

CURRENTLY - FROM NEWS TO NOTES

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Hindu & The Indian express

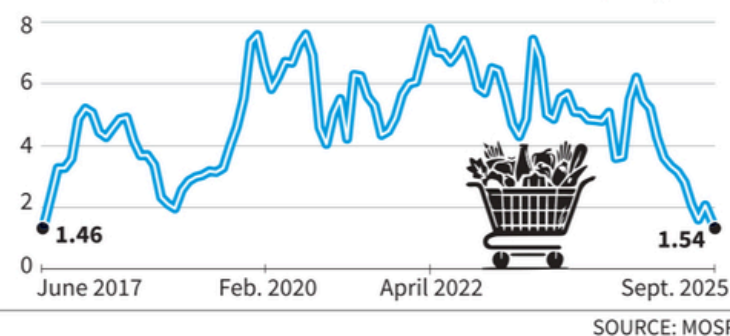
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Historic low

India's retail inflation slipped to 1.54% this month, the lowest since June 2017. The chart shows Y-o-Y inflation rate (in %)



Retail inflation eases to 8-year low of 1.54%

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation fell to a more than eight-year-low of 1.54% in September on falling food and fuel prices, official data showed on Monday. This is once again below the Reserve Bank of India's lower comfort bound of 2%.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, was last lower in June 2017, when it stood at 1.46%. Inflation had fallen below the

RBI's lower comfort limit in July 2025, before rising marginally to 2.1% in August.

The food and beverages grouping saw a contraction of 1.4% in September, compared with a growth of 0.05% in August and 8.4% inflation in September last year. "Looking ahead, food inflation is likely to stay benign supported by a favourable base and good monsoon," Rajani Sinha, chief economist at CareEdge Ratings, said.

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Retail inflation eases to 8-year low of 1.54%

The Hindu, Page 1

Why in News:

- India's retail inflation (measured by CPI) fell to an eight-year low of 1.54% in September 2025, mainly due to falling food and fuel prices.
- This is below the RBI's lower comfort band of 2%, the lowest since June 2017 (1.46%).

RBI's Inflation Target:

- Under the Monetary Policy Framework Agreement (2016),
- The target is $4\% \pm 2\%$.
- Hence, tolerance band = 2% (lower limit) to 6% (upper limit).
- The current rate (1.54%) is below the lower limit - indicating deflationary pressure or subdued demand.

Who Measures Retail Inflation in India:

- Retail inflation is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- It is released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).





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In India, which one of the following is responsible for maintaining price stability by controlling inflation ?

- (a) Department of Consumer Affairs
- (b) Expenditure Management Commission
- (c) Financial Stability and Development Council
- (d) Reserve Bank of India

2022

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With reference to **inflation** in India, which of the following statements is correct?

- (a) Controlling the inflation in India is the responsibility of the Government of India only
- (b) The Reserve Bank of India has no role in controlling the inflation
- (c) Decreased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation
- (d) Increased money circulation helps in controlling the inflation

2015



Gaza declaration inked as Hamas sets hostages free

Trump, leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Turkiye sign document meant to cement the ceasefire; Hamas releases last of the 20 surviving hostages and Israel hands over 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners

Agence France-Presse
SHARM EL SHEIKH

U.S. President Donald Trump hailed a "tremendous day for the Middle East [West Asia]" as he and regional leaders signed a declaration on Monday meant to cement a ceasefire in Gaza, hours after Israel and Hamas exchanged hostages and prisoners.

Arriving to a hero's welcome earlier in Israel, Mr. Trump had said, "This is a great day. This is a new beginning." Asked if the two-year Gaza war was over, he said: "Yes."

Mr. Trump sat down at a resort in Sharm el-Sheikh with more than two dozen world leaders to discuss the deal. The U.S. President along with leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Turkiye



Sweet relief: A released Israeli hostage, held in Gaza since the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, with his mother; and (right) a freed Palestinian hugging a relative after his release from an Israeli jail. REUTERS

signed the declaration as guarantors to the Gaza deal.

"The document is going to spell out rules and regulations and lots of other things," Mr. Trump said before signing, repeating

twice that "it's going to hold up."

As part of Mr. Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, Hamas on Monday freed the last 20 surviving hostages it held after two years of captivity in Gaza. In ex-



change, Israel released 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners held in its jails.

