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## Nokia, Indian Institute of Science join hands to push PM Modi's 6G vision

In an effort to help realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for India as a leader in 6G, telecom equipment giant Nokia on Friday announced to partner with the Indian Institute... **07**



## Telangana Governor, CM worship tribal deities at Medaram

**Hyderabad, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday offered prayers to tribal deities Samakka and Saralamma at Medaram in Mulugu district. The two leaders reached Medaram by separate helicop-

ters and paid their obeisance to the deities as part of the ongoing Sammakka Saralamma Jatara, considered as Asia's largest tribal fair. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy told mediapersons that he prayed for the prosperity of Telangana and its people. He was accompanied by state ministers Seethakka, Sridhar Babu,

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and several other Congress leaders. Revanth Reddy said he always draws inspiration from the story of Samakka and Saralamma to fight against exploitation and injustice, adding that the Congress with the support of the people fought with the same spirit to end the 10-year 'misrule' of BRS. The

Chief Minister also said that a people's government has been formed in the state with the blessings of the tribal goddesses. The state government released Rs 110 crore for the biennial Jatara to provide all facilities for the devotees, the Chief Minister said, even as he criticised the Centre for sanctioning only Rs 3 crore for the event.

Revanth Reddy also said that he shares a special relationship with Mulugu district and minister Seethakka, whom he considers his sister, adding that he starts all his important programmes from this place. Recalling how he had launched the 'Haath Se Haath Jodo Yatra' from Medaram, the Chief Minister promised to provide necessary funds for the all-round development of the place. For Tamilisai Soundararajan, this was her third visit to the Medaram Jatara as the Governor. She offered traditional sarees as tokens of respect.



## BRS MLA Lasya Nanditha dies in car accident

**Hyderabad, Feb 23 (IANS)** Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLA G. Lasya Nanditha died in a road accident near Hyderabad early Friday morning. She was 33.

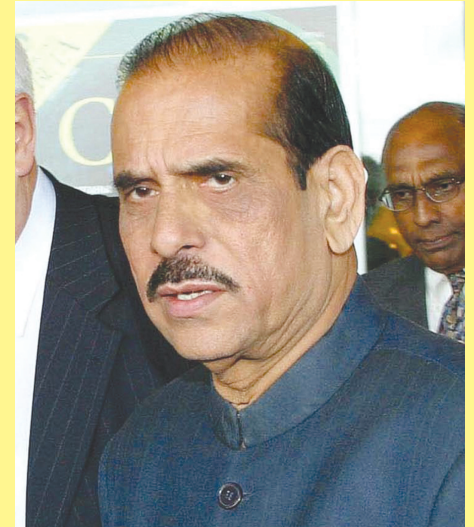
The accident occurred when the car she was travelling in hit a road divider on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) near Patancheru. The MLA's driver was injured in the crash.

## Chandrababu created hurdles in distribution of house sites among poor: Jagan

**Amaravati, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday came down heavily on TDP president N. Chandrababu Naidu describing him as a villain who tried to stop the poor from getting house sites. Addressing a public meeting at Ongole, the Chief Minister alleged Chandrababu Naidu and his supporters filed 1191 legal cases in courts to stop the distribution of house site pattas and construction of houses for the poor. He said that Naidu, who had humiliated SCs, BCs and other weaker sections of society with disparaging remarks during his tenure as Chief Minister, approached courts to create hurdles. While construction of 8.90 lakh houses has been completed for the poor, 22 lakh more houses are under construction, he said, adding government has faced hurdles in the construction of houses for the poor in the CRDA (Capital Region Development Author-



ity) region as Chandrababu and his men approached courts citing demographic imbalance. He observed that it is very unfortunate that Naidu is still continuing in politics after cheating all sections of people by defaulting on his loan waiver promise to farmers and self-help groups and throwing his 2014 election manifesto into the dustbin after coming to power. Naidu, who didn't give a single cent of land to the poor during TDP rule, created legal hurdles as he didn't want the poor to gain social and economic empowerment, Jagan Mohan Reddy said.



## Former Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi passes away in Mumbai

**Mumbai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Former Lok Sabha Speaker and ex-Chief Minister of Maharashtra Manohar G. Joshi passed away here at the age of 86, early on Friday morning. In a brief statement by his relatives, it is said: "Our family is deeply saddened to inform you that Mr. Manohar Joshi passed away today morning at 3 a.m. following prolonged age-related health issues."

## Judicial probe to begin soon in Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project: Revanth Reddy

**Hyderabad, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said the state government will soon appoint a retired judge of the High Court or Supreme Court to conduct a probe into alleged irregularities in the construction of Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project by the previous BRS government. He said the leaders of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) will have to face the probe by a retired judge. He was talking to mediapersons in Medaram in Mulugu district after paying obeisance to tribal deities during ongoing Medaram jatara.

Revanth Reddy said it was only after the Congress government decided to order a judicial probe into Medigadda barrage (a part of Kaleshwaram project), the BJP started demanding an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He asked what the BJP was doing for 10 years. "The CBI, ED and the



I-T are all in the hands of BJP but they did not file a single case against KCR or his family," he said while recalling that the BJP ignored the representations the opposition parties made for a probe into allegations of corruption. He also claimed that that and BJP have reached an understanding for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections in Telangana. He said as per the understanding between the two parties, BJP will contest 10 seats while BRS will contest the remaining 7 seats.

## We discussed the electoral alliance with the Left parties : YS Sharmila

**Vijayawada, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Congress party has begun talks for an alliance with the Left parties in Andhra Pradesh. CPI(M) and CPI leaders held a meeting with APCC president YS Sharmila at the party office in Vijayawada at Andhra Ratna Bhavan. They discussed the issue of contesting in the upcoming general elections together, political alliances and seat-sharing. The Left parties are already partners in the India alliance at the national level. A round table meeting will be convened soon and the future course of action will be announced by the two parties.



## Canines known for showing unconditional love : DGP Ravi Gupta

**Hyderabad, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Director General of Police Ravi Gupta has stated that canines exemplify unconditional love. The 23rd batch of Canines passing out parade took place at the Integrated Intelligence Training Academy (IITA).



### Vijay Sinha slams Tejayshwi for skipping budget session of Bihar Assembly

Patna, Feb 23 (IANS) : The Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Vijay Kumar Sinha, on Friday slammed leader of opposition Tejayshwi Yadav of the RJD for not taking part in the Assembly proceedings. He asked Tejayshwi Yadav to resign from the post of leader of opposition if he does not want to participate in the Assembly proceedings during the ongoing budget session. "I got an opportunity for the first time to present the budget of the road construction department in the Assembly on Friday. Tejayshwi Yadav was the minister of this department in the Mahagathbandhan government. He is also holding the post of leader of opposition in the Bihar

Assembly. "I was expecting a healthy discussion in the House. Unfortunately, that was not the case. If he (Tejayshwi) does not want to participate in the Assembly proceedings, he should resign from the post of leader of opposition," Sinha said on Friday. He added that Tejayshwi Yadav is that kind of opposition leader who used to go before the people to win their trust when Assembly proceedings were underway. When there is no Assembly session, he (Tejayshwi) stays in Delhi, Sinha said. Tejayshwi Yadav is currently taking out the Jan Vishwas Yatra in Bihar since February 20. He was in Siwan on Friday.



### 'He changed history', Cong minister's praise for Gadkari on development of roads

Bengaluru, Feb 23 (IANS) : Contrary to recent criticism of the Central government by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over "injustice" to his state, PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Friday praised Union Minister for Road Transport and High-

ways Nitin Gadkari for his contribution to the state in terms development of roads. "Since Nitin Gadkari took over as the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, he has managed to change history. He has put in honest efforts and succeeded in them.



### J&K approves development of 7 new Industrial Estates

Jammu, Feb 23 (IANS) : The Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Council in a meeting chaired by Lt Governor, Manoj Sinha, accorded administrative approval for the development of seven new Industrial Estates in the union territory at Rs 3,04.51 crore, an official said on Friday.

The project would attract investment to the extent of Rs 78.12 crore and generate 735 jobs. New Industrial Estate at Sempora Medicity, Srinagar involving 517 kanals of state land shall be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 22.60 crore by IRCON. The project would attract an investment of Rs 1,825.45 crore and has an employment generation potential of around 11,643 (approximately); New Industrial Estate at Bhagthali, Kathua involving 2,949 kanals of state land shall be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 83.13 crore by NBCC. The project will attract investment of Rs 4,599.89 crore and has employment potential of around 8,278 (approximately). New Industrial Estate at Karandi, Samba involving 460 kanals of state/private land shall be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 34.45 crores by NBCC.

### Ex-SP MLA booked for duping real estate company

Lucknow, Feb 23 (IANS) : Former Samajwadi Party MLA, Indal Rawat, has been booked for allegedly duping a real estate company of Rs 2.52 crore, said officials. The allegation stems from a purported agreement between Rawat and the company for the construction of a building on land that allegedly did not belong to him, said the officials on Friday. The case came to fore following a court directive instructing the Gomti Nagar police to probe the matter, after a complaint was filed by the managing director of the company, Rajesh Pandey. Deepak Pandey, SHO Gomti Nagar, said that an FIR has been registered against Rawat under sections 420 (cheating).



Panaji, Feb 23 (IANS) : There are some countries where development will never take place, some of them are "our neighbours", Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi said on Friday. Joshi was speaking during the birthday event of Goa's Water Resource Minister Subhash Shirodkar in Shiroda-South Goa. "There are some countries where development will never take place. I will not speak about such countries, some are our neighbours... Our neighbouring country will never develop," he said, without naming any country.

### FAR Amendment Bill passed by Karnataka Legislature with Council's nod amid walkout by BJP

Bengaluru, Feb 23 (IANS) : A Bill, which provides for sale and purchase of premium floor area ratio (FAR), has been passed by the Karnataka legislature with the Legislative Council's assent on Friday after a marathon debate and walkout by the BJP members. The Karnataka Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Bill 2024, which has been already passed by the Assembly was tabled in the upper house by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who also holds Bengaluru City Development portfolio. The lawallows developers to build additional floors by purchasing additional FAR and paying a fee of 40 per cent

of the guidance value to the local planning authorities. It also allows sale of FAR. The premium FAR has been limited to 0.4 per cent, while the limit for the Transferable Development Right (TDR) is at 0.6 per cent. Premium FAR provision is expected to increase revenue to local planning authorities, which, therefore, can invest more in developmental works. The Bill provides for the proceeds from premium FAR fees to be used for land acquisition and development of basic amenities. The FAR is currently determined on the basis of the road width, zones and other parameters, Shivakumar said.



### Gurugram : 2 handed life term in murder case

Gurugram, Feb 23 (IANS) : A court here has sentenced two men to life imprisonment in connection with an October 2021 murder case, an official said on Friday. The convicts have been identified as Lalit and Rahul. The court has also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 each for murder and Rs 10,000 each for tampering with evidence. Akhilesh a.k.a. Ram

Kishor, a native of Uttar Pradesh, was found murdered near the cremation ground of Gopal Khera on October 4, 2021. According to the police, on October 4, 2021, they received information that the body of a man was lying on a bench near the cremation ground of Gopal Khera. Later, police reached the spot and took custody of the body. In connection with the matter, a murder case was registered at the Sector-10A police station.

