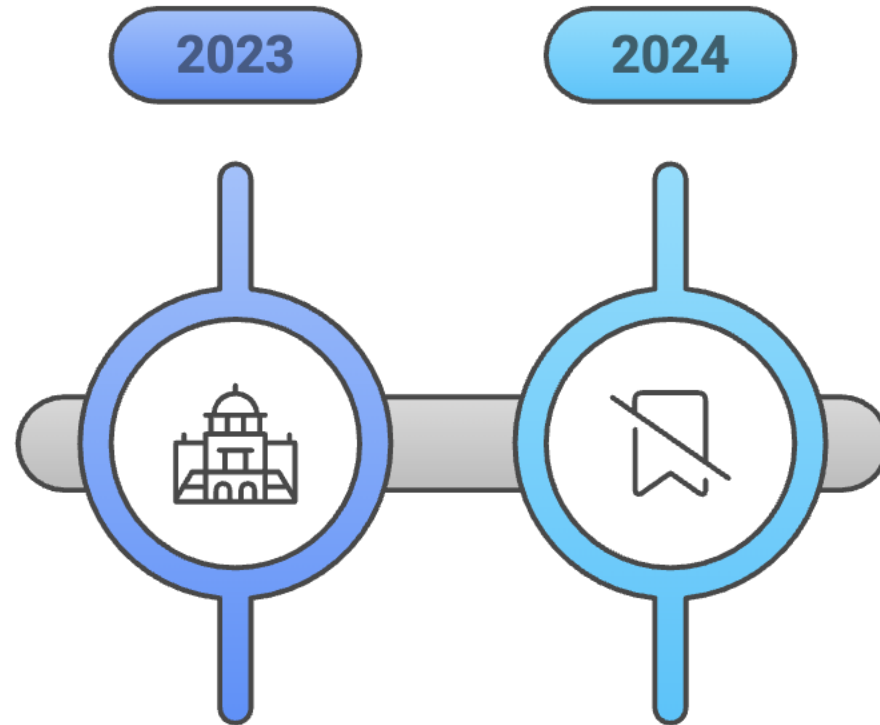
Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq responsible for 91% of executions



