

## Key Findings:

- **Global Decline:** Internet freedom has decreased worldwide for the 13th straight year.
- **AI's Role in Repression:** Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used to spread disinformation and automate censorship.
- **Legal and Physical Threats:** Many countries see legal punishments and even physical violence against individuals for what they express online.
- **Worst Offenders:** Iran and Myanmar are particularly repressive, with China remaining the worst for the ninth year in a row.
- **India's Concerns:** India is expanding AI-based censorship, potentially undermining democracy and creating bias ahead of its 2024 elections.

**What is Censorship?** The control or suppression of ideas, information, or forms of expression by governments or powerful groups.

## How Censorship Works in India

- **Legal Tools:**
  - **Criminal Procedure Code:** Allows for seizure of publications deemed harmful by the government.
  - **Central Bureau of Film Certification:** Regulates and censors film content.
  - **Press Council of India:** A self-regulatory body for the press.
  - **Cable Television Networks Act:** Regulates content on cable TV.
- **Social Media and IT Rules:**
  - Social media platforms fall under the IT Act and the more recent IT Rules. These grant substantial power to the government over online content.

## Pros and Cons of Censorship

### Potential Benefits

- Prevents social unrest by reducing harmful content.
- Protects national security.
- May limit the spread of false information.

### Significant Drawbacks:

- Can become a tool for controlling people's lives and suppressing dissent.
- Violates freedom of speech and expression rights.
- Open to abuse and political bias.

### The Way Forward

- India needs robust legal protections for free speech online.
- Regulation of AI is essential to ensure it promotes liberty, not repression.

## Special Provisions for Indian States: Article 371

- **Purpose:** Article 371 of the Indian Constitution grants unique protections to certain states, often related to land ownership and tribal rights.
- **Different Articles, Different Provisions:**
  - **Article 371A (Nagaland):** Only tribal residents of Nagaland can purchase land in the state.
  - **Article 371F (Sikkim):**
    - The Sikkim government owns all land within the state.
    - The Supreme Court has limited jurisdiction over certain legal matters in Sikkim.
  - **Article 371G (Mizoram):**
    - Land ownership is primarily for tribal residents of Mizoram.
    - Parliament cannot interfere with tribal laws and customs.
  - **Article 371 (Himachal Pradesh):** Restricts land purchases by non-residents.

### Key Points:

- These Articles under 371 aim to protect the unique cultures, land rights, and legal practices of specific states.
- Restrictions on land ownership are a common theme across these provisions.



## MAHARASHTRA & GUJARAT

(ART 371)

"Special responsibility" to Governor to establish "separate development boards" for "Vidarbha, Marathwada, and the rest of Maharashtra", and Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat; "equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said areas"; "equitable arrangement providing adequate facilities for technical education and vocational training, and adequate opportunities for employment" under the state government.

## KARNATAKA

(ART 371), 98TH AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

There is a provision for the establishment of a separate development board for the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, the working of which will be reported annually to the Assembly; there shall be "equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said region"; and "equitable opportunities and facilities" for people of this region in government jobs and education. An order can be made to provide for reservation "of a proportion" of seats and jobs in educational and vocational training institutions and state government organisations respectively in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region for individuals who belong to that region by birth or domicile.

## SIKKIM

(ART 371F, 36TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1975)

The members of the legislative Assembly of Sikkim shall elect the representative of Sikkim in the House of the People. To protect the rights and interests of various sections of the population of Sikkim, Parliament may provide for the number of seats in the Assembly, which may be filled only by candidates from those sections. Governor shall have "special responsibility for peace and for an equitable arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of different sections of the population". All earlier laws in territories that formed Sikkim shall continue, and any adaptation or modification shall not be questioned in any court.

## ANDHRA PRADESH & TELANGANA

(ART 371D, 32ND AMENDMENT ACT, 1973; SUBSTITUTED BY THE ANDHRA PRADESH REORGANISATION ACT, 2014)

President must ensure "equitable opportunities and facilities" in "public employment and education to people from different parts of the state"; he may require the state government to organise "any class or classes of posts in a civil service of, or any class or classes of civil posts under, the State into different local cadres for different parts of the State", and allot them. The President has similar powers vis-à-vis admissions in any university or state government-run educational institution. Also, he may provide for setting up of an administrative tribunal outside the jurisdiction of the High Court to deal with issues of appointment, allotment or promotion in state civil services. [ART 371E allows for the establishment of a university in Andhra Pradesh by a law of Parliament. But this is not really a 'special provision'.]

## ASSAM

(ART 371B, 22ND AMENDMENT ACT, 1969)

President may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of the Assembly consisting of members elected from the tribal areas of the state.