### SHIRAM FINANCE LIMITED DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers/guarantors mentioned hereunder had availed the financial assistance from M/s. Shriram Finance Limited (Shriram City Union Finance Limited, amalgamated with Shriram Transport Finance Company Limited, subsequently Shriram Transport Company Limited name Changed as Shriram Finance Limited, by its Incorporation Certificate dt.13-11-2022) a corporate body registered and incorporated as a company under the Indian companies Act 1956, is doing Non-Banking financial activities, having its Registered Office: Sn Towers, Plot No.14A, South Phase, Industrial Estate, Gundy, Chennai - 600 032 and having its administrative office at 6th Floor (level 2), Building No.Q2, Aurum Q Parc, Gen 4/1, TTC, Thane Belapur Road, Ghanoli, Navi Mumbai-400710, and Branch office at JANGAON (hereinafter referred as Wel the Company) Lender. We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/guarantors have committed various defaults in repayment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non Performing Asset in accordance with the directives/guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of SHIRAM FINANCE LTD. under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 & in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices on respective dates mentioned hereunder below under Section 13(2) of SARI/SEI Act, 2002, calling upon the following borrowers/guarantors (mortgagors) to repay the amount mentioned in the notices together with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices The notices issued to them on their last known addresses have returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

### TATA CAPITAL LIMITED POSSESSION NOTICE

We, Tata Capital Limited (hereinafter referred to as "TCL - Transferee") through Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd (hereinafter referred to as TCFSL - Transferee) vide Orders dated 24th November 2023 passed by National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai vide scheme of arrangement agreed between Tata Capital Financial Services Limited ("TCFSL") as Transferees and Tata Capital Limited ("TCL") as Transferee under the provisions of Sections 230 to 232 read with Section 66 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 ("said Scheme") having our registered office at 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013 do hereby serve upon you the following notice u/s 13(4) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the "Act").

AMEERPET BRANCH, Shop N.4, Nagasuri Plaza, Opp. Aditya Enclave, Ameerpet, Hyderabad-500038. Ph: 040-66636222, 23730894  
AUCTION NOTICE TO THE GOLD LOAN BORROWER  
To, Mr. Rajasekhar Charipally (Borrower), S/o Janardhan Charipally, Flat No.306, D-Block, Shanthi Gardens, Nacharam, Hyderabad-500076.

HDB Financial Services Ltd. Registered Office: Radhika, 2nd Floor, Law Garden Road, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad-380009.  
Branch: Shree Balaji PSR Tower, 1st Floor H.No.1-8-616, 1, Prakash Nagar, Begumpet, Hyderabad, Telangana-500016.  
DEMAND NOTICE  
Notice U/s 13(2) read with Section 13(13) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

OPINIONmail



BJP'S PERFORMANCE NARRATIVE UNDER PM NARENDRA MODI IS DECEPTIVE AND FALSE

Though RSS-BJP clan has wonderful track record of convincing people on their deceptive and false narratives, such as they convinced many of Ganesha drinking milk while actually going down the drain, they seem losing confidence on this skill this time, which is more than obvious in their two-fold parallel electoral strategy: First, pushing spectacular performance narrative under PM Narendra Modi in the last 10 years; and Secondly, raising the pitch for their communal Hindutva agenda as a fall back and their only hope. As it has emerged on the election eve 2024, Ayodhya, Kashi, and Mathura will remain at the core of BJP's communal Hindutva political agenda while taking refuge in religious Hinduism, as a means of deception to be played on electorate. PM Modi himself talked of heralding Ram Rajya for 1000 years, while a Maharashtra BJP leader has termed Modi as the 11th incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu. It should be noted that Ram of Ayodhya was the 7th incarnation of Vishnu, and Krishna of Mathura was the 8th. RSS-BJP clan had also tried to project PM Narendra Modi as embodiment of Ram during the Ram Temple inauguration event in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024. The clan's deception and falsehood seemed having no limit.

The performance narrative under the last ten years rule of PM Narendra Modi is also not less deceptive and false. PM Modi himself has said that the world is in praise of his government's wonderful performance and looking forward to India. He said that India was ranked 5th biggest economy of the world, and the country would become 3rd biggest in his third term, and a developed country in Amrit Kaal by 2047. This ranking forms the core of the performance narrative under Modi rule. It would be of great help to know how actually world ranks India under PM Modi? Deceptive fastest growing country tag with the 5th biggest economy, conceals many facts including the one that World Bank describes India as lower middle income country. Due to low earning, working poverty is very high. World Bank says over 97 crore people can't afford even healthy food, while 80 crore people are dependent for foodgrain on PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojna. Despite PM Modi's claim of pulling 25 crore people out of poverty, the number of poor remained the same since introduction of Food Security Act in 2013. India houses largest number of poor in the world. This is how India is ranked by the world. Deception in the performance narrative is obvious, since the World Bank had said in 2022 that India needs about one decade to become even an upper middle income country. It makes the narrative of Modi's "Vikasit Bharat" (Developed India) guarantee farfetched, especially in the backdrop of rising inequality within the country under his rule, though wealth creation is also a fact, but for handful of entities, such as 20 companies bagging 60 per cent of wealth generated and 70 per cent of earning of the entire country. When even PM Modi is talking about India's ranking in growth and economy, it will not make any harm to anyone to know key rankings of our country on various areas of interest, and it would not be an anti-national activity as the government has been alleging certain individual Indian political leaders of maligning Modi rule abroad. India has been one of the least happy nations in the world, even less-happier than Nepal, China, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The World Happiness Report by UN-SDSN ranked India 136 out of 146 nations it studied in 2022. One of the chief reasons was failure of governance and performance of the government. In Human Development Index (HDI), the UNDP ranked India 132 out of 191 countries in 2021-22. In inequality-adjusted HDI, the UNDP put India at 108th in 2022 report out of 156 nations. In Social Progress Index by Social Progress Imperative, India ranked 110 out of 169 countries in the world on the basis of the data published in 2022. Where-to-be-born Index 2024 ranks India among those countries where taking birth is least desirable by the people on account of miseries people are likely to suffer.

(By Dr. Gyan Pathak)

EDITORIAL  
the indian mail

THE CURIOUS CASE OF SP LEADER SWAMI PRASAD MAURYA'S RESIGNATION FROM THE PARTY

Certain politicians you never get to know enough to make sense of them, why they are in the game and will they rebound after sliding into a career recession. Samajwadi Party leader Swami Prasad Maurya is one of them. This man resigned from his post in Samajwadi Party on February 13 and hardly anybody reacted, his innings over, there was nothing "Yashasvi" about him to classify as noteworthy, except that there was a time he consolidated votes like very few politicians could in the caste-ridden political landscape of Uttar Pradesh. Swami Prasad Maurya resigned

with little fanfare. Why, forget the fanfare or lack of fanfare, why did Maurya quit the Samajwadi Party, which clung on to him for months as if for dear life? Maurya's visceral attacks on Sanatana Dharma and on Lord Ram in particular, the 'Pran Prathistha' of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir must have been the last nail in Maurya's political coffin. On Tuesday, Maurya also quit the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. Until a week ago, he was also the party's national general secretary. It kind of struck odd when Maurya made it a point to share his two resignation letters — one to the chairman of the state Legislative Council, and the other



to Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav — with the media, why? "I have been elected as a member of the Legislative Council, Uttar Pradesh from the Assembly, Uttar Pradesh constituency as a candidate of the Samajwadi Party. Since I have resigned from the primary membership of the Samajwadi Party, hence on the basis of morality, I am also resigning from the membership of the

Legislative Council, Uttar Pradesh. Please kindly accept," he wrote. To Akhilesh Yadav, he wrote, "Got the opportunity to work in a cordial environment under your leadership. But as a result of not taking the initiative of any kind of talks on the talks held on 12 February 2024 and the letter sent on 13.02.2024, I am also resigning from the primary membership of the Samajwadi Party."



POST-POLL MINISTRY FORMATION IN PAKISTAN FACING TOO MANY IMPONDERABLES

Ministry formation is on the rocks in Pakistan after the February 8 elections produced a fractured mandate. Major political parties went scurrying to cobble together a majority coalition even though Imran Khan's PTI despite winning biggest share of seats and emerging as the largest party in the National Assembly was not accepted as the winner by PML-N and PPP, the two other major political parties. A confusing picture emerged after PTI pressed its claim and named Omar Ayub as the prime ministerial can-

didate but found itself without sufficient allies. Instead PML-N headed by Shehbaz Sharif joined hands with PPP attaining the magic figure of 134 NA seats to stake the formation of a coalition government. But the PPP will not be joining the coalition government and giving PML-N outside support. Reading between the lines, it is learnt that the PPP leadership seeks to maintain its distance from a government which would have little option but to take tough and politically unpopular decisions despite its inner weakness. It makes the new coalition bid led by PML-N a weak one. It can be toppled any time by PPP. In terms of real politic, the PML-N government will need to keep its prop PPP in good humour. Their differences are so well known. They are uniting to keep out Imran Khan from power. (IPA Service)

HOUTHU MILITIAS ESCALATE WAR BY TARGETING UNDERWATER INTERNET CABLES

The Telegraph reports that the Policy Exchange warns of the emergence of seabed warfare, highlighting the potential for Iran-backed militias to intensify their actions in the Gaza conflict. A recent report has issued a warning that Houthi rebels might target the underwater internet cables of Britain. A report from Policy Exchange, a think tank, cautions that the Houthis could escalate their involvement in the conflict by extending their activities into the subsea domain, specifically by targeting underwater cables. Undersea cables play a crucial role as essential infrastructure for digital connectivity, consisting of around 500 fibre-optic cables that span the ocean's floor globally. British firms, including British Telecom, are part of consortia owning cables in the Red Sea, with British Telecom holding an interest in the significant AAE-1 cable that stretches from Europe, through Africa, to Asia. The AAE-1 (Asia-Africa-Europe-1) cable is a 25,000 km submarine communications cable system from South East Asia to Europe across Egypt, connecting countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. This cable system is designed to provide telecommunications services like internet access, data transfer, and other forms of digital communication, enhancing connectivity between these regions. Policy Exchange has raised alarms that groups supported by Iran, such as the Houthis and Hezbollah, have suggested through their official social media accounts the possibility of targeting these cables. (IPA Service)

AUSTRIAN COMMUNISTS SURGING AHEAD IN OPINION POLLS FOR REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN 2024 END

Barely five years ago, the far-right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) found itself mired in a crisis with no end in sight. Things had started to go wrong in May 2019, when the press obtained hidden-camera footage of FPÖ chairman and federal vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache apparently drunk and high on cocaine during a vacation in Ibiza. He was shown promising political favours to a Russian heiress (actually an actress involved in a sting operation) if she bought Austria's biggest tabloid and turned it into a mouthpiece for his party. Within twenty-four hours of the video being released, it had brought down the federal government — a coalition between the FPÖ and the center-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) — and forced Strache's resignation from all political functions.