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TRUMP'S SPEECH

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Gaza declaration inked as Hamas sets hostages free

Source: The Hindu: Page: 1

International Relations

Why in News

- A "Gaza Declaration" was signed by U.S. President Donald Trump and leaders of Egypt, Qatar, and Türkiye in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt).
- The declaration aims to cement a ceasefire in Gaza after Israel-Hamas exchanged hostages and prisoners, marking a step toward ending the two-year-long Gaza conflict.
- Hamas released 20 surviving Israeli hostages, while Israel freed 1,968 mostly Palestinian prisoners.



Arctic seals, birds in new 'red list' of endangered species: IUCN

Agence France Presse

Arctic seals and birds are coming under increasing threat, mainly due to climate change and human activity, according to an updated list of endangered species released Friday by the world's top conservation body.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) said habitat loss driven by logging and agricultural expansion is a threat to birds. At the same time, seals were at risk mostly due to global warming and human activities, including maritime traffic.

The IUCN said it was changing the status of the hooded seal from vulnerable to endangered while bearded and harp seals are now classified as near threatened.

"This timely global update highlights the ever increasing impact human activity is having on nature and the climate and the devastating effects this has," its director general Grethel Aguilar told reporters at its World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi.

The IUCN red list now includes "172,620 species of which 48,646 are threatened with extinction," it said in a statement.

Global warming is destroying the natural habitat of animals including seals that live in the cold parts of the world. Maritime traffic, mining and oil extraction, industrial fishing and hunting are among other risks to the species.

"Global warming is occurring four times faster in the Arctic than in other regions, which is drastically reducing the extent and duration of sea ice cover," the IUCN said.

"Ice-dependent seals are a key food source for other animals," it added.

They "play a central role in the food web, consuming fish and invertebrates and recycling nutrients" and are one of the "keystone species" of their ecosystem.

Kit Kovacs, a scientist at the Norwegian Polar Institute, raised the alarm about the Svalbard archipelago, halfway between Norway and the North Pole.

Arctic seals, birds in new 'Red List' of endangered species: IUCN

Source: The Hindu, Science Page

GS Paper: GS-III - Environment, Biodiversity

Why in News

IUCN's updated Red List (2025) shows rising threat to Arctic seals and birds due to climate change and human activity. Global warming in the Arctic is 4x faster than elsewhere.

Species Update:

- Hooded Seal -> Endangered (from Vulnerable)
- Bearded Seal -> Near Threatened
- Harp Seal -> Near Threatened
- 🐦 Arctic Birds -> Threatened by logging & agricultural expansion

Snow leopards are the world's least genetically diverse big cat

A new Stanford-based study explains the implications of this phenomenon for the future of the elusive feline; researchers used whole-genome sequencing data for 37 snow leopards and concluded that the low genetic diversity is likely due to a persistently small population size

Divya Gandhi

The snow leopard, the agile "ghost of the mountains" that inhabits the rugged ranges of 12 Asian countries, including India, has the lowest genetic diversity of any big cat species in the world, even lower than that of the dwindling cheetah.

A new study led by researchers at Stanford University, published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS) on October 7, explained the implications of this phenomenon. The researchers used whole-genome sequencing data for 37 snow leopards and concluded that the low genetic diversity is, however, "likely due to a persistently small population size throughout their evolutionary history rather than recent inbreeding."

'Purging' of mutations

This means that "mutations that could potentially cause health issues in snow leopards have been removed from the population over many generations," lead author Katie Solari, a research scientist in biology at Stanford, told *The Hindu*. The PNAS paper added, "We found snow leopards to have the lowest heterozygosity of any big cat species, with heterozygosity for every snow leopard sample included in this study falling lower than that observed in any other big cat." This included cheetahs, "which have long been considered the archetype of low heterozygosity in big cats."

The good news is that snow leopards, compared to several *Panthera* species, have a significantly lower highly deleterious homozygous load – genes inherited from the mother and father that have fewer instances of duplicated copies of potentially harmful mutations that are connected with health issues.

This, the authors said, suggests effective "purging" of bad mutations during their evolutionary history at small population sizes.

"If a negative trait surfaced, those individuals died before reproducing, or their progeny were less successful. This purging, facilitated by historic inbreeding, allowed the snow leopard population to remain relatively healthy even at their small numbers," an article in the *Stanford Report* read.

In fact, "the inbreeding coefficient of snow leopards is significantly higher than other big cats and was even significantly lower than the Asian leopard and puma, indicating that the lower genetic diversity observed in snow leopards is not explained by higher inbreeding," per the research paper.

Dr. Solari told *The Hindu* that the very low genetic diversity and small population sizes mean they may not be able to adapt well to future anthropogenic challenges.