## ARUNACHAL PRADESH

(ART 371H, 55TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1986)

The Governor has a special responsibility with regard to law and order, and "he shall, after consulting the Council of Ministers, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken". Should a question arise over whether a particular matter is one in which the Governor is "required to act in the exercise of his individual judgment, the decision of the Governor in his discretion shall be final", and "shall not be called in question...".

## NAGALAND

(ART 371A, 13TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1962)

Parliament can't legislate in matters of Naga religion or social practices, the Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources, without concurrence of the legislative Assembly. This provision was inserted in the Constitution after a 16-point agreement between the Centre and the Naga People's Convention in 1960, which led to the creation of Nagaland in 1963. Also, there is a provision for a 35-member regional council for Tuensang district, which elects the Tuensang members in the Assembly. A member from the Tuensang district is Minister for Tuensang Affairs; Governor has the final say on Tuensang-related matters.

## MIZORAM

(ART 371G, 53RD AMENDMENT ACT, 1986)

Parliament cannot make laws on "religious or social practices of the Mizos, Mizo customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, ownership and transfer of land... unless the Legislative Assembly... by a resolution so decides."

## MANIPUR

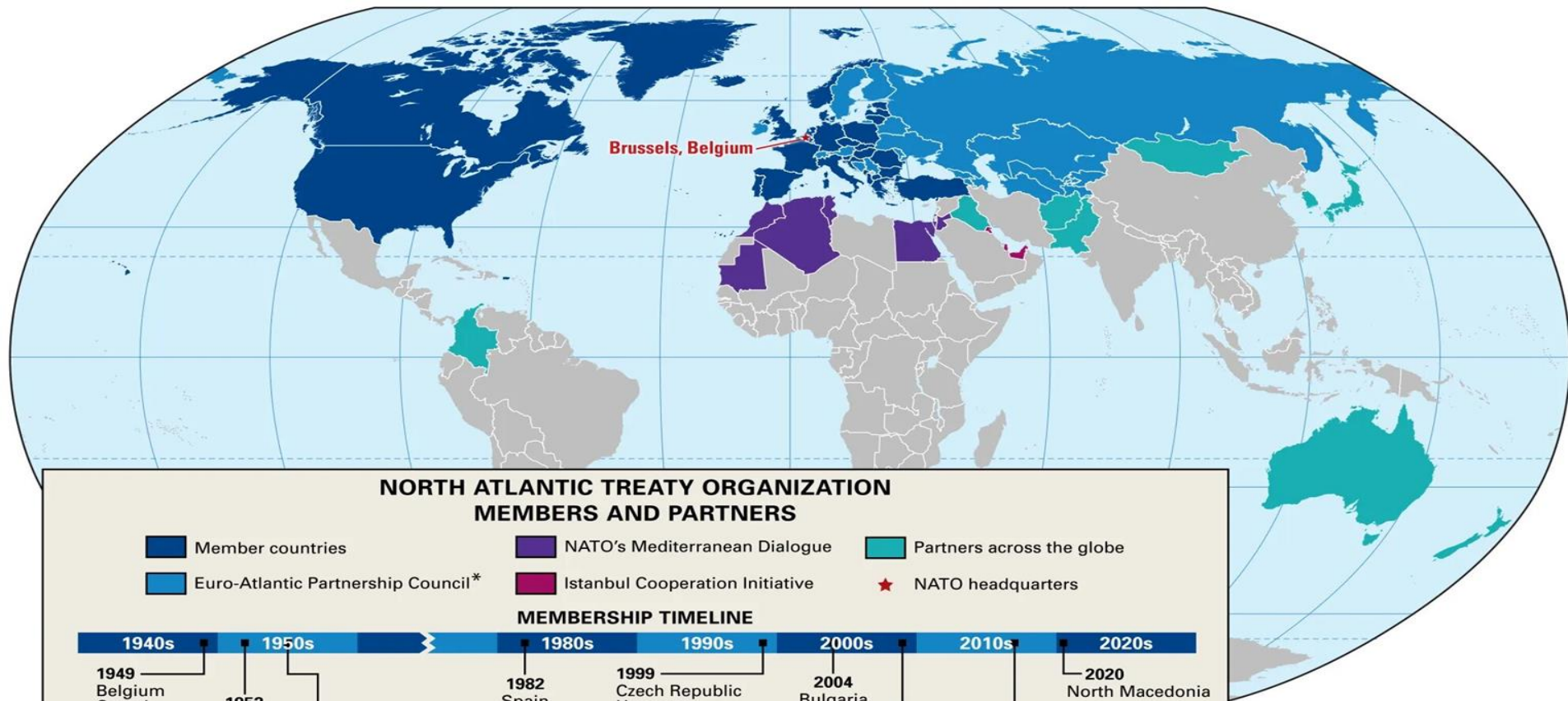
(ART 371C, 27TH AMENDMENT ACT, 1971)

President may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of elected members from the Hill areas in the Assembly; entrust "special responsibility" to the Governor to ensure its proper functioning. The Governor has to file a report every year on this to the President.