FOR NOVAK DJOKOVIC, THE GAME IS ON, IT IS NOT THE 'BEGINNING OF THE END'

The verdict was passed when 36-year old Novak Djokovic, a colossus in the world of tennis lost to 22-year Jannik Sinner at the semi final of Australian Open recently. It confirmed the judgement of the crowd which passed the "beginning of the end" verdict when Carlos Alcaraz (19) blew him off the Wimbledon turf last year. Post Australian Open reverse, instant decision making fans are of

the view that the greatest ever tennis player is past his prime. The 20-something Gen-next had caught up; it is curtains for the Djokovic era. But then stadiums are kangaroo courts infamous for their hasty judgments. Yet it can be stated to be a divided verdict if a veteran's take is anything to go by. "When you get older, the bad days get worse" Martina Navratilova, an ageless champion said. Revert-

ing to cold logic, be it a tennis champ or a 9 to 5 executive, who does not have a bad day at work!? Ageing superstars are tetchy especially after defeat to an younger opponent. Asked if age was catching up after the Australian Open defeat, Djokovic neither fumed nor came up with a smart snub. The Serb, father to a 9 year old did not make a headline reply. He said "I hope not, but I don't know, time will tell"



## Israeli army re-enters Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis after short withdrawal

**Gaza, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Israeli army sent four armoured personnel carriers into Nasser Hospital shortly after it withdrew troops from the facility, the Gaza-based Palestinian health ministry has said in a statement. Palestinian security sources told Xinhua news agency on Friday that the Israeli army forces have converted the complex into a military barracks through days of siege and attacks. An earlier report by Israel's Channel 13 news claimed that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had ended their operation at the hospital. Ashraf al-Qedra, the spokesman for the health ministry, told the news agency that the hospital housed more than 120 wounded people and patients, as well as medical teams. He noted that during the siege, the hospital, which is the second-largest hospital in the Gaza Strip, was "without electricity, water, food, oxygen, and proper medical care for critical cases."

He urged the World Health Organization to use all means to pressure Israel to end the "militarization of hospitals and provide all humanitarian and medical needs." Two days ago, Israeli public radio reported that the army forces fighting in the Nasser Hospital area needed a few more days to complete their control over the site. It added that the hospital had become a refuge for a large number of Hamas fighters who fled from the northern Gaza Strip, noting that dozens of them were killed, while around two hundred surrendered to the Israeli army, many of whom were disguised in medical personnel uniforms. In addition, it mentioned that large quantities of weapons, ammunition, and drugs were found at the site, which were transferred to the Israeli detainees. However, the forces did not obtain any information that would contribute to the release of the abducted persons.

## PTI offered 'lucrative position' for making rigging allegations, claims ex-Rawalpindi Commissioner

**Islamabad, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Withdrawing all his allegations related to rigging in the February 8 general elections in Pakistan, former Rawalpindi Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chattha said he was "extremely ashamed, embarrassed", and claimed that he made the move in coordination with a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader, a media report said. "I take full responsibility for my actions and surrender myself before the authorities for any kind of legal action," Chattha said in a statement to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Geo News reported. In a dramatic development last Saturday, Chattha had tendered his resignation, which he said was

out of "guilty conscience" for abetting large-scale electoral rigging in the garrison city, further raising the political mercury in the country. The Commissioner, in the rare press conference, had taken responsibility for the "rigging" that he claimed took place in Rawalpindi Division. "We converted the losers into winners with 50,000 votes margin," he had stated. In response to his allegations, the PTI, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and other political parties -- most of whom had already rejected the election results -- demanded an investigation into the matter. In the same presser, Chattha had also accused Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa of facilitating the rigging.



## Israel to send delegation for Gaza truce talks in Paris

**Jerusalem, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Israel's war cabinet decided on Friday night to send a delegation for Gaza ceasefire talks in Paris on Friday, as international negotiators renew efforts to secure a deal between Israel and Hamas. A government official confirmed to Xinhua news agency that the head of the Mossad intelligence agency, David Barnea, will lead the Israeli delegation. The talks will be attended by Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani and Director of US Central Intelligence Agency William Burns. The White House's Middle East coordinator, Brett McGurk, was in Israel on Thursday for talks with senior officials to negotiate the release of hostages held in Gaza and to secure

a pause in the fighting. McGurk's visit comes amid heightened efforts to broker a ceasefire agreement, as Israel's declared intention to launch an incursion into the densely populated city of Rafah raised global concern and more than four months of heavy Israeli bombardments in the Gaza Strip had killed 29,410 Palestinians and wounded 69,465 others as of Friday. After meeting McGurk, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is "preparing the continuation of intense ground operations". Gallant's office said in a statement that their meeting focused on efforts to free the remaining 134 hostages still held in Gaza, at least 30 of whom are believed to be dead.

## Houthis claim responsibility for attacking British cargo ship in Gulf of Aden

**Sanaa, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Yemen's armed Houthi group has claimed responsibility for launching missile attacks against a British cargo ship in the Gulf of Aden. "The naval forces of the Yemeni (Houthi) armed forces carried out an attack against a

British ship (Islander) in the Gulf of Aden, with several missiles," Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said on Friday in a televised statement aired by the group's satellite TV channel al-Masirah. The missiles directly hit the ship, causing a fire on it, Sarea was quoted as saying by Xinhua

news agency. "We also targeted an American destroyer in the Red Sea with several drones," he said. He said that his group also fired several ballistic missiles and drones towards the Israeli city of Eilat. This is the latest of Houthi attacks since mid-November last year in support for Hamas.



## Four killed in China building fire

**Nanjing, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Four people were killed after a building fire broke out Friday morning in the city of Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province. The fire broke out in a residential building in the Yuhuatai District at around 4:39 a.m., Xinhua news agency reported, citing the local fire rescue team. The fire was put out at around 6:00 a.m. and rescue efforts were concluded. The cause of the accident is currently under investigation.



## 72 killed in Lassa fever outbreak in Nigeria

**Abuja, Feb 23 (IANS) :** At least 72 fatal cases of Lassa fever have been reported in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, since the beginning of this year, public health authorities said on Friday. The 72 deaths were among a total of 411 cases confirmed so far from the outbreak of the viral hemorrhagic fever recorded across 21 states since January, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the latest report of the Nigeria Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC). Sixty-five per cent of the total confirmed cases were reported from the three states of Ondo, Edo, and Bauchi, while 35 per cent were reported from 18 other states, the NCDC said. A total of 2,122 cases have been recorded so far this year, marking

a significant decrease from 8,280 suspected cases recorded in the same period in 2023, said the national disease control agency. Two health workers have been so far affected by the Lassa fever outbreak in the country, with the predominant age group of victims being 21 years and 30 years of age, the NCDC said in its report. Lassa fever is a disease spread to humans through food or household items contaminated with rodent urine or feces. It is reportedly transmitted when saliva, urine, and excreta of rats come into contact with humans. In 2023, at least 219 deaths were recorded from 1,227 confirmed cases of Lassa fever, according to the NCDC.



## Palestinian death toll rises to 29,410

**Gaza, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza has risen to 29,410, with 69,465 others wounded since the Israel-Hamas war broke out, authorities said on Friday. As per Palestinian Health Ministry, the Israeli army killed 97 Palestinians and wounded 132 others during the past 24 hours, noting that some victims remain under the rubble amid heavy bombardment and a lack of civil defense and ambulance crews, Xinhua news agency reported. At least 20 Palestinians, including children, were killed when an aircraft bombed a number of homes in the Al-Sabra and Al-Zaytoun neighborhoods in Gaza City. The sources told Xinhua that artillery shells were fired towards residential homes in the Al-Rimal neighborhood, west of Gaza, resulting in casualties among the residents. Warplanes also launched three raids on the border area in the city of Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip, targeting homes without causing casualties.

## Strong earnings report from Nvidia bolsters optimism on Wall Street

**New York, Feb 23 (IANS) :** US stocks soared higher on Friday after a strong earnings report from tech giant Nvidia bolstered investor optimism on Wall Street, a media report said. The blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 278 points, or 0.7 per cent. The S&P 500 gained 1.6 per cent, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite was 2.4 per cent higher, CNN reported. The S&P 500 hit a record high during morning trading on the pop in big tech and the Nasdaq is tracking towards a new all-time high as well, the report said. Nvidia, one of the largest

companies on Wall Street, led gains after reporting extraordinary earnings growth, fuelled by the artificial intelligence boom. Profits of the chipmaker grew to nearly \$12.3 billion in the three months ended January 28 -- up from \$1.4 billion in the year-ago quarter, a gain of 769 per cent year-over-year and even stronger growth than Wall Street analysts had expected. That result helped bring the company's full-year profits up more than 580 per cent from the year earlier, CNN reported. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said in a statement on Friday evening that generative AI has now "hit the tipping point".



## One killed, eight injured in highway shooting in West Bank

**Jerusalem, Feb 23 (IANS) :** At least one person was killed and eight others injured on Friday in shooting near the occupied West Bank in Jerusalem, according to Israeli police and emergency services. The Israeli Police said that three gunmen opened fire near the A-Zaim checkpoint at cars waiting in traffic near the settlement, according to Israeli Police, Xinhua news agency reported. The gunmen were shot by security forces at the scene. Of the eight injured, two were critical, emergency services confirmed to local media.



## Manipur HC cancels order for examining inclusion of Meitei community in Scheduled Tribes list

**Imphal, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Manipur High Court has modified its March 2023 order in part, whereby a contentious direction was issued to the state government for considering the inclusion of Meiteis in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list, observing that a paragraph of that order was in conflict with the Supreme Court's constitution bench observation, court sources said on Friday. The single judge bench of Justice Golmei Gaiphulshillu was hearing a review petition filed against para 17 (iii) of the decision dated March 27, 2023 rendered by the then acting Chief Justice M.V. Muralidharan in a petition by a Meitei organisation. "....the direction given at Para No. 17 (iii) needs to be deleted

and is ordered accordingly for deletion of the Para No. 17 (iii) of the judgment and order dated 27.03.2023 passed in W.P.(C) No. 229 of 2023," the order of Wednesday said. The contentious paragraph no 17 (iii) of last year's High Court verdict instructed the state to expedite consideration of Meitei community inclusion in the ST list. Then acting Chief Justice M.V. Muralidharan, who was subsequently transferred to the Calcutta High Court, in his March 27, 2023 order directed the state government to send a recommendation to the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry to consider the ST status for the Meitei community. The directive is believed to be a catalyst for ethnic conflict between the non-tribal Meitei community and tribal Kuki-Zo com-

munity claiming over 200 lives and injuring 1,500 and displacing over 70,000 people of both communities. Erstwhile princely state Manipur merged with the Indian Union in 1949. Justice Gaiphulshillu's order said: "The Meitei (Meitei) of Manipur has lost the identity of the tribe while merging with the Union of India on September 21, 1949 and earlier Manipur was a simple classless tribal society. However, at the time of merging, 29 communities of Manipur have been included in the Scheduled Tribe list of Indian Union and thereafter, as per the order of May 26, 2003 of the Gauhati High Court's Imphal bench, Chongthu, Khoibu, and Mate have been included in the list of Scheduled Tribes. Accordingly, now there are 34 num-



bers of tribal communities of Manipur included in the list of Scheduled Tribes of the Indian Constitution, but the Meitei (Meitei) tribe was left out." After the outbreak of ethnic violence on May 3 last year (post the March 27 High Court order), several petitions, including challenges to the high court directive, were filed to the Supreme Court. The ethnic violence broke out in the northeastern state after March 27 High Court order as a 'Tribal

Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the Meitei community's demand for ST status. Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur's estimated population of about 36.49 lakh and live mostly in the six Imphal Valley districts, while tribals, which include Naga, and Kuki-Zo, constitute 40 per cent and reside mainly in the 10 hill districts.