Critical to Asia's mountains

The wild feline indeed faces a long list of threats today: climate change, habitat loss, decreased availability of primary prey (mountain ungulates such as the Siberian ibex), retaliatory killings for livestock predation, and poaching for their skin. All this while climate change in Asia's high mountains threatens their future. Despite this, snow leopards, which were first listed as 'endangered,' were



The snow leopard is distinguished by an unusually long tail that it uses like a rudder to stay balanced as it traverses rough terrain. PUBLIC DOMAIN

controversially downlisted to 'vulnerable' in 2017, as they did not meet certain criteria for population size. There are no more than 4,500 to 7,500 individuals, each critical to the Asian mountain ecosystem "that offers immense ecosystem services – acting as an important source of carbon storage and providing water to almost two billion people."

Hearteningly, however, the international community has worked for decades to establish a sustainable zoo population: In 2008, there were 445 snow leopards across 205 institutions globally, the paper read.

The snow leopard, distinguished by an unusually long tail, which acts as a rudder to help it keep its balance as it traverses its rough terrain, happens to be the least genetically studied of all big cat species. There is, however, evidence of continuous habitat connectivity across at least 75 km in Pakistan and around 1,000 km in Mongolia, and the animal is known to cross long distances between mountain ranges, according to the study.

'Very poorly studied'

As for India, a pioneering survey last year estimated that 718 snow leopards exist in the wild: 477 in Ladakh, 124 in Uttarakhand, 51 in Himachal Pradesh, 36 in Arunachal Pradesh, 21 in Sikkim, and nine in Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian snow leopard accounts for 10-15 percent of the global population.

"Of the 12 countries with wild snow leopards, India has the highest numbers after China and Mongolia. That makes

If a negative trait surfaced, those individuals died before reproducing, or their progeny were less successful. This purging, facilitated by historic inbreeding, allowed the snow leopard population to remain relatively healthy even at their small numbers

India one of the most important countries for the conservation of this species," Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi, with the India programme of the Snow Leopard Trust at the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Mysore, told *The Hindu*.

He added that the genetic diversity of leopards in India "is very poorly studied ... We need to sample across the high mountains to understand the genetic diversity of snow leopards in India."

"India's Project Snow Leopard, dedicated to the conservation of snow leopards, and NGOs such as the NCF, have been working on snow leopard conservation for 27 years. Local community members from snow leopard habitats such as Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal are key partners in the conservation of snow leopards," said Dr. Suryawanshi.

But the snow leopard in India is threatened by land use change and climate change, he said.

"Almost the entire snow leopard habitat in India is within 50-100 km of the

international border. Large-scale infrastructure is changing the face of this region. Climate change-induced warming and floods are impacting the wildlife of this landscape, including the snow leopards, to a large extent."

Maintaining integrity

Dr. Suryawanshi, who is a co-author of the paper, said the main challenge of studying snow leopards is in "getting the samples." Bureaucratic hurdles in getting permissions to study snow leopards generally slow down research, he said.

"In addition, the timelines of funding and permissions often do not match. The Stanford study collaborated with researchers around the world, and only then were they able to put together enough samples to make an assessment of the genetic diversity of snow leopards. We need to collect a similar number of samples from within India to understand the genetic diversity of snow leopards in the country."

On the future fate of snow leopards of the fragile high-elevation landscape of the Himalayas, "we need to treat these landscapes and the people that live here with respect," said Dr. Suryawanshi. "The effects of rampant large infrastructure projects are clearly visible in the scale of destruction in the recurrent floods that occur every monsoon."

Maintaining the integrity of the snow leopard's habitat is crucial for the long-term conservation of this charismatic species of the Himalaya, Dr. Suryawanshi added. divya.gandhi@thehindu.co.in

Snow leopards are the world's least genetically diverse big cat

Source: The Hindu, Science Page

GS Paper: GS-III - Environment, Biodiversity, Conservation

Why in News:

- A Stanford University study (published in PNAS) found that snow leopards have the lowest genetic diversity among all big cats - even lower than cheetahs.
- The study used whole-genome sequencing of 37 snow leopards from across their range in 12 Asian countries (including India).

12 Snow Leopard Range Countries:

India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan.

IUCN Status:

- Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*) -> Vulnerable (since 2017; earlier Endangered)
- Estimated global population: 4,500 - 7,500 individuals
- In India: ~477 in Ladakh, 124 in Uttarakhand, 51 in Himachal Pradesh, 37 in Arunachal Pradesh, 8 in Sikkim, 12 in Jammu & Kashmir.