# Analyzing the Surge in Global Executions



# India's Death Sentence Moratorium Continues



Supreme Court of India didn't confirm any death sentence

Supreme Court of India didn't confirm any death sentence



# Death Penalty Comparison



**Portugal**

US

**Netherlands**

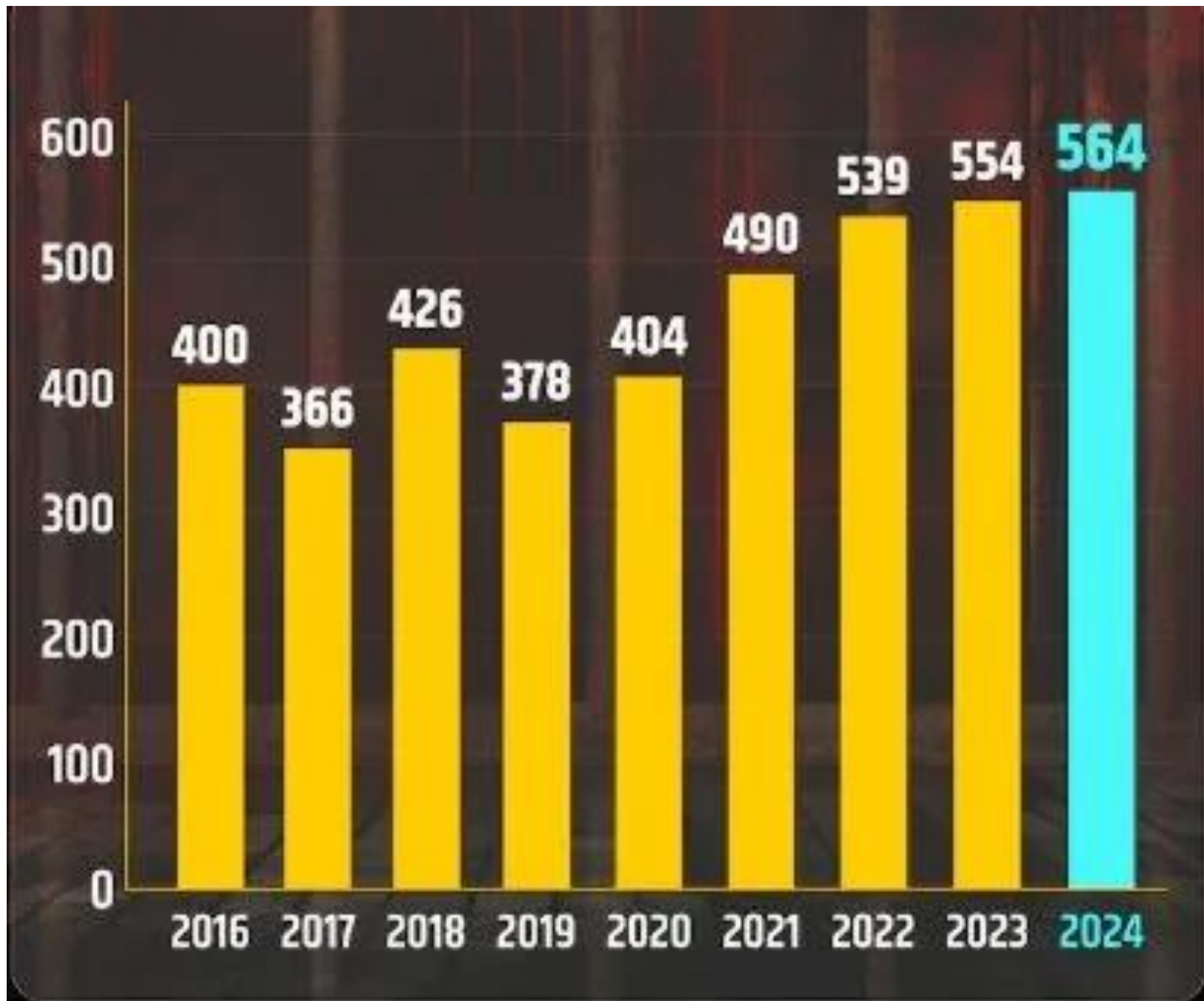
Iran

**France**

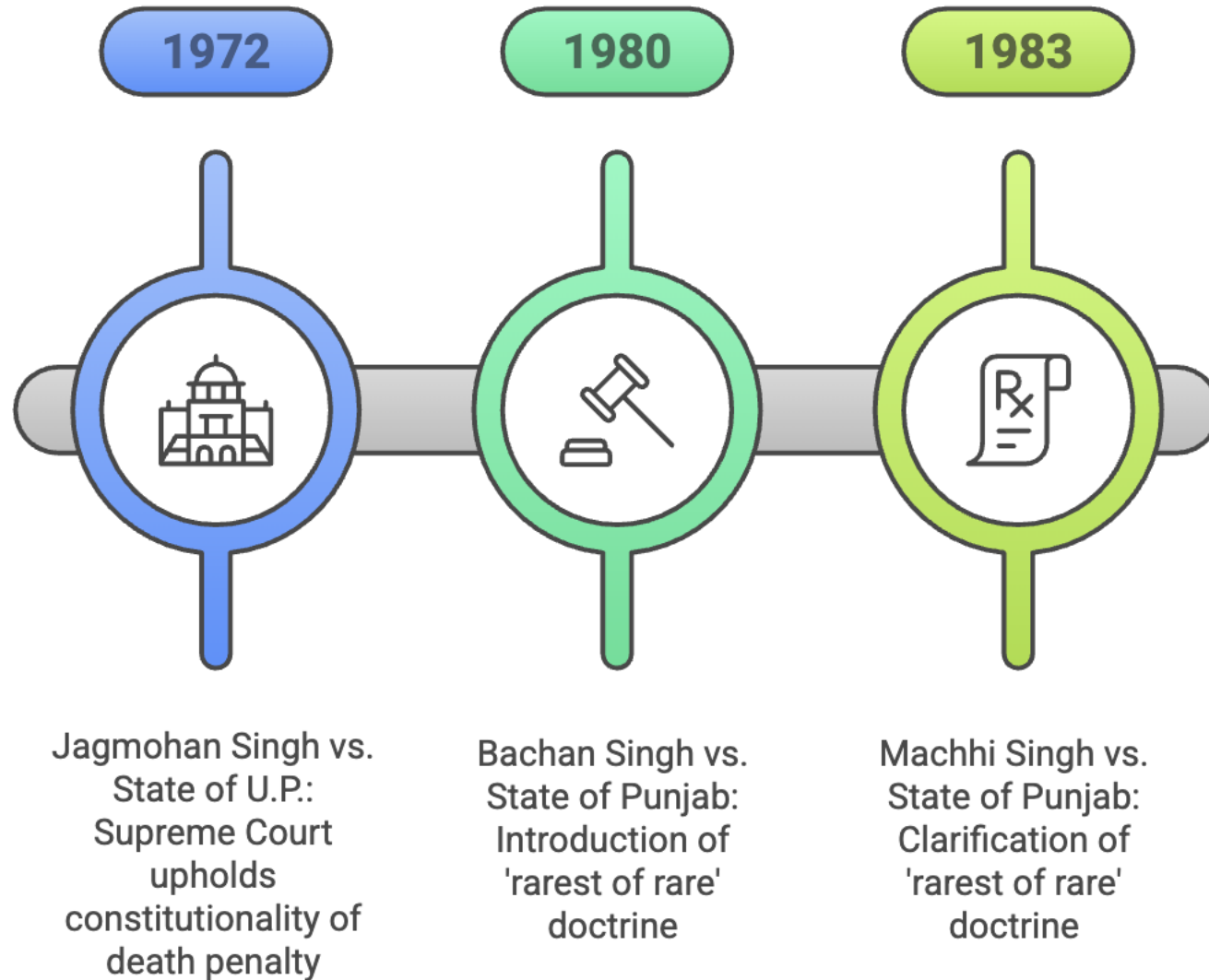
China

**Australia**

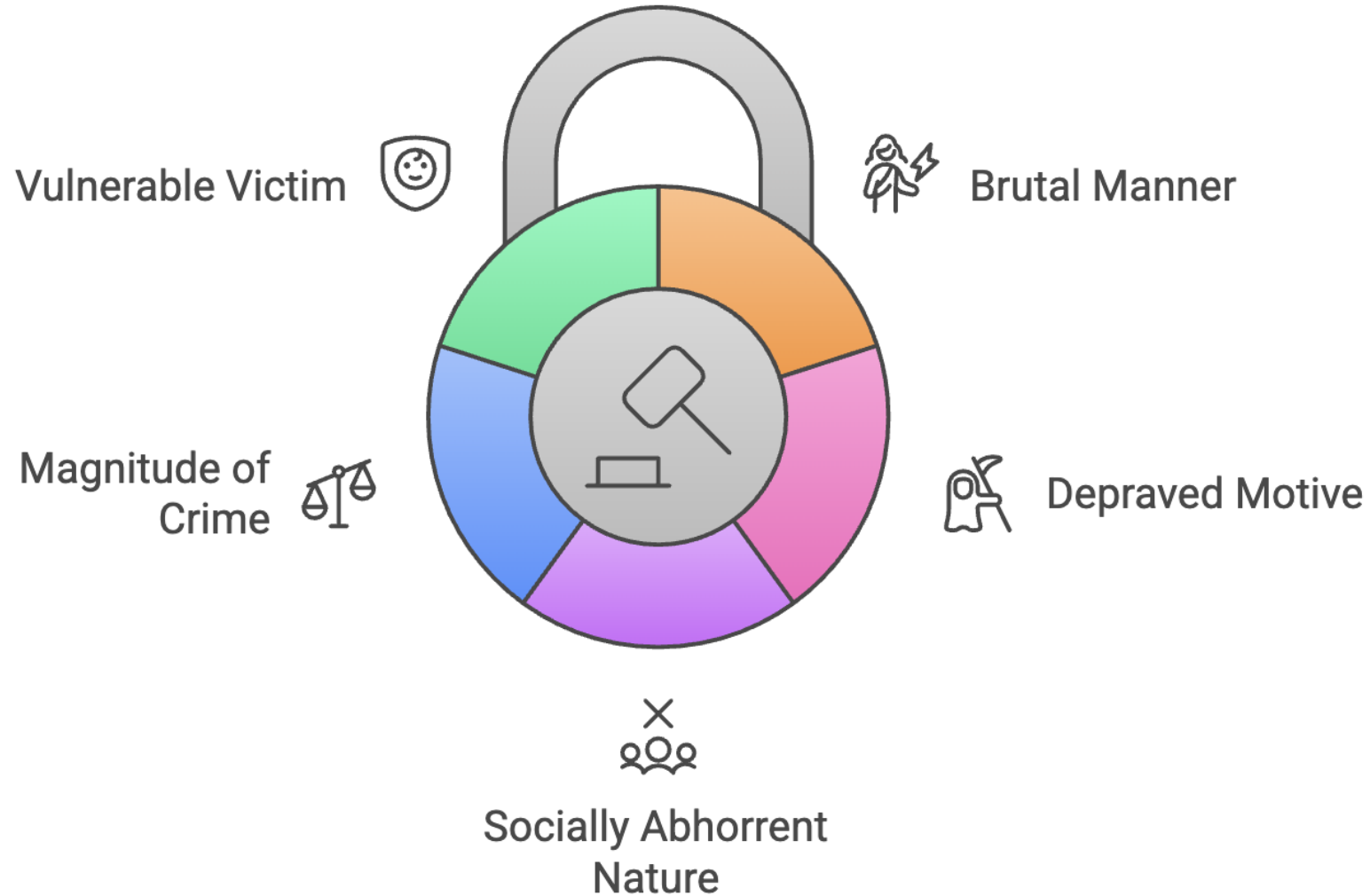
India



# Evolution of the Death Penalty in India



# Evaluating Death Penalty Justifications Based on Crime Characteristics





# Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report



# Understanding the Panchayat Advancement Index

## Ministry of Panchayati Raj

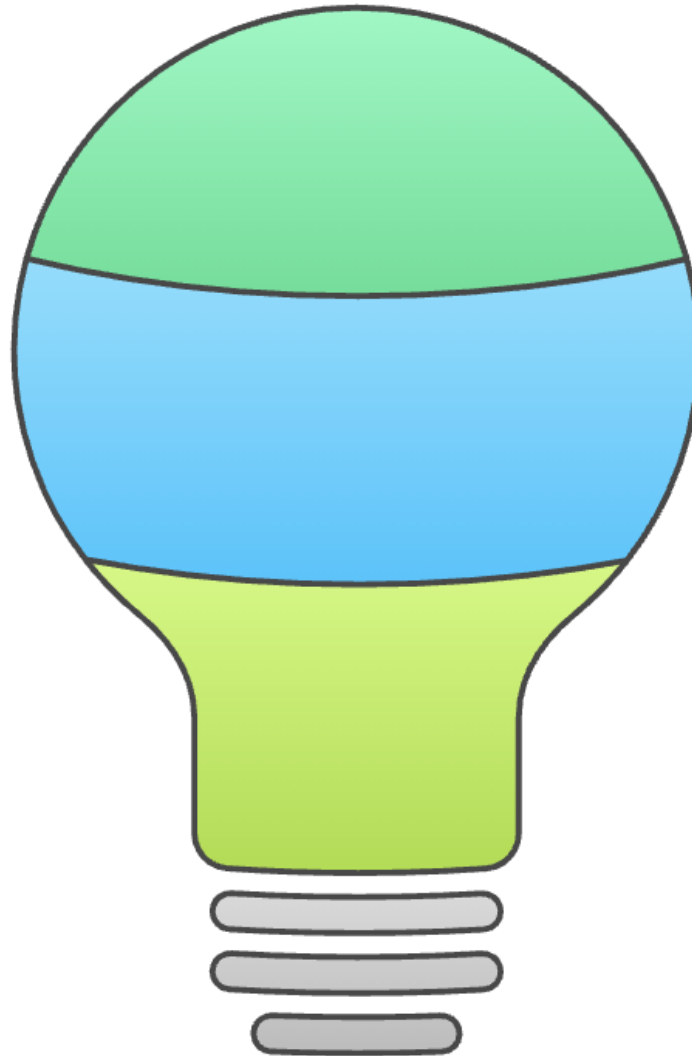


Government body overseeing the index

## Fiscal Year 2022-23



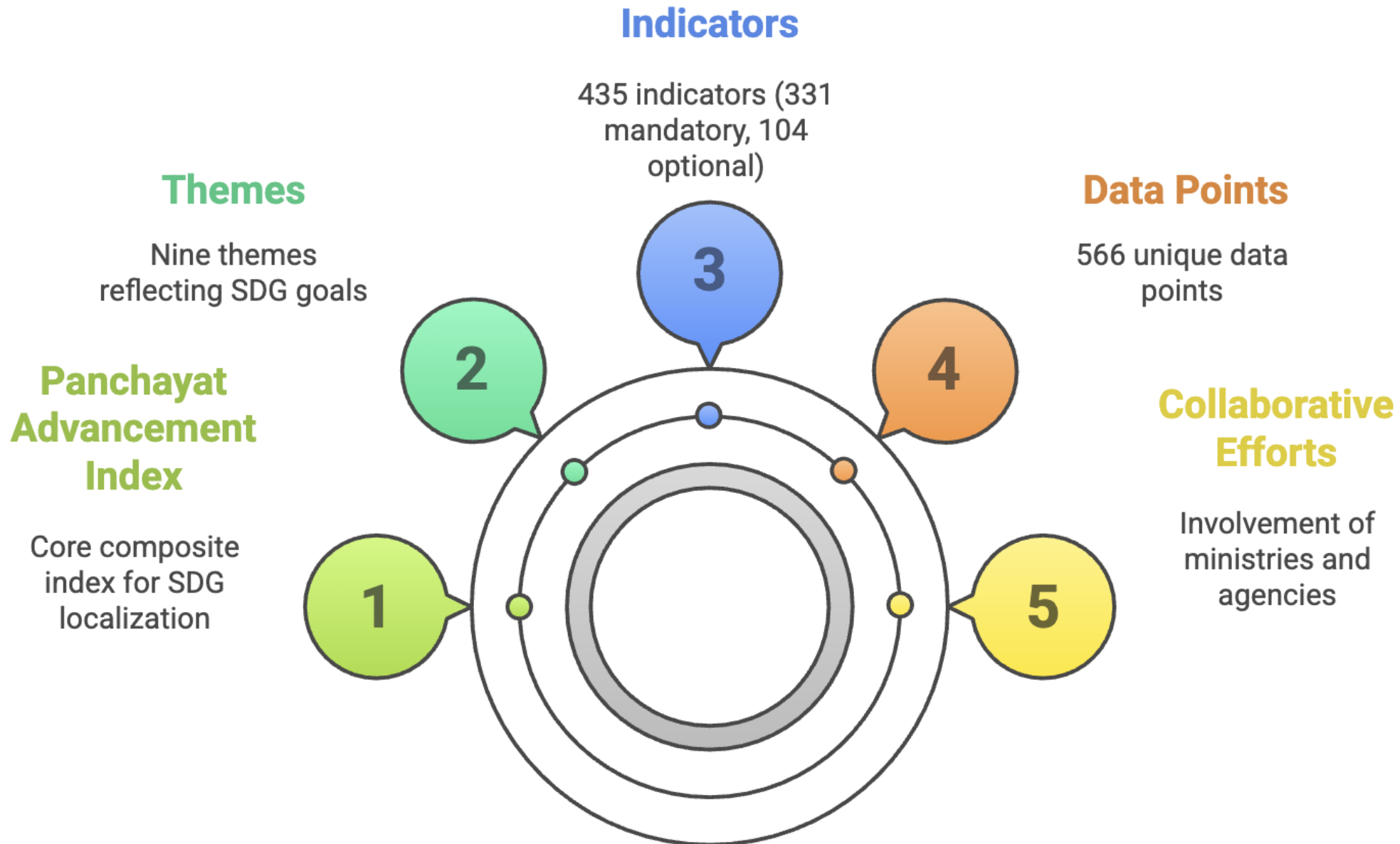
Reporting period for the index



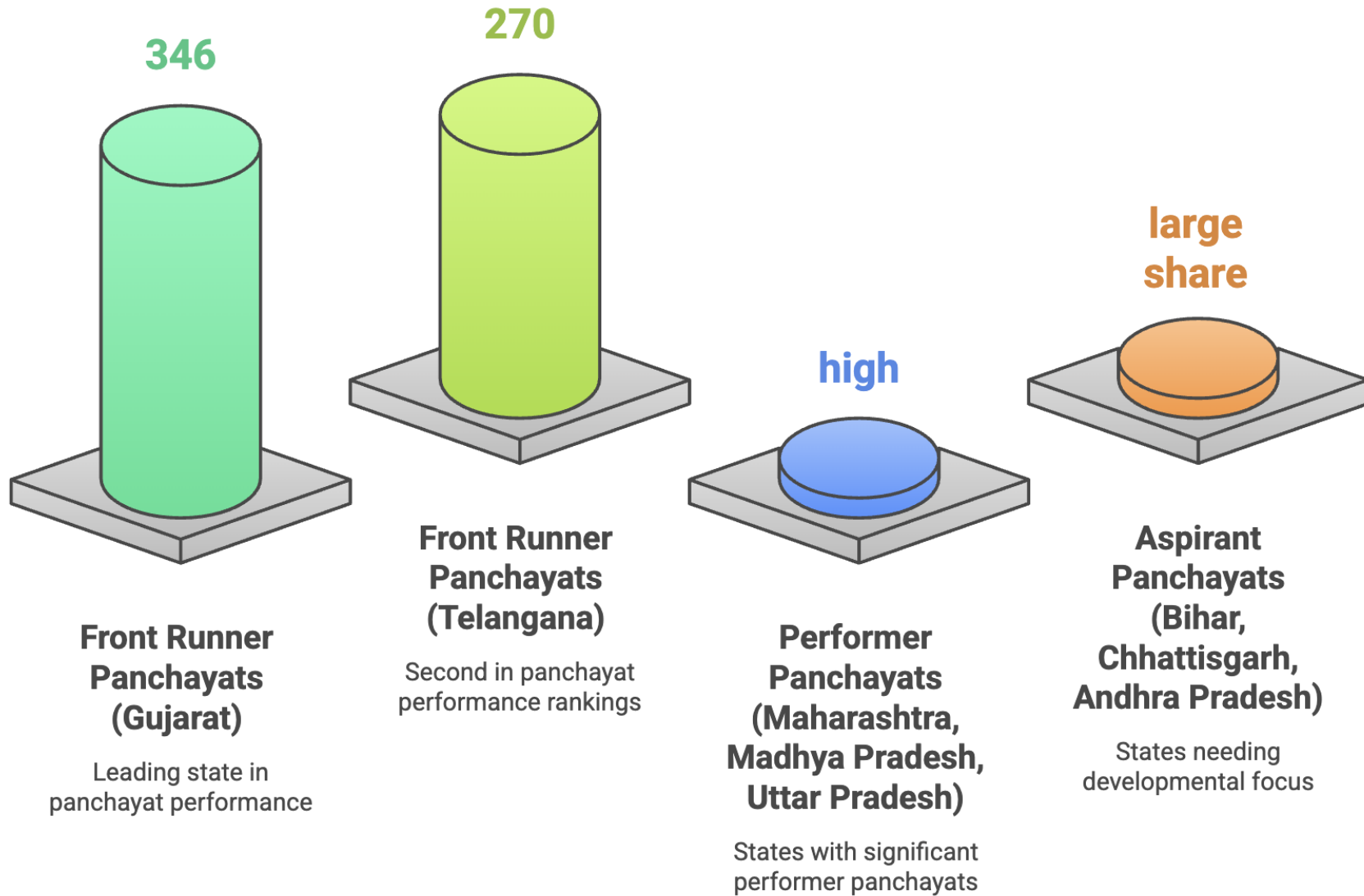
## Baseline Report

Initial report for fiscal year 2022-23