## Mumbai youth held in Lucknow for stalking motivational speaker

**Lucknow, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A 26-year-old man from Mumbai was arrested in Lucknow for allegedly stalking a renowned motivational speaker over a period of six months, said officials. The accused, a model and son of a hotelier in Maharashtra, was infatuated by the woman and had been following her to various events with the intention of marrying her, said the Lucknow police spokesman. The accused had a background in the entertainment industry, and had appeared in advertisements for skincare products. According to the police, the youth would book accommodations in five-star hotels ahead of her scheduled appearances, even flying from Mumbai to attend events in different cities. The accused was arrested during the motivational speaker's programme in Lucknow on Thursday. ADCP (central zone) Manisha Singh, confirmed the arrest and subsequent FIR against the youth.

## Minor allegedly raped by neighbour in Delhi, accused held



**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A 14-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by her neighbour in central Delhi, police said on Friday, adding that they have arrested the accused. Police said that information regarding sexual assault with the minor girl by the accused, identified as Dhananjay, 39, a resident of Baljeet Nagar, was received at Anand Parbat police station. "The accused is a neighbour of the minor girl and runs a vegetable store in the neighbourhood. "He allegedly sexually assaulted her for the first time in 2021. The victim reported the matter to parents now and subsequently they approached police," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central, M. Harsha Vardhan said.

## Plea seeks electric auto policy for women in Amritsar

**Chandigarh, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Clean Air Punjab, a consortium to address air quality challenges in the state, has in a letter appealed to Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri, for the expeditious approval of the pink electric auto policy for women under the Rejuvenation of Auto-Rickshaw in Amritsar through Holistic Intervention (RAAHI) project. Recognising the role of electric vehicles (EVs) in achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, Clean Air Punjab underscored the imperative of integrating women into the transportation workforce. In a landscape where only a few states actively address gender disparity, Punjab has extended the RAAHI scheme to women auto drivers. The substantial 90 per cent subsidy on electric autos for women not only catalyses economic empowerment, but also

cultivates environmental stewardship. At an event on February 18, attended by 250 women, there emerged an eagerness among the participants to embrace electric autos in Amritsar, provided with requisite support. Indu Aurora, President-elect of Voice of Amritsar, articulated the pressing need to curtail emissions in the city, elucidating the health hazards affecting the citizens, especially the vulnerable demographics. She underscored the transformative potential of EVs in ameliorating air quality and enhancing financial empowerment among women. Shweta Mehra from Clean Air Punjab emphasized the cardinal principle of equal opportunity in women's empowerment, reflecting on the receptive engagement of the policy-makers and women alike during the Gender-Responsive E3W Transition convening in Amritsar.



## MVA to seal seat sharing deal in Feb-end: AICC leader Ramesh Chennithala

**Mumbai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) will finalise its seat-sharing deal for the 48 Lok Sabha seats at its final meeting on February 27-28, AICC General Secretary Ramesh Chennithala said here on Friday. The seat allocation talks with the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (SP), Shiv Sena (UBT), and other allies are in the final stages without encountering any hurdles and the seats deal shall be sealed next week, he asserted. On Friday, NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar had announced

in Kolhapur that the allocation of 39 constituencies has been finalised and the remaining 9 seats shall be completed by the weekend. Speaking to mediapersons along with state Congress President Nana Patole, Mumbai chief Prof. Varsha Gaikwad and other senior leaders, Chennithala reiterated that the MVA is going strong and will strive to win maximum number of seats in the state. "Discussions with all friendly parties are proceeding smoothly. We have accepted all the points for the manifesto suggested by Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi President Prakash Ambedkar," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Patole said that as the elections approach, the Opposition parties and their leaders are being systematically targeted through various central investigation agencies, but no action is initiated against BJP leaders facing serious corruption charges. He cited the instances of former MVA leaders like Ajit Pawar, Ashok S. Chavan, who faced allegations in various scams but after they joined hands with the BJP, they have been rewarded in different ways.

## Punjab Police bust online job fraud racket, nab four from Assam

**Chandigarh, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Punjab Police's Cyber Crime Division has busted an international online job fraud racket with the arrest of four criminals from Assam, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said here on Friday. The modus operandi used by the gang was to lure people into trap by offering lucrative "work from home" jobs through a Telegram mobile app group. "To gain trust, fraudsters would initially give petty tasks to the victim, in return paying a small amount in lieu of accomplishing the task. Later, the victim was asked to deposit money on

different pretexts in lure of a bigger return," the DGP said, adding with these arrests the police has dug up another trail, leading to deep-rooted cyber fraud nexus spread across the country. Those arrested have been identified as Jahurul Islam, Rafiul Islam, Mehabub Alam, and Azizur Rehman. Police teams have also recovered two swipe machines, two biometric scanners, an eye scanner, a fingerprint scanner, 38 PAN cards, 32 debit and credit cards, 16 SIM cards, 10 voter cards, nine Aadhaar cards, 10 bank account passbooks and cheque books, etc., from their possession. ADGP, Cyber Crime, V. Neeraja



said following a complaint from a woman who was duped of Rs 25 lakh, a Cyber Crime team conducted investigation into the case and found that the gang was running their operation from Assam. During the operation, the accused Jahurul Islam and Rafiul Islam were arrested from Assam's Nagaon district and revealed that they were running a customer services point

(CSP) for providing online services, and to make quick bucks they misused the documents of the public using Adobe Photoshop software. Thereafter, Alam was arrested from Guwahati district, and revealed that he came into contact with Rehman, who asked him to provide bank accounts details on a commission basis.

## Case filed against Bihar ACS, Education, Pathak for abusing teachers

**Patna, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A lawyer in Bihar's Muzaffarpur on Friday filed a case in a local court against Additional Chief Secretary, Education, K.K. Pathak for abusing teachers. Senior lawyer Vinod Kumar said that the CJM's court admitted the case and set the date of the next hearing on March 4. "K.K. Pathak had used abusive language against teachers a few days ago. It was highly objectionable and condemnable. My wife is a teacher and the sentiments of lakhs of teachers like her



have been hurt by the abusive words of KK Pathak a few days ago. Hence, I filed a case against him under Sections 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace).



## Nifty hits new high before closing at day's low

**Mumbai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Domestic equities traded lackluster on Friday despite Nifty touching a new high of 22,297 intra-day for the fifth consecutive session, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services. The Nifty traded in a narrow range throughout the day and fell in red in the last 30 minutes to close at day's low of 22,212.70 on Thursday, down 4.75 points or 0.02 per cent. Mixed flash estimates of PMI for the month of February by S&P Global for both India and the US along with the hawkish tone of the RBI in its meeting minutes dented investor sentiments. Even China's stimulus announcement in the form of a rate cut failed to lift the global mood.

Smallcap100, however, ended with gains of 0.3 per cent each. Sectorally, it was a mixed trend with profit booking seen in IT, PSU banks, oil & gas and metals. Realty, pharma, and auto, on the other hand, saw buying interest, Khemka said. Vaibhav Vidwani, Research Analyst at Bonanza Portfolio, said the Nifty closed on a sideways note at 22,212, while the Sensex closed at 73,142. Nifty Media and Nifty Realty were the sectors which outperform on Friday, up by 1.36 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively.

Nifty Midcap100/



## Nokia, Indian Institute of Science join hands to push PM Modi's 6G vision

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** In an effort to help realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for India as a leader in 6G, telecom equipment giant Nokia on Friday announced to partner with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) to jointly research 6G technologies and use cases that will have a direct societal impact in the country. Nokia and IISc will work together in the company's new 6G Lab in Bengaluru, where they will pursue three core areas of research -- 6G radio technologies, 6G architecture and the application of machine learning into the 6G air interface. The collaboration will develop refer-

ence architectures, software frameworks and algorithms, with the aim of contributing their joint research to the 6G technology and standards ecosystem, Nokia said in a statement. "The importance of India on the global telecommunications stage cannot be overemphasised. We're proud to work with the brightest minds in Indian science and academia to ensure 6G is a force multiplier for the economy," said Nishant Batra, chief strategy and technology officer at Nokia. While the nature of their research is global, Nokia and IISc will place special focus on 6G use

cases that address areas of particular importance to India. The use cases include creating more sustainable and energy-efficient communications systems, improving resiliency and reliability of networks for critical communications and using AI and developing "Network as Sensor" technologies to improve transportation safety, augment healthcare and increase access to education. "IISc is very privileged to contribute to India's mission to be a front-line contributor in design, development.



## BSE, NSE issues penalty notices to HAL for not having sufficient independent directors

**Chennai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Public sector Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has received penalty notices of Rs 542,800 each from India's two stock exchanges-BSE and NSE- for not having sufficient number of independent directors on its Board. In a regulatory filing on Friday, HAL said it has received notices from NSE and BSE for imposing the penalty of Rs. 542,800/- each for the quarter ended 31st December, 2023, for non-compliance of Regulation 17(1) in respect of composition of Board of Directors due to insufficient number of Independent Directors. The company said it is owned by the Indian government under Ministry of Defence. "Since, appointment of Independent Directors in the Government Companies are being made by the concerned Administrative Ministry of the Government of India, multiple requests were made to Ministry of Defence (MoD) for filling the vacant posts of Independent Directors in the Company," HAL said.

## Bank deposits losing attractiveness as govt savings schemes see strong growth

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Global brokerage Goldman Sachs has flagged multiple headwinds to deposit growth in Indian banks as it loses its attractiveness. It has cited headwinds like strained financial savings, the rise of alternatives such as stock market investments and strong growth in alternate government savings schemes (PPF and Small Savings), size of which has grown to 21 per cent of the total deposits. Interestingly, increase in alternative government savings

schemes is equivalent to 34 per cent of the increase in deposits over FY21-23, Goldman Sachs said. It said: "We believe the system would need to offer attractive rates to make bank-deposits attractive. "We believe consumer lending is nearing the consolidation phase driven by large volumes of unsecured lending with an estimated 120mn unsecured personal loans which increased 4X over the last three years; rising financial leverage at Households with gross-financial-liabilities to gross-financial-assets increasing to all time peak of 40 per cent.



