

# The year India came into its own

Rediffusion survey of what dominated people's minds in 2023 shows enormous pride in India

BS REPORTER

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The year 2023 was India's coming out party, going by what dominated the headlines and found popularity. Capturing people's imagination in the year were the successful Chandrayaan mission, the G20 event in New Delhi, India's medal haul at the Asian Games, the successful hosting of the Men's Cricket World Cup, and the stature of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This was also the year of comeback kings, with Shah Rukh Khan rekindling his career and, in the process, reviving the Hindi box office, and Virat Kohli emerging as the player of the tournament to take India to the final of the World Cup. Balancing the comeback kings were the new stars on the horizon: The burgeoning electric vehicles, the Artificial Intelligence generation, quick commerce, and the new golden boy of Indian cricket, Shubman Gill.

These are some of the inferences drawn from the "Hits of the Year" survey by advertising agency Rediffusion, shared exclusively with *Business Standard*.

"An important dimension that shone through was the enormous pride in India, a general belief that as Indians we are starting to count globally and we are at the forefront of the world," said Sandeep Goyal, Chairman, Rediffusion.

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## HITS OF THE YEAR

1 Chandrayaan-3: India's tryst with the moon

2 G20 Summit: The world comes home to India

3 **Narendra Modi:** Leader of the hour



4 **Shah Rukh Khan:** The return of the king

5 **AI:** The artificial intelligence generation

6 The Uttarakhand tunnel rescue



7 **Virat Kohli:** The man, the myth, the legend

8 The International Year of Millets

9 **Shubman Gill:** Big hitter is a big hit

10 A historic Asian Games for India

11 **Naatu Naatu:** Indian cinema on the international stage

12 **Evs:** India goes electric

13 Gold is back

14 (i) The battle for quickest commerce  
(ii) A surge in domestic tourism

15 The ODI Cricket World Cup

16 "Just looking like a wow"



17 **The great Indian celebrity wedding**

18 Mahua Moitra

19 The never-ending season of deals

20 **Authentic:** No fakes, fake news, or deepfakes

Source: Hits of the Year survey by Rediffusion

## THE INDIA STORY

Corporate landscape evolves, redefines work



Return to office. This message echoed loud and clear through corporate corridors this

year. The resistance, too, was loud and intense. Employees returned, often grudgingly. As they tried to wean them away from their homes, some organisations adopted a nuanced approach – a hybrid work style, allowing for a few days of WFH in a week. It worked, and it didn't. After "Great Resignation", "Quiet Quitting" and "Career Cushioning", a new expression emerged in the office lexicon – "Coffee Badging", wherein employees appeared in the office, but only briefly, clocking in, grabbing a coffee, chit-chatting and then going back home to work remotely.

ANEKA CHATTERJEE writes

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## India's year...

A “Hit” can be an event, a personality, a trend, technology, or just a popular word — anything that found fame and gained mass acceptance. The survey was conducted by Red Lab, the consumer insights think tank at Rediffusion. Its team sat down to list all things that ‘drove’ or inspired India in 2023.

The researchers scanned all the news and newsmakers through the year, creating a long list of 130 possible Hits. This long list was reviewed by an expert panel of thought leaders, culture czars, and business captains, who distilled it down to 35. This shortlist was put to a popular poll among 2,078 respondents across India between end-November and early December to arrive at the Top 20. The respondents were in the 18-45 age group, 56 per cent of them male and the rest female. This is the first full-fledged Hits of the Year survey by Rediffusion. It started last year as a limited pilot and, therefore, comparisons with 2022 will not tell the whole story.

The story this year is riveting, not least because the survey captures the story of India returning to its roots. For instance, millet, the group of food grains that India is promoting, was one of the Hits. So was domestic tourism. But it was Chandrayaan that stole the show.

“Chandrayaan is seen by most Indians as a ‘victory’ for India, especially after the previous attempt failed. Last time when things didn’t quite work

## BEHIND THE HITS

► Chandrayaan celebrated for making India a genuine super power

► G-20 had mass recognition, though not too many really understood it

► Enormous pride in India, a belief that Indians are starting to count globally

► PM Modi came through as the tallest leader in the country, with great vision and commitment

► Rahul Gandhi not in top 20, but his Bharat Jodo Yatra got many mentions of support

► Cumulative success of Pathaan and Jawan catapulted Shah Rukh Khan

► Virat Kohli's comeback seen a befitting reply to detractors

► Support for Shubman Gill higher among women, more on his looks than on his game

► Millets adoption may still be lukewarm, but the hype has people interested

► Domestic tourism was a hot topic with Indians

Source: Hits of the Year survey by Rediffusion

out, there was a general feeling of ‘loss of face’. The redemption this time is being celebrated for India being seen as a genuine superpower. Hum Kissi Se Kum Nahin,” said Goyal.

Khan and Kohli’s comebacks were also seen as stories of redemption, with the actor reinventing himself as an action hero after an abysmal few years and the cricketer silencing his detractors.

Interestingly, while Kohli had a high share of votes among men but just average among women, Gill found more supporters among women, who scored him better on looks than on his game.

The list of redemption does not include Congress Party leader Rahul Gandhi, who did make it to the shortlist of Top 35, riding on his Bharat Jodo Yatra, but did not garner enough votes to make the Top 20. The only other politician in the Top 20 is Trinamool Congress’

Mahua Moitra, who, despite being expelled from the Lok Sabha and battling a defamation case, stood her ground and made an impression in the media for being a formidable opposition leader.

Naatu Naatu provided the pan-India flavour for earning global recognition and deep fake loomed as a new threat.

The social media surprise Hit was the passionate boutique owner, New Delhi’s Jasmeen Kaur, making a pitch for her latest collection with the Instagram sensation, “looking like a wow”. That is what a lot of people were saying about India this year.

## CEA...

“This, if made the benchmark, can form the basis for the treatment of different combinations of debt defaults and the reasons therein on the one hand, and the