# Panchayat Advancement Index Structure



## Panchayat Performance and Development Categories





**Poverty-Free  
and  
Enhanced  
Livelihoods  
Panchayat**

**Healthy  
Panchayat**

**Child Friendly  
Panchayat**

**Water  
Sufficient  
Panchayat**

**Clean and  
Green  
Panchayat**

**Panchayat  
with Self-  
Sufficient  
Infrastructure**

**Socially Just  
and Socially  
Secured  
Panchayat**

**Panchayat  
with Good  
Governance**

**Women  
Friendly  
Panchayat**

- 
- **Performance Categories:** Panchayats are categorized into five tiers based on their scores:
    - **Achiever (90+ points):** None qualified this year.
    - **Front Runner (75–90 points):** 699 Panchayats (0.3%).
    - **Performer (60–75 points):** 77,298 Panchayats (35.8%).
    - **Aspirant (40–60 points):** 1,32,392 Panchayats (61.2%).
    - **Beginner (below 40 points):** 5,896 Panchayats (2.7%).
  - **Data Validation:** Out of 2,55,699 Gram Panchayats, 2,16,285 submitted validated data through the dedicated PAI portal.



10 MCQ





## **Consider the following statements about India's First-Ever Climate Change Station:**

1.It has been established in Ladakh.

2.It will help track glacial retreat and permafrost melting.

• **Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

## **Consider the following statements about Maternal Mortality Trends in India:**

1. India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has increased in recent years.
2. The Sustainable Development Goal target for MMR is 70 per 1,00,000 live births.

- **Which is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Consider the following statements regarding World Homoeopathy Day:**

- 1.It is celebrated on April 10 in memory of Samuel Hahnemann.
- 2.The theme in 2024 focused on enhancing research in homeopathy.

• **Which is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

## **Consider the following about the Niveshak Didi Initiative:**

- 1.It is launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- 2.It promotes financial literacy among rural women.