## Orchid Pharma gets USFDA nod, to market its new drug in US soon

**Chennai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Vertically integrated pharma player Orchid Pharma Ltd said on Friday that it will launch its Enmetazobactam drug in the US in the next couple of quarters. The company has received approval from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) for its invention Enmetazobactam, a Beta Lactamase Inhibitor. The company shares went up to Rs 1,217.20 on Friday at the BSE after closing at Rs 1,150.95 on Thursday. According to the company, the USFDA approval paves the way for the introduction of Enmetazobactam in the United States, the largest pharmaceutical market in the world.

The product is expected to be launched within the next couple of quarters in the US market. This development comes in close succession to the recent recommendation for approval by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). This New Drug Approval (NDA) allows the use of Exblifep (Cefepime and Enmetazobactam) as an injection for the treatment of patients 18 years and older with complicated urinary tract infections (cUTI), including pyelonephritis caused by the following susceptible microorganisms -- Escherichia coli (E. coli), Klebsiella pneumoniae, Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Proteus mirabilis, and Enterobacter cloacae complex.



## Apple's India revenue up 42% to \$8.7 bn in 2023: Morgan Stanley

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Apple's revenue in India rose nearly 42 per cent (on-year) last year to \$8.7 billion, foreign brokerage Morgan Stanley said in a report on Friday. According to the report, iPhone shipments grew about 39 per cent to 9.2 million units last year. "In CY23, India represented 4 per cent of iPhones shipments and revenue, up from 3 per cent in CY22 and 1 per cent 5 years ago," said analysts in the report. "If India continues to grow at the same trajectory while China iPhone shipments stay flat,

India would be a bigger iPhone market than China by 2027," it added. TechCrunch was first to report on Apple India's 2023 revenue. Apple registered strong double-digit growth in the December quarter in India, reaching another quarter revenue record in the country, company's CEO Tim Cook said earlier this month. Responding to an analyst's questions, Cook said that the India market "hit a quarter revenue record". India's smartphone shipments remained flat in 2023 at 152 million units, but Apple reached the 10-million-unit mark in shipments and captured the top position in revenue in a calendar year for the first time. In a bid to further boost mobile manufacturing in the country, the government in January slashed import duty on parts used for manufacturing of mobile phones to 10 per cent from 15 per cent. The move will help companies like Apple to manufacture more of its high-end premium smartphones in the country.



## Goldman Sachs downgrades key banking stocks, says goldilocks period over

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Marquee global brokerage Goldman Sachs has downgraded key Indian banking stocks and cut earnings estimates across the coverage universe by 5 per cent/2 per cent on average over FY25E/26E. Goldman Sachs said: "We believe the proverbial Goldilocks period (strong growth & strong/visible profitability) is over for the financial sector in the near-term as headwinds are increasing such as rising pressure on cost of funds due to structural challenges in the funding environment, growing concerns on rising consumer leverage posing potential asset quality challenges.

## Global 5G smartphone shipments crosses 2 bn units in Q4 2023: Report

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Global cumulative shipments of 5G smartphones surpassed 2 billion units in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, with Apple and Samsung topping the list, a new report said on Friday. According to Counterpoint Research, this was achieved in less than five years.





### I&B Minister Anurag Thakur launches 4 portals to modernise media landscape

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Minister for Information and Broadcasting (I&B), Anurag Thakur, on Friday launched four transformative portals, which have the potential to modernise the entire media landscape. The Press Sewa Portal will bring a paradigm shift in the registration of periodicals and newspapers.

The motive behind the transformative initiative is to facilitate a more conducive business environment for newspaper publishers and TV channels, enhance transparency and efficiency in government communication, and also enable easy access to authentic government videos. Under the initiative, a comprehensive database of Local Cable Operators (LCOs) will also be cre-

ated to streamline the regulatory processes in the cable television sector. The I&B Minister, addressing the gathering after the launch, said, "India is viewed as an attractive destination for investment today, with global companies setting up businesses here." Recalling PM Narendra Modi's emphasis on governance and economic reforms, resulting in the country's enhanced status in ease of doing business, he said that this has led to increased investment from both existing businesses and new entrepreneurs. "The startup ecosystem, in particular, has flourished, with a significant increase in the number of startups and unicorns," Thakur said. The Press Sewa Portal, developed under the Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023, is a monumental step towards complete automation of the process for

newspaper registration and other related processes. This portal will simplify the cumbersome registration procedures. Key features of the Press Sewa Portal:  
\* Online Application: Publishers can file applications for title registration online, using Aadhaar-based e-signatures  
\* Probability Metre: This Indicates the likelihood of title availability  
\* Real-time Tracking of Application Status: Accessible through an intuitively designed dashboard  
\* Dedicated DM Module: Enables district magistrates to manage applications received from publishers in a centralised dashboard The website will also offer easy access to relevant information, featuring an AI-based chatbot for user-friendly interactions.



### Delhi HC stays single judge bench's order for return of seized property if money-laundering probe goes beyond 365 days

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Delhi High Court on Friday stayed a single judge bench's order that mandated the return of seized property to its original owner if the Enforcement Directorate's investigation under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act extends beyond 365 days without leading to any related offence proceedings. A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora, stayed Justice Navin Chawla's January 31 ruling in favour of Mahender Kumar Khandelwal, the Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) for Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL). Justice Chawla had pointed out that continuing to hold Khandelwal's property without initiating court proceedings or filing a complaint against him amounted to a confiscatory act

devoid of legal authority, thus infringing upon Article 300A of the Constitution. "The continuation of such seizure beyond 365 days, in absence of the pendency of any proceedings relating to any offence under this Act before a court or under the corresponding law of any other country before the competent court of criminal jurisdiction outside India, shall be confiscatory in nature, without authority of law and, therefore, violative of Article 300A of the Constitution of India," the order read. Therefore, the judge had said, "the natural consequence of the investigation for a period beyond three hundred and sixty five days not resulting in any proceedings relating to any offence under the Act, in terms of Section 8(3) of the Act, is that such seizure lapses and the property so seized must be returned to the person from whom it was so seized".

### Punjab to present budget on March 5

**Chandigarh, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Punjab Cabinet led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday gave nod for convening the budget session of 16th Legislative Assembly from March 1 to 15 with budget presentation on March 5. This was decided at a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister here. A spokesperson for the Chief Minister's Office said the Cabinet authorised the Governor to convene the session, as per Article 174 of the Constitution of India. The Punjab government will present its budget for the financial year 2024-25 on March 5. In order to give boost to the Medium and Small Scale Industries, the Cabinet also gave approval for setting up of dedicated Wing namely MSME Punjab in the Department of

Industries and Commerce, Punjab. This initiative is driven by the commitment of the government to address the diverse challenges faced by MSMEs and transform Punjab into a highly vibrant and dynamic industrial hub. MSME Punjab will work towards enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs, ensuring a steady flow of credit from financial institutions and banks to MSMEs, enabling them to fuel their expansion and innovation. MSME Punjab will also provide handholding and support to MSMEs in adopting advanced technologies and modernising their operations to stay ahead in the global marketplace, facilitating setting up of common facilities testing facilities and quality certification, etc.,



### TN Police raid multiple places after Indonesian national's arrest in cocaine smuggling case

**Chennai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Tamil Nadu Police were conducting searches and raids at several places in the state after the Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) arrested an Indonesian passenger at the Chennai international airport, who had arrived from Lavos via Singapore. The passenger was arrested on tip-off from the arrested passenger, Ahmad Idris, who had smuggled 2,970 grams of cocaine worth Rs 27 crore. Sources in the Tamil Nadu Police told IANS that certain pockets were under surveillance by the Central Intelligence Bureau and that the state police were also supporting in the present raids. It may be noted that the banned

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) members were trying to regroup and many of the former operatives of the movement are in various pockets of Tamil Nadu, including Sri Lankan refugee camps. The former intelligence senior operative of the LTTE, Sabesan alias Satkunam was arrested in October 2021 in Chennai in a case related to the smuggling of 300 kg of drugs, five AK 47 assault rifles and 1000 rounds of ammunition which were secured near Vizhinjam seas in Thiruvananthapuram. Satkunam was a very senior intelligence operative of the LTTE and was in the inner circle of its founder leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran who was assassinated by the Sri Lankan Army.



### CM Yogi orders relief for those affected by rain, hailstorm

**Lucknow, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed the officials to conduct relief work with full promptness in areas which have been affected by rain and hailstorm. According to the official spokesman, the chief minister has asked the officers to visit the affected areas and also monitor the relief work and

provide help to the people. He has directed the officials to provide adequate relief amounts to the families who may have lost dear ones and their crops and livestock affected. The CM further said that immediate financial assistance should be provided to those people whose houses and cattle sheds were damaged.

### MP Poonamben Maadam bids farewell to Rambhakt by flagging off Aastha Train

**Jamnagar, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The entire country has been immersed into the divinity of Lord Ram after Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla idol at Ayodhya. As lakhs of devotees from across the country are continuously visiting the historical temple, Jamnagar MP Poonamben Maadam flagged off a batch of devotees from Jamnagar and Dwarka through a special Aastha Train. Poonamben Maadam bid farewell to 400 Rambhakt from Devbhumi Dwarka and over 940 Rambhakt from Jamnagar city and district. In this train, 166 Ram devotees from Dwarka, Okha, Kalyanpur

and Raval and 234 from Khambhaliya, Bhanvad and Salaya joined. It is important to note that on February 22, it will be a month since the Pran Pratishtha ceremony performed by PM Modi. It will be at this moment when these devotees from Jamnagar Parliamentary constituency will get an opportunity to pray to Lord Ram. Special arrangements were made at different stations to welcome these devotees on their way to the ancient city of Ayodhya. Addressing the mediapersons, MP Poonamben Maadam said, "This could be made possible due to the faith, hard work, and struggle of all Rambhakt. Through this pilgrimage, they will get an opportunity to pray before Lord Ram." She also



added that on this moment, several devotees became emotional. "We are all witness to the energy and faith of all these devotees," Poonamben Maadam further said. The devotees also blessed PM Modi and gave their wishes to make the country developed. On this special occasion, Poonamben Maadam garlanded the devotees and served sweets to them. She also

greeted the Ram devotees to have a pleasant and auspicious darshan of Lord Ram. Witnessing this auspicious occasion, MP Poonamben Maadam also travelled by train from Khambhaliya to Jamnagar along with Ram devotees. All the Ram devotees including Poonamben Maadam had a unique zeal about this pilgrimage.

### Samyukta Kisan Morcha to hold tractor march on Feb 26, 'mahapanchayat' in Delhi on March 14

**Chandigarh, Feb 23 (IANS) :** After discussing the situation at the interstate borders between Punjab and Haryana where thousands of farmers have been camping for over a week, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella organisation of the farmers' organisations, on Friday announced a series of protests, including a 'mahapanchayat' in Delhi on March 14. It demanded registration of a murder case against Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Home

Minister Anil Vij over the death of a man during the farmers' agitation a day earlier and a compensation of Rs 1 crore for the deceased. Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait told the media after the coordination committee meeting of the SKM said on Friday a 'black day' for non-implementation of their demands, comprising the law guaranteeing the minimum support price (MSP) of crops, would be observed across the country.