What "Least Genetically Diverse" Means:

- Genetic diversity = variation in DNA among individuals of a species.
- Low genetic diversity -> fewer genetic differences -> reduced ability to adapt to environmental changes or resist diseases.

Mokyr, Aghion and Howitt win Nobel economics prize

Winners are professors in U.S., French and British universities; prize worth \$1.2 mn highlights work on innovation-driven economic growth

Reuters
STOCKHOLM

Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt won the 2025 Nobel economics prize for "having explained innovation-driven economic growth", the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said on Monday.

The prestigious award, formally known as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, is the final prize to be given out this year and is worth 11 million Swedish Kronor (\$1.2 million).

"The laureates have taught us that sustained growth cannot be taken for granted," the prize-awarding body said in a statement. Economic stagnation, not growth, has been the norm for most of human history. Their work shows that we must be aware of, and counteract, threats to continued growth."

Mr. Mokyr is a professor at Northwestern University, in Evanston in the United States, while Mr. Aghion is professor at the College de France and INSEAD, in Paris, and at the London School of Economics and Political Science, in Britain. Mr. Howitt is a professor at Brown University, in Providence in the United States. Mr. Mokyr was



Moment of pride: Visuals of Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt, recipients of the Nobel Economics prize. REUTERS

awarded half the prize with the other half being shared between Aghion and Howitt.

"Joel Mokyr used historical observations to identify the factors necessary for sustained growth based on technological innovations," John Hassler, member of the Nobel Committee, said.

Creative destruction

"Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt produced a mathematical model of creative destruction, an endless process in which new and better products replace the old."

The awards for medicine, physics, chemistry, peace and literature were announced last week.

Those prizes were established in the will of Swedish dynamite inventor and businessman Alfred Nobel and have been handed out since 1901, with a few interruptions mostly due to the

world wars.

The economics prize was established much later, being given out first in 1969 when it was won by Norway's Ragnar Frisch and Jan Tinbergen from the Netherlands for work in dynamic economic modelling. Tinbergen's brother Nikolaas also won a prize, taking home Medicine in 1973.

While few economists are household names, relatively well-known winners include former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke, and Paul Krugman and Milton Friedman. Last year's economics award went to U.S.-based academics Simon Johnson, James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu for research that explored the relationship between colonisation and the establishment of public institutions to explain why some countries have been mired in poverty for decades.

Mokyr, Aghion and Howitt win Nobel economics prize

Source: The Hindu, Page 13

Why in News:

- Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion, and Peter Howitt have been awarded the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

Reason for Award:

They were awarded "for having explained innovation-driven economic growth."

- Joel Mokyr - used historical observations to identify how technological innovations drive sustained growth.
- Philippe Aghion & Peter Howitt - developed a mathematical model of "creative destruction," describing how new and better products replace old ones, fueling continuous economic progress.

Achieving Centre's rooftop solar targets to remain a challenge: study

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Despite a near four-fold increase in applications between March 2024 and July 2025, only 13.1% of the targeted 1 crore solar rooftop installations, under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSGY), has been achieved, and just 14.1% of the allocated ₹65,700 crore in subsidies released till July 2025, a report said.

"In this scenario, the FY2027 target [of 1 crore installations] continues to be viewed as a considerable challenge," said the report on the performance of the scheme, jointly published by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research and Analytics on Tuesday.

Reasons included tardy approval processes, which could stretch anywhere from 45 to 120 days, stem-



The scheme has facilitated the installation of 4,946 MW of rooftop solar capacity till July 2025 across States and Union Territories.

ming largely from "meter shortages, lack of coordination between consumers, installers, and DISCOMs, and procedural inefficiencies at the utility level," it noted.

The PMSGY is a Centre-led endeavour to encourage more homes to install rooftop solar connections.

The government provides capital upfront via loans.

As of July 2025, the pe-

riod until which the report tracked progress, the PMSGY had received 57.9 lakh applications for residential rooftop solar installations. The scheme has facilitated the installation of 4,946 MW of rooftop solar capacity till July 2025 across various States and Union Territories, indicating "robust on-ground execution", the report said. Subsidy disbursements

have crossed ₹9,281 crore (\$1.05 billion), benefiting over 16 lakh households. As of July 2025, the 4.9 GW of installations added under the PMSGY accounted for approximately 44.5% of the country's total residential rooftop capacity.

The PM solar scheme only incentivises solar installations, whose component parts are entirely manufactured in India. Called "DCR-compliant modules", they are on average costlier by ₹12/watt over imported variants. "These higher prices are making larger residential installations less economically attractive," the report said.