## NATO Plus: What is it and why does it matter to India?

- **What is NATO Plus?**
  - A grouping of NATO countries (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and five additional nations: Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel, and South Korea.
  - Focuses on strengthening international defense cooperation.
- **What is NATO?**
  - A military alliance of 31 North American and European countries.
  - Founded in 1949 with the aim of protecting members' security and freedom.
  - Key Principle (Article Five): An attack on one member is considered an attack on all.
- **Potential Benefits for India if Included in NATO Plus:**
  - Enhanced intelligence sharing with member countries.
  - Easier access to advanced military technology.
  - A stronger defense partnership with the United States.





## Reverse Flipping: Understanding the Trend

### What is Reverse Flipping?

- Reverse flipping is when an Indian company that has moved its headquarters abroad (often for tax benefits) chooses to "return home" and re-establish its base in India.

### Why is it happening?

- **India's Growth:** India's booming economy and large market make it attractive for businesses.
- **Favorable Environment:** India offers:
  - Potential for venture capital funding.
  - Improved tax structures.
  - Strong intellectual property (IP) protection.
  - A young and educated workforce.
  - Supportive government policies.

**Key Example:** The trend is particularly noticeable in India's fintech (financial technology) sector.

## Seed Certification: Ensuring High-Quality Crops

### What is Seed Certification?

- A system guaranteeing that seeds meet standards for:
  - **Genetic purity:** Ensuring they are the correct variety.
  - **Physical purity:** No contaminants like weed seeds.
  - **Seed health:** Free from diseases and pests.

### Why is it Important?

- **Protects crop quality:** Guarantees farmers are planting the right variety with desirable traits.
- **Boosts yields:** Healthy seeds lead to stronger plants and better harvests.
- **Reduces risk:** Minimizes the spread of diseases, pests, and weeds through seeds.
- **Builds trust:** Assures farmers of seed quality.

### How Seed Certification Works (Simplified)

1. **Application:** Seed producers apply for certification.
2. **Field Inspections:** Experts check for crop health, purity standards, and isolation from other varieties.
3. **Seed Testing:** Samples analyzed for purity, germination, and health.
4. **Labeling:** Certified seeds get labels with details for traceability.



## Specific Benefits of Seed Certification

- **Maintains crop varieties:** Ensures farmers get what they expect.
- **Improves yields and production:** Healthy seeds perform better.
- **Minimizes pesticide use:** Reduces the need for pest control.
- **Protects biodiversity:** Helps preserve different crop varieties.
- **Supports fair trade:** Clear labeling and quality standards.
- **Strengthens food security:** Reliable, high-quality seeds are critical for reliable food production globally.





## Boosting India's Fisheries Sector

- **The Goal:** To support and develop India's fisheries sector.
- **The Programs:**
  - **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY):** A comprehensive initiative to address challenges in the fisheries sector.
  - **Extension of Fisheries Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF):** Ensures continued infrastructure support for the sector until 2026.

### What is PM-MKSSY?

- **Focus:** Modernizing the fisheries sector, supporting small businesses, and improving livelihoods.
- **Key Actions:**
  - Registering fishers and fish farmers to streamline the sector.
  - Providing easier access to financing.
  - Offering insurance incentives for fish farmers.
  - Supporting safety and quality standards to boost market opportunities.

**Who Benefits:** Fishers, fish farmers, fish workers, and small businesses in the fisheries sector.

### Why it Matters

- **India's Fisheries:**
  - India ranks third globally in fish production.
  - The sector is crucial for jobs and food security.
- **Challenges:** The sector faces issues like lack of formal structure, limited risk protection, and safety/quality concerns. PM-MKSSY aims to address these



## The Push for UN Security Council Reform

- **The Issue:** Many believe the UN Security Council (UNSC) doesn't reflect the current global power balance and needs to be updated.

### Key Groups:

- **L.69 Group:** A large group of developing nations advocating for UNSC expansion. They want more permanent and non-permanent seats to better represent the world today. India is a member.
- **Uniting for Consensus (Coffee Club):** A group of nations opposed to adding new permanent seats. They include countries like Italy, Pakistan, and Argentina who often compete with regional rivals for influence.
- **G-4 Nations (Brazil, India, Germany, Japan):** These countries desire permanent seats on the UNSC and support each other's bids.

### Reform Proposals

- **Razali Plan (1997):** Proposed adding:
  - 5 new permanent members (no veto power)
  - 4 new non-permanent members
- **The Opposition:** The "Coffee Club" opposes the Razali Plan out of self-interest.