## BJP core committee meeting in Jaipur discusses roadmap for LS polls

**Jaipur, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A core committee meeting was held at the Rajasthan BJP office here on Friday under the chairmanship of the party's state unit chief C.P. Joshi, in which the roadmap for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections was discussed, sources said. A detailed discussion

was held on the implementation of the 'historic' decisions like the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) and the Yamuna Water Agreement. Along with brainstorming on the preparations for the upcoming general elections, the strategy to make the lotus bloom in all the 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state under the leader-

ship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was discussed, sources said. After the meeting, state BJP chief Joshi said that an action plan for the upcoming programmes in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections has been prepared. Discussions were also held on how everyone can participate in the campaigns like the 'Gaon Chalo Abhiyan.



## NCST team receives 23 complaints from locals in Sandeshkhali



**Kolkata, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The field inspection team from the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), which visited the trouble-ridden Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on Friday, has received as many as 23 complaints from the

local people there. A member of the field inspection team, which was led by NCST Vice-Chairman Ananta Nayek, told mediapersons that the commission will submit a report on its findings to President Draupadi Murmu.

Without naming anyone, the team member said that the majority of the complaints were against a local political leader, about whom the commission will update the President. However, the members of the team were tight-lipped about the details of the findings during their day-long inspection. The NCST team reached Sandeshkhali on Thursday morning where they interacted with the local people, especially the women who have been protesting for over last two weeks alleging sexual harassment in the hands of a local Trinamool Congress leader and his aides. On Wednesday, the NCST had sent notices to Chief Secretary B.P. Gopalika and acting DGP

Rajeev Kumar, seeking an action taken report on the unrest in Sandeshkhali within 72 hours, or else appear personally before the commission in the national capital. Besides NCST, four other national commissions -- National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Women, and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights -- have intervened in the Sandeshkhali matter. The respective chairpersons of both NCW and NCSC have recommended President's Rule, considering the gravity of the complaints of the women from Sandeshkhali.



## Kerala hospital performs rare surgical procedure on critically-ill youth

**Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 23 (IANS) :** In what's billed as just the third such surgery performed in the country, a leading private hospital in Thiruvananthapuram performed the percutaneous mesocaval shunt procedure for the first time in Kerala. The KIMS Hospital authorities pointed out that the procedure was performed on a critically ill 25-year-old youth suffering from a rare abdominal disease, who came to the hospital with unbearable pain. Following detailed examination, it was revealed that the blood vessels in the esophagus were at risk of rupture and the procedure was per-

formed through a small pinhole, without resorting to complicated surgical procedures. The doctors at KIMS pointed out that the patient developed this condition due to a blockage in the portal vein, which carries blood from the intestine to the liver. This blockage resulted in high blood pressure in the portal vein and esophageal veins of the patient, who had previously undergone a splenectomy to remove the spleen. The procedure was led by Manish Kumar Yadav, Senior Consultant, Neurointerventional Radiology Department, and was done without relying on traditional surgical techniques.

## K'taka got road projects worth over Rs 4 lakh cr in 10-year period : Gadkari

**Bengaluru, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, said on Friday that after Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government assumed power in 2014, the aim was to execute road projects worth Rs 3 lakh crore in Karnataka. He said that Karnataka got road projects worth over Rs 4 lakh crore in a 10-year period. He said this while addressing a rally at Belagavi after inaugurating and laying the foundation for 18 National Highway projects worth Rs 7,290 crore on Thursday. "After 10 years, Rs 62,000 crore worth of road works have been completed. Rs 80,000 crore to Rs 1 lakh crore

worth projects are ongoing and Rs 2.5 lakh crore worth projects are in pipeline. Karnataka is a progressive state and without road infrastructure the overall development is not possible," Gadkari said. When PM Modi-led BJP government came to power in 2014, the length of national highways in Karnataka was 6,707 km. In 2024, the length of national highways is 8,200 km, he said. Gadkari further said that the much sought-after Bengaluru Peripheral Ring Road Project would solve the traffic congestion woes in the state capital, adding the project would be completed by January 2025. "The ring road project was taken up with a budget of Rs 17,000 crore. The state government is giving 30 per cent of the land acqui-



sition cost," he said. The ring road would have a length of 282 km of which and 242 would pass through Karnataka. Gadkari also said that Belagavi is going to be an exporter of 'green oil' to the world in the form of ethanol. "There are 28 sugar factories in Belagavi and production of ethanol will benefit farmers. The sugarcane is cultivated in abundance. So, don't take my words lightly," he stated. Karnataka Minister for PWD Satish Jarkiholi, BJP MPs Mangala Angadi, Annasaheb Jolle and others were also present on the occasion.



## Whether courts are empowered to modify an arbitral award? SC refers question to larger bench

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A 3-judge bench of the Supreme Court has referred to a larger bench the question whether courts are empowered to modify an arbitral award under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The Bench, headed by Justice Dipankar Datta, noted that while one line of decisions of the top court has answered the above question in the negative.

## Assam Forest and Wildlife officials being trained on GPS for elephant population estimation

**Guwahati, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Assam's Forest and Wildlife Department officials are being imparted GPS (Global Positioning System) training as part of the ongoing elephant estimation 2024 exercise, officials said on Friday. According to officials, the satellite navigation system is being used to pinpoint the ground position of a wild elephant. Experts from Guwahati-based northeast India's leading biodiversity conservation organisation "Aaranyak" are imparted GPS training to Forest and Wildlife officials of Goalpara, Tinsukia and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, and Kamrup and Chirang

Forest Divisions. Elephant population estimation has been underway since February 20 and it would continue till February 27. Aaranyak's senior expert Arup Kumar Das said: "We have shown GIS-based block maps of different ranges of Goalpara Forest Division. Approximately, 70 forest and wildlife officials attended the training. GPS hands-on training was provided to about 15 staff of the Goalpara Forest division with a practical session on uploading block boundaries in GPS." He also provided GPS training to the forest and wildlife officials of Tinsukia and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park while Das, along with fellow expert Madhumita



Borthakur, also imparted GPS training to officials of the Kamrup West Forest Division. "The training was technical support for the Elephant Estimation-2024. Apart from imparting the GPS training, the Aaranyak experts also prepared Block Maps which will be helpful for elephant population estimation," Das said. He said that the GPS training programmes greatly enhances the ability to accurately record GPS locations of elephant sightings inside

each estimation block, aiding in conservation efforts as well as habitat management. In addition to GPS training, GPS essential mobile app training has also been imparted which will be useful for field work. Moreover, a practical session was organised on "uploading block boundaries in GPS using basecamp software" for elephant estimation, the expert said.

## Uttar Pradesh to organise CSR Summit soon : Official

**Lucknow, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra has said that Uttar Pradesh will soon organise a CSR Summit. The state has witnessed a surge in corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding in the past few years. According to data from the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs, spending on Uttar Pradesh has gone up from Rs 148.9 crore in 2014-15 to about Rs 1,330.6 crore in 2021-22 -- an almost nine-fold jump. Uttar Pradesh Cabinet Minister Anil Rajbhar said on Friday: "There is no place better than Uttar Pradesh for effective utilisation of CSR funds." Alok Varma, Project Director,

Samuday and My Clean City, HCL Foundation, said: "We began with the idea that UP has been part of our growth story, so we must be part of the state's growth story. The promise made has been able to impact the lives of 5.1 million people positively. In fact, models from Uttar Pradesh are now showing the way in other places." CEO Nand Ghar and director group communication, Vedanta Group, Ritu Jhingon shared that 33 per cent of the 6,000 Nandghars built by her company were in Uttar Pradesh. Head of education at Reliance Foundation, Nilay Ranjan said their CSR initiatives have reached out to 2.3 million people in Uttar Pradesh in the past decade.



## BJP govt in Arunachal provided 17,500 jobs in last 7-8 years : CM Khandu

**Itanagar, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The BJP government in Arunachal Pradesh has provided 17,500 government jobs in the last 7-8 years and abolished the corrupt practices in providing jobs, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said here on Friday. The Arunachal government on Thursday officially handed over appointment letters to 1,256 youths, who had successfully ap-

peared in the Combined Secondary Level Examination-2023 conducted by the Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board (APSSB) last year. The Chief Minister symbolically handed over 'offer letters' to 30 new recruits at the event – Rozgar Mela – organised by the state Youth Affairs department. "Earlier, most of the Group C and D posts were filled by the con-

cerned departments on the recommendations or insistence of political leaders and senior officials. Those who had no connection with the affluent were left high and dry. "To do away with the corrupt practices and to provide all eligible youth a level-playing field, we created the APSSB and today it is bearing fruits," Khandu said.



## Unilateral actions can jeopardise security & stability of the entire region: VP

**Visakhapatnam, 23 Feb (IANS) :** The Vice-President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar, on Friday cautioned that unilateral actions and disregard for international law at sea can have far-reaching consequences, and can jeopardise the stability and security of the entire region. "If not well contained in time, it can go beyond regional disputes," Dhankhar said while addressing the Indian Maritime Seminar (MILAN 2024) organised by the Indian Navy here on Thursday. Dhankhar highlighted that the challenge to rule-based order is at its peak at the moment, and described its resolution as unavoidable necessity. "In recent years, we have seen formidable security challenges in the maritime domain and these have acquired a

new, menacing dimension having potential to endanger peace, not to speak of unsettling the supply chains," Dhankhar said, while mentioning the cascading impact of such supply chain disruptions on the lives of ordinary people. Emphasising global dependence on the seas for trade and commerce, the Vice-President underlined the need for observance of maritime order, terming it quintessential to peace and harmony of the region as also for maintenance of supply chains and economic growth. Protection of global supply chains, avoiding deeper regional tensions and exploitation of the blue economy are global concerns that can no longer be ignored, he added. Stating that Bharat recognises the significance of respecting the boundaries and fostering a rule-based maritime order, the Vice-



President said, "We believe that unscrupulous adherence to international law, including the UNCLOS, is imperative and essential and the only way for the peaceful coexistence and sustainable use of maritime resources." Dhankhar observed that this aspect is severely strained and compromised in the present times. Referring to the theme of MILAN 2024 - 'Partners Across Oceans: Collaboration, Synergy, Growth' - as very apt and relevant, the Vice-President underlined the need for nations to come together, share experiences, and develop collaborative strategies to ensure the safety, security and sustainability of our oceans.

## Haryana Assembly passes two Bills

**Chandigarh, Feb 23 (IANS) :** On the third day of the budget session of the Haryana Vidhan Sabha, two bills were passed on Friday. These include the Haryana Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 2024, and the Industrial Disputes (Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions)

(Haryana Amendment) Repeal Bill, 2024. The Haryana Municipal (Amendment) Bill was passed to amend the Haryana Municipal Act, 1973. Municipalities in the state have three tiers of hierarchy based on population criteria i.e., Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council and Municipal Committee. There were only Muni-

pal Councils and Municipal Committees in the state till 1994 due to the small urban population. The Haryana Municipal Act, 1973, was enacted to govern the matters of municipalities in Haryana. Keeping in view the 74th Constitutional amendment, the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, was enacted for the constitution

of Municipal Corporations in large towns. The Faridabad Complex Administration was responsible for the management of Faridabad and it was upgraded to Municipal Corporation in 1994. To improve the service conditions of employees and their utilisation in providing municipal services as per their competence.