"Establishing clear, time-bound rooftop solar capacity targets at the State level is essential for creating a coherent vision," said Vibhuti Garg, Director, IEEFA-South Asia, and a contributing author, in a statement.

Achieving Centre's rooftop solar targets to remain a challenge: study

The Hindu, Page 12

Why in News:

A recent study by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and JMK Research found that only 13.1% of the target under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGY) has been achieved till July 2025. Out of ₹65,700 crore allocated for subsidies, only 14.1% has been disbursed.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGY)

Launch: February 2024

Implemented by: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)

- To promote rooftop solar installations in residential homes.
- Provide up to 300 units of free electricity/month to households.
- Encourage self-reliance in clean energy and reduce power bills.

Key Targets:

- 1 crore rooftop solar systems by FY 2027
- 30 GW total rooftop solar capacity addition



Mains Enrichment

Number of births declines; deaths rise slightly: report

The Vital Statistics of India, based on the Civil Registration System report for 2023, shows 86.6 lakh deaths were registered that year, recording a marginal increase from the 86.5 lakh in 2022

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

India registered 2.52 crore births in 2023, around 2.32 lakh fewer than in 2022, the Vital Statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS) report for the year 2023 shows.

The report, compiled by the Registrar-General of India (RGI) and released on Monday, stated that 86.6 lakh deaths were registered in 2023, a marginal increase from 86.5 lakh deaths in 2022.

The report shows that there was no major spike in deaths in 2022 and 2023, despite the COVID-19 dashboard maintained by the Health Ministry showing that the total number of pandemic-induced deaths stood at 5,33,665 as on May 5.

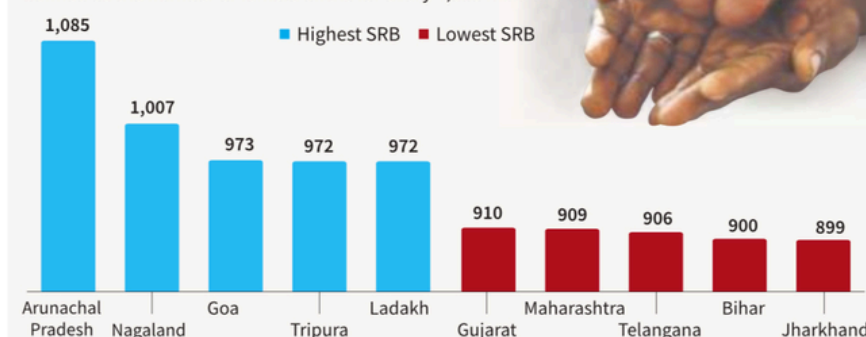
However, there was a significant rise in deaths in 2021, the second-year of COVID-19 lockdown, which recorded an excess of 21 lakh deaths from the 2020 count.

There were 81.2 lakh deaths in 2020 and 102.2 lakh in 2021.

The report also said that

Gender imbalance

The chart shows five States/Union Territories each with the highest and lowest sex ratios at birth (SRB) in 2023. SRB is commonly defined as the number of female births for every 1,000 male births



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

Jharkhand recorded the lowest sex ratio at birth at 899, followed by Bihar at 900, Telangana at 906, Maharashtra at 909, Gujarat at 910, Haryana at 911 and Mizoram at 911. Since 2020, Bihar has been recording the lowest sex ratio, which is defined as the number of females born per 1,000 males.

Sex ratio count

The highest sex ratio was reported by Arunachal Pradesh at 1,085, followed by Nagaland at 1,007, Goa at 973, Ladakh and Tripura at

972, and Kerala at 967.

The share of institutional births in total registered births is 74.7 % in 2023. However, the report did not include information from Sikkim. Overall registration of births for the year 2023 stood at 98.4%.

Statewise data

The report said that 11 States/Union Territories achieved more than 90% registration of births within the prescribed time limit of 21 days.

These States are Gujarat, Puducherry, Chandigarh,

Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Punjab. Five States – Odisha, Mizoram, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh – reported 80-90% registration, while in 14 States – Assam, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Kerala, Karnataka, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh – the registration stood at 50-80%.

Number of births declines; deaths rise slightly: report

The Hindu, Page 12

Key Data Points:

Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB):

- Highest: Arunachal Pradesh - 1,085 females per 1,000 males
- Lowest: Jharkhand - 899 females per 1,000 males
- Other low SRB states: Bihar (900), Telangana (906), Gujarat (910)

Deaths

- Total registered deaths in 2023: 86.6 lakh
- Slight increase from 86.5 lakh in 2022

(Report compiled by the Registrar-General of India (RGI) under the Civil Registration System 2023)