**The Challenge:** Finding a compromise that satisfies the various groups and their often-conflicting interests is the key to successful reform.



## Operation Prosperity Guardian

- **Goal:** Protect merchant ships in the southern Red Sea from Houthi attacks.
- **Who's Involved:** A multinational naval force led by the US, including the UK.
  - Specifically, formed under the existing Combined Task Force 153 (CTF 153).
- **Why it Matters:**
  - Houthis (a Yemeni group) have been attacking ships in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, a key shipping route.
  - This operation aims to ensure safe passage for commercial vessels.

## What is Combined Task Force 153 (CTF 153)?

- A US-led naval group focused on maritime security in the Red Sea.
- Part of the larger Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), an international naval partnership.







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## Geographical Indications (GIs): Protecting and Promoting Unique Products

### What is a GI?

- A Geographical Indication (GI) is a special tag that identifies a product as originating from a specific location and possessing qualities unique to that region.

### International Protections

- **Paris Convention:** Provides basic principles for protecting industrial property (including GIs).
- **Lisbon System:** Streamlines international registration for "appellations of origin" (a type of GI).
- **Madrid System:** While focused on trademarks, can also protect some GIs.

### GI Protection in India

- **Key Law:** Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999
- **GI Registry:** Located in Chennai, responsible for processing and registering GI applications.
- **Benefits of GI Tags in India:**
  - Promote and protect unique regional products.
  - Boost credibility and market value.
  - Preserve cultural heritage and traditional knowledge.
  - Prevent misuse of product names and reputations.
  - Support sustainable production practices.

## GI Tags as Intellectual Property

- GIs are a form of intellectual property (IP) protected under the WTO's TRIPS Agreement.
- GI rights protect the collective interests of producers in a region.

## State-Wise GI Tags in India

To make this information easier to use, consider creating a table. Here's how it could start:

State	GI Products (Examples)
Andhra Pradesh	Srikalahasti Kalamkari (textile), Tirupati Laddu (sweet)
Arunachal Pradesh	Khamti Rice, Yak Churpi (cheese)
Assam	Muga Silk, Judima (rice wine)

## GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GI) TAGS IN INDIA







## The G20: Shaping Global Economic Cooperation

### What is the G20?

- A forum for the world's 19 largest economies plus the European Union.
- Focuses on international economic cooperation and addressing global challenges.
- Began in 1999 in response to the Asian financial crisis, and its importance grew after the 2008 global financial crisis.

### Key Areas of Focus:

- Economic stability
- Climate change
- Sustainable development
- Trade, health, energy, and more

### How the G20 Works

- No permanent headquarters or binding decisions.
- Operates through annual meetings with a rotating presidency.
- Finance Track (central bankers, finance ministers) and Sherpa Track (non-economic issues) guide the agenda.

# G20





## Significance of the G20

- Brings together major economies, including emerging markets.
- Platform for cooperation on economic issues, even among rivals.
- Promotes a more balanced distribution of global power.

## G20 Limitations

- Difficulty reaching a consensus among diverse members.
- Non-binding decisions limit enforcement of agreements.

## India's 2023 Presidency

- Historic first-time hosting the G20 Summit.
- Theme: "One Earth, One Family, One Future"
- Focus areas:
  - Climate action and green development
  - Inclusive growth and progress on SDGs
  - Technological transformation
  - Women-led development

## Why India's Presidency Matters

- Highlights India's growing economic power.
- Leadership opportunity on climate change.
- Focus on inclusive growth and representing the "Global South" (developing nations).

## Dabba Trading: The Illegal Gamble

### What is Dabba Trading?

- A type of gambling based on stock prices.
- Traders bet on whether prices will rise or fall, but don't actually buy or sell the stocks.
- Operates outside of official stock exchanges.

### Why is it Illegal?

- Violates the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act (SCRA), 1956.
- Can result in severe penalties, including jail time and fines.

### Problems with Dabba Trading

- **No Investor Protection:** Investors have no safeguards, can't access dispute resolution mechanisms like those within official exchanges.
- **Risk of Broker Default** If the broker can't pay, investors lose everything.
- **Tax Evasion:** Cash-based transactions escape the formal banking system, costing the government revenue.
- **Black Money** Dabba trading can fuel illegal, untraceable money transfers and criminal activity.

## How to Stop Dabba Trading

- **Enforce Existing Laws:** Punish violators of the SCRA to act as a deterrent.
- **Educate Investors:** Make them aware of the dangers of dabba trading and the benefits of regulated exchanges.
- **Monitor Online Activity:** Regulators should keep an eye on social media and apps used for dabba trading and take action against offenders.