## Drugs valued at Rs 35 crore seized in Mizoram; 3 held

**Aizawl, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Assam Rifles in co-ordination with the Mizoram Police, recovered 11.39 kg methamphetamine tablets and 218 gm heroin valued at around Rs 35.19 crore and arrested three drug peddlers including two women in Mizoram's Champhai district in this connection, an official said on Friday. Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of Assam Rifles and Mizoram Police conducted a raid at Dungtlang village on Wednesday night and seized methamphetamine tablets and heroin, an Assam Rifles official said. A 25-year-old man hailing from Assam's Silchar town and two women from Zotlang in Champhai district have been arrested for pos-

sessing drugs, smuggled from neighbouring Myanmar. The drugs and the apprehended persons have been handed over to Champhai police station for further legal proceedings. "Ongoing smuggling of contraband items is a major cause of concern for the state of Mizoram and India," the Assam Rifles said in a statement. An official said the highly addictive methamphetamine tablets, also locally called Yaba tablet or party tablet, smuggled from Myanmar have been one of the most trafficked drugs in recent years. These tablets have a huge demand in northeastern states, and other parts of India and neighbouring Bangladesh.

## Odisha Cabinet approves several key proposals, makes '12th Fail' tax-free

**Bhubaneswar, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Odisha Cabinet on Friday approved additional financial support to the landless agricultural households under the farmers' welfare scheme, Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA). The state Cabinet at its meeting held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved 16 key proposals related to 13 departments, including one-time additional financial assistance to the landless farmers under the KALIA scheme, and making the recently-released Hindi film '12th Fail' starring Vikrant Massey tax-free. "The eligible landless agricultural households are being provided with Rs 12,500 in three installments to take up livestock and horticultural crop-based activities to further accelerate their agricul-

tural prosperity. Now, Rs 2,000 shall be provided as an one-time additional financial support/assistance," said official sources. The state government also made modifications in the release dates of regular financial assistance given to the beneficiaries under the KALIA scheme. The Cabinet allowed the concerned authorities to disburse the assistance on any preferable date instead of the date earlier fixed by the state government. "The release dates for KALIA assistance can be further advanced

than the above dates, i.e., April 1 onwards for Kharif season and September 1 onwards for Rabi season, as decided by the state government from time to time," the sources added. The KALIA scheme has been under implementation since 2018-19, aiming to provide financial assistance to small and marginal farmers (SMFs), including sharecroppers and tenant farmers as well as landless agricultural households (LAHs) in the state.



## Man stabbed to death in Delhi, one juvenile held

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A 30-year-old man succumbed to injuries during treatment after he was allegedly stabbed by a group of boys in outer Delhi, the police said on Friday, adding they have apprehended one juvenile in connection with the incident while a manhunt has been initiated to nab others who are on the run. The deceased was identified Manoj a.k.a Monu, a resident of Sultanpuri. According to the police, on Friday, at around 9.30 p.m., the police was informed about a man being stabbed in the abdomen by two pedestrians near Bank of Baroda, Harijan Basti, Sultanpuri. "A police team immediately responded and upon arrival at the spot.

## Eight illegal colonies demolished in Gurugram's Sohna

**Gurugram, Feb 23 (IANS) :** A team of the District Town and Country Planning (DTCP) department conducted a demolition drive in Gurugram's Sohna block where eight illegal colonies were being developed in an area of around 19 acres, the officials said on

Friday. The district town planner (enforcement) along with his team carried out the demolition drive. DTCP officials claimed that the colonies were being developed illegally in Ghamroj, Bhondsi and Mahendrawada villages without prior permission from the concerned department.



## PMK calls for immediate measures to prevent man-animal conflict in TN

**Chennai, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) has called upon the Tamil Nadu government to take immediate steps to prevent the rising man-animal conflicts in the state. "As many as five people lost their lives in Krishangiri district of Tamil Nadu in the last one month in the attack of wild elephants," PMK President and former Union Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss, said in a statement.





## Imran wants IMF aid to Pakistan stalled over 'rigged' elections

**Rawalpindi, Feb 23 (IANS)** : Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan will write to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), demanding to stop its support for Pakistan due to the "rigged elections", party leader Ali Zafar said on Friday, media reports said. "Imran Khan will issue a letter to the IMF today. The charter of IMF, EU, and other organisations stipulates that they can function or provide loan to a country only if there's good governance," Zafar told journalists after meeting Khan at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail, Geo News reported. Zafar claimed that the "most important section" of their

charter is that a country should be democratic. "If there's no democracy, neither can these institutions function in such countries, nor should they," he said, Geo News reported. "The basic pillar of democracy is free and fair elections. However, the entire world saw how the nation's mandate was stolen. Let's leave pre-poll rigging aside, in post-poll rigging, victory was snatched from PTI's winning candidates," Zafar said. This isn't the first time that the opposition PTI will try to affect the IMF deal, as in 2022, its ex-leader Shaukat Tarin had told PTI's then Finance Ministers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab that they should "tell the IMF that the commitment made to them cannot be fulfilled" and to cite the recent devastation caused by floods in the country as the reason behind it. Pakistan secured a short-term \$3 billion programme from the IMF last year, which helped the country avert a sovereign debt default. It will run out next month and securing a new and much bigger one is widely seen as the priority for the new administration.

## Two arrested for breaking into Secret Service vehicle of Biden's granddaughter

**Washington, Feb 23 (IANS)** : Two teenagers have been arrested in connection with the break-in of a secret service vehicle assigned to US President Joe Biden's granddaughter Naomi Biden. The break in had occurred outside Naomi Biden's house in Georgetown area in Washington DC last year, BBC reported. The incident occurred on November 12 and Naomi Biden's secret service agent had fired at the thieves. As per the court records, the accused was identified as Robert Kemp and an unnamed juvenile.



## Japan: Train services suspended between Tokyo, Yokohama due to concrete on tracks

**Tokyo, Feb 23 (IANS)** : Train services on Japan's JR Yokosuka line between Tokyo and Yokohama stations were suspended on Friday due to concrete on tracks in a tunnel. Multiple pieces of concrete have fallen onto the tracks in the tunnel between Tokyo and Shinagawa stations, leading to suspension of train operations since morning, said East Japan Railway Company, or JR East, Xinhua news agency reported. The closed section was extended from Tokyo to Yokohama stations due to restoration work. JR East's Narita Express trains, which connect Narita Airport in Chiba Prefecture and the greater Tokyo area, have consequently been suspended from the first departure on all routes, but are expected to resume in the afternoon.

## Russia-US relations won't improve for decades : Dmitry Medvedev

**Moscow, Feb 23 (IANS)** : Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev Friday said that Russia-US ties will not improve in the coming years and even decades. In an interview to the local media, Dmitry Medvedev said that his current position allows him to speak more categorically and openly than during other periods, Xinhua news agency reported. Both countries will not be able to develop normal ties in the upcoming years after what has happened, no matter who is in power in Washington, Dmitry Medvedev said. He reiterated that Moscow had never refused to negotiate with Kiev as it is Ukraine that forbids talks, but attempts made by Western countries to steer Ukraine in this direction have remained unsuccessful. Russia's preconditions for such negotiations would be "the recognition of the results of the special military operation," he said, adding that Ukraine is trying to delay the negotiation process fearing immediate defeat.



## China one of the costliest places in the world to raise a child

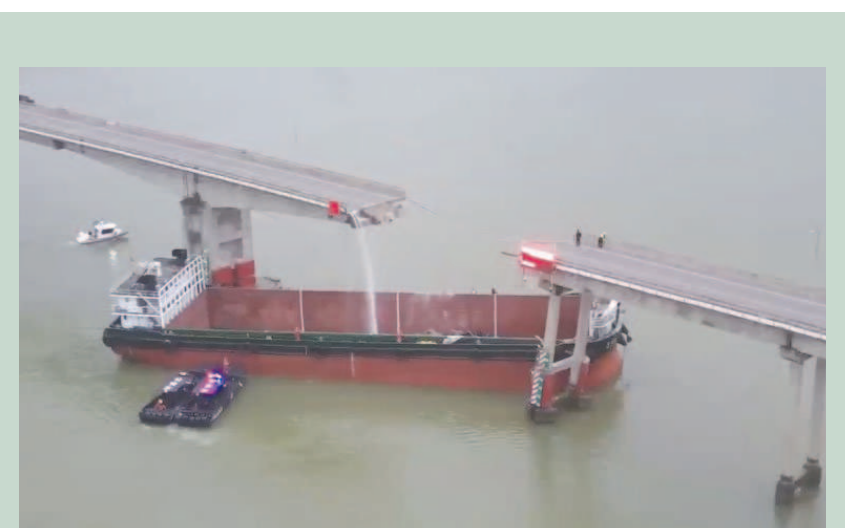
**Hong Kong, Feb 23 (IANS)** : China is one of the most expensive places in the world to raise a child in relative terms, a new report said, with the disproportionate impact on women driving the country's precipitous low fertility rate as it grapples with a demographic crisis. The study by the China-based YuWa Population Research Institute found that the average nationwide cost of raising a child from birth to age 17 was about \$74,800 – rising to more than \$94,500 to support a child through a bachelor's degree, CNN reported. The cost of raising a child to age 18 in China is 6.3 times higher than the country's GDP per capita, the report said – a ratio second only to South Korea, which has the world's lowest fertility rate, and where the cost of child-rearing is 7.79 times the GDP per capita, CNN reported.



## US asks Pakistan to respect freedom of expression, end social media curbs

**Washington, Feb 23 (IANS)** : The US has asked Pakistan to respect freedom of expression and restore access to X and social media platforms. On disruptions on social media in Pakistan, US state department spokesperson Matthew Miller, in a media briefing, said: "So we are concerned by any report of restrictions on the exercise of the freedom of expression and association in Pakistan, including the partial or complete government-imposed internet shutdowns, which includes, of course, on social media platforms." "We continue to call on Pakistan to respect freedom of expression and re-

store access to any social media that has been restricted, including Twitter, I think now known as X," the spokesperson added. On irregularities in election process in Pakistan, Matthew Miller said the US wants full investigation into the matter. Mobile internet was suspended on February 8, the polling day after which the country's caretaker government had said that the step was taken as a security measure.



## 2 killed, 3 missing as cargo ship rams bridge in China

**Beijing, Feb 23 (IANS)** : Two people were killed and three others went missing after a cargo ship rammed into bridge, leading to collapse of a portion of the structure on Friday morning in Guangzhou in China's Guangdong Province. The incident occurred around 5.30 a.m. when a container ship hit the pier of the Lixinsha Bridge, plunging five vehicles, Xinhua news agency reported. According to preliminary investigation, of the five vehicles, two plunged into the river and the others fell onto the vessel. A crew member was slightly injured in the accident. Rescue efforts are underway and the cause of the accident is being investigated.