- **Which is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2



## **Consider the following statements about the Artemis Accords:**

1.It is an initiative led by NASA for peaceful space exploration.

2.India is a signatory to the Artemis Accords.

### **• Which of the above is/are correct?**

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Consider the following statements about the ‘Death Sentences and Executions 2024’ report:**

- 1.The report is published by Amnesty International.
- 2.The report highlights a rise in the number of executions globally in 2023.

**• Which of the above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Consider the following statements regarding the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI):**

- 1.No panchayat qualified in the “Achiever” category this year.
- 2.The majority of panchayats fall under the “Beginner” category.

• **Which is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

**Consider the following statements about data collection in the PAI portal:**

1. Over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats exist in India.
2. All Gram Panchayats submitted validated data on the PAI portal.

• **Which of the above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

## **Consider the following about Artemis Program:**

- 1.It plans to land the first woman and person of color on the Moon.
- 2.It is an initiative under the International Space Station framework.

- **Which is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2



## **Consider the following about Niveshak Didi:**

- 1.It aims to raise awareness on investment frauds.
- 2.It is implemented through Anganwadi centres.

- **Which of the above is/are correct?**

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

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# Word of the day

## **Antipathy:**

a feeling of intense dislike

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**Synonyms:** enmity, hate, grudge

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**Usage:** *She felt a strong antipathy towards lying.*


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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/antipathypro](http://newsth.live/antipathypro)

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /æntɪpəθi:/

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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, some wearing suits. The background is dark and out of focus, showing more people clapping. There are some decorative elements: a solid orange rectangle in the top left corner and a cluster of small, glowing red and blue dots below it. The text 'Thank you guys.' is written in white, sans-serif font on the left side of the image, with a thin white horizontal line underneath it.

Thank you  
guys.

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