## US makes first lunar landing in over 50 years

**Los Angeles, Feb 23 (IANS)** : US company Intuitive Machines' first lunar lander has touched down on the moon, marking the first American spacecraft to land on the lunar surface in more than 50 years. The uncrewed lander, named Odysseus, landed at the lunar South Pole on Friday at 6:23 p.m. Eastern Time, according to NASA. Odysseus carries NASA science and other commercial payloads to the moon. The spacecraft was launched on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on Friday last week from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The mission, codenamed IM-1, marks Intuitive Machines' first robotic flight to the moon's surface, Xinhua news agency reported. The scientific objectives of the mission include studies of plume-surface interactions, radio astronomy, and space weather interactions with the lunar surface. It will also demonstrate precision landing technologies and communication and navigation node capabilities, according to NASA. NASA is working with several US companies to deliver science and technology to the lunar surface through the Commercial Lunar Payload Services initiative.

## 15 killed as mine collapses in Venezuela

**Caracas, Feb 23 (IANS)** : Fifteen people were killed and 11 others injured after a mine collapsed in La Paragua in Venezuela's Bolivar state. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said search and rescue teams are on the spot to find trapped miners, Xinhua news agency reported. Nicolas Maduro said: "We immediately dispatched all the civil



defence teams, together with the governor of Bolivar state Angel Marciano, we would strengthen the rescue phase."

According to preliminary investigations, the mine collapsed after some drilling.

## Need to deepen economic engagement with India: Albanian Foreign Minister

**New Delhi, Feb 22 (IANS)** : Acknowledging India as a major international player and an economic power, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania, Igli Hasani, said on Friday that immense possibilities of cooperation exist between the two countries in spheres ranging from IT, digitisation, tourism and economy. Hasani, who arrived here for the 9th Raisina Dialogue on Wednesday, said that Albania will soon open an embassy in New Delhi.





### KIUG 2023: Shooter Sift Kaur Samra tests tweaks in her technique in winning bronze

**Guwahati (Assam), Feb 23 (IANS) :** Asian Games gold medallist Sift Kaur Samra came to the 4th Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2023 Ashtalakshmi to test the changes made to her training method ahead of a busy season as she had tweaked a few things in her technique. The 22-year-old, who has already bagged a Paris Olympic quota for India in the 50m Rifle 3-position.

### 4th Test: Root leads fightback with unbeaten century to carry England past 300

**Ranchi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Joe Root shelved the Bazball approach to get back to playing attritional cricket and that paid off handsomely as he led England's fightback with an unbeaten century to carry England to 302/7 at stumps on the opening day of the fourth Test against India at the JSCA International Stadium here on Friday. Root's sublime 106 not out off 226 balls, his 31st century in the format and also his tenth Test hundred against India, was laced with nine boundaries, helped England cross 300 after being 112/5 at lunch, with debutant fast-bowler Akash Deep taking first three scalps.



### Jay Shah hails Ashwin on becoming first Indian to take 100 Test wickets vs England

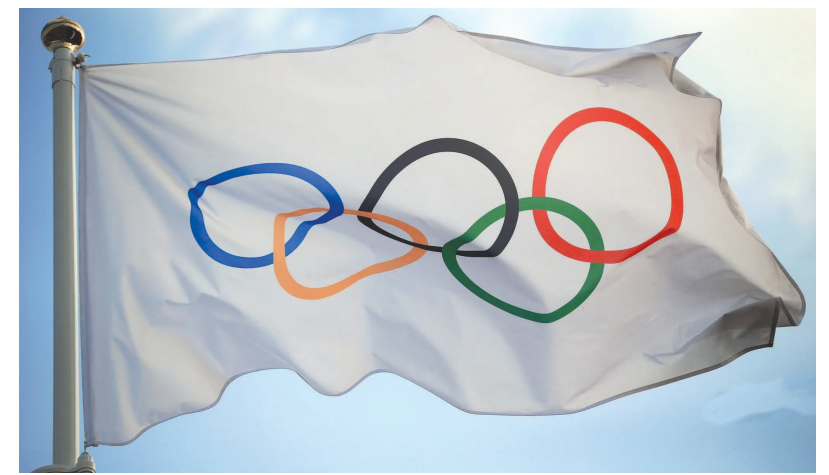
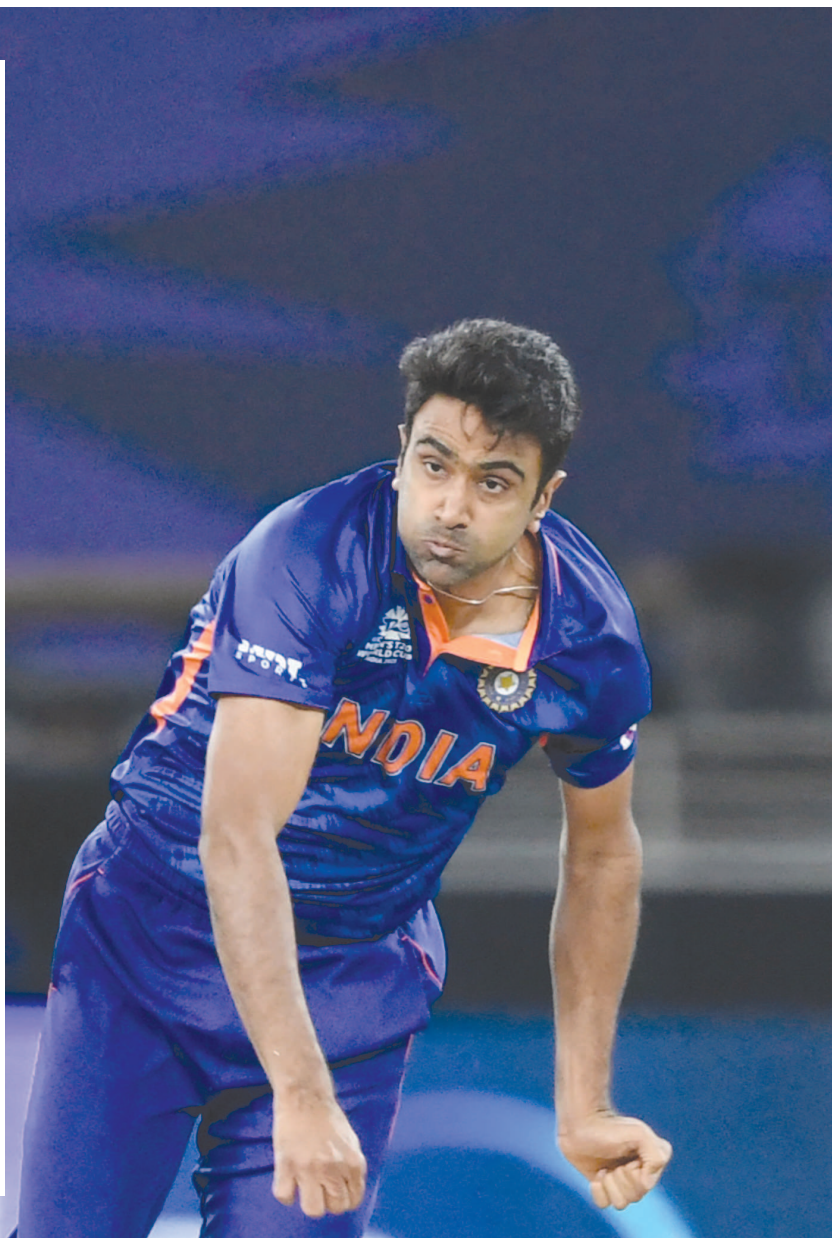
**Ranchi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Friday showered praise on veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin for achieving the milestone of becoming the first Indian to take 100 Test wickets against England.

Ashwin achieved the feat on day 1 of the fourth Test against England after dismissing Jonny Bairstow lbw in the 22nd over.

Congratulating Ashwin on his another career milestone, Shah wrote on X: "Setting new records yet again, @ashwinravi99 has made history by becoming the first Indian to take 100 Test wickets against England. His outstanding performance further cements his status as one of the greatest spin bowlers in cricket history. His extraordinary feat underscores his talent, and dedication to the sport. Congratulations!"

The feat places Ashwin in an elite group of bowlers, with only Australia's Nathan Lyon also having taken 100 wickets against England among active players. Shane Warne holds the overall record with 195 wickets from 72 innings.

Earlier, Ashwin etched his name into history as he joined the elite club of players with 500 Test wickets, becoming only the second Indian to achieve this remarkable feat. The 37-year-old spin maestro dismissed Zak Crawley for wicket number 500 during the third Test against England in Rajkot.



### CAS dismisses Russia's appeal against suspension by International Olympic Committee

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Friday dismissed the appeal filed by the Russian Olympic Committee against the decision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to suspend its membership.

The IOC suspended the Russian Olympic Committee in October last year for breaching the Olympic Charter. The suspension means ROC is no longer entitled to operate as a National Olympic Committee, as defined in the Olympic Charter, and cannot receive any funding from the

Olympic Movement. "The CAS Panel in charge of this matter dismissed the appeal and confirmed the Challenged Decision, finding that the IOC EB did not breach the principles of legality, equality, predictability or proportionality," the CAS statement read.

"The CAS Panel's decision is final and binding except for the parties' right to file an appeal to the Swiss Federal Tribunal within 30 days on limited grounds," it added. The ROC called the suspension "another counterproductive decision with obvious political motivations".

### BFI eyes record participation at Eastern Open Talent Hunt in Guwahati

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Following the success of three previous talent hunt programmes, Boxing Federation of India (BFI) in association with REC Limited is all set to unfold the next chapter with the Eastern Open Talent Hunt scheduled to be held from March 2 to March 18 at the Deshbhakta Tarun Ram Phookan Indoor Stadium in Guwahati.

The Eastern Open Talent Hunt forms a vital part of the four open preliminary tournaments organised by the BFI across different regions of the country.

These tournaments cater to elite, youth, junior, and sub-junior categories for both men and women boxers. "Assam and North East have played a pivotal role in identifying innumerable boxing talents.



### ITF Women's Open : Ankita Raina leads Indian contingent in main draw at Gurugram

**Gurugram, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Seasoned singles player Ankita Raina will lead the Indian contingent of nine players in the main draw of the second edition of the ITF Women's Open W35 Gurugram from February 26 to March 3. Hosted by The Tennis Project the prestigious event promises to be a thrilling affair with some of the best players having signed up for the US \$25,000 prize money event. The tournament has attracted players from 16 countries including hosts India.



### Ishan, Shreyas likely to lose central contracts over Ranji Trophy absence : Report

**New Delhi, Feb 23 (IANS) :** India batters Ishan Kishan and Shreyas Iyer are likely to be excluded from the BCCI central contract over their absence from the Ranji Trophy, say reports. Iyer has a Grade B BCCI contract whereas Kishan holds a Grade C contract.

### WPL created a platform for young players to achieve their dreams: Beth Mooney

**Bengaluru, Feb 23 (IANS) :** Beth Mooney, the captain of Gujarat Giants, believes the Women's Premier League (WPL) has created a platform for the young players in India to achieve their cricketing dreams. The second edition



of WPL gets underway at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday, with defending champions Mumbai Indians taking on last year's runners-up Delhi Capitals.