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### Quality cricket being played in Ranji Trophy final between Mumbai and Vidarbha : Sachin

After India clinched the five-match Test series against England 4-1, all the focus has been on the ongoing Ranji Trophy final..

12



### Statiq deploys its 1st EV charging facility in Ayodhya for green mobility

As people in Ayodhya begin to embrace electric vehicles (EVs), charging infrastructure provider Statiq on Monday inaugurated its maiden EV charging station in the holy city.

07



### CS reviews arrangements for President, Vice-President's visit to Telangana

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held a coordination meeting with the officials and reviewed the arrangements to be made in connection with the visit of the President of India...

02



### CM Revanth launches Indiramma housing scheme at Bhadrachalam

**Bhadrachalam, Mar 11 (NSS):** Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday launched the prestigious Indiramma housing scheme in

Bhadrachalam on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said he was very much delighted to launch the Indiramma housing scheme for poor in the pres-

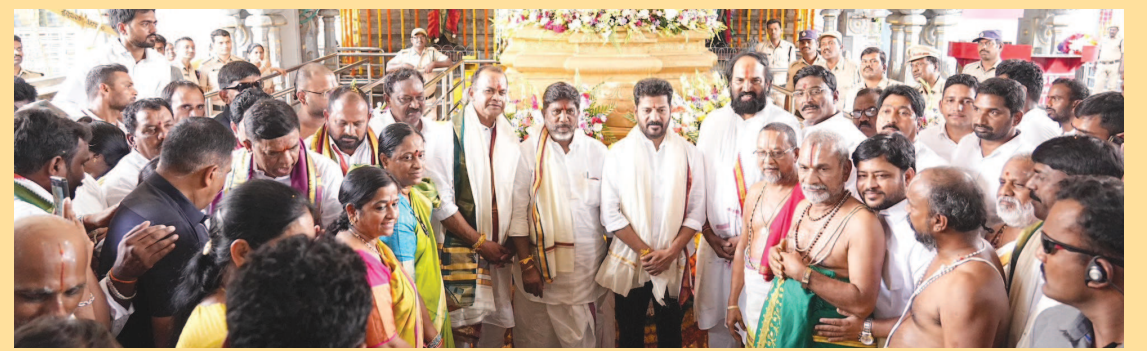
ence Lord Rama in the temple town of Bhadrachalam and the objective of launching the scheme was to fulfill the dream of owning a house by all poorer sections . The Chief Minister said the government has already sanctioned 4,50,000 Indiramma houses at the cost of Rs.22,500 crore and under the scheme, the house pattas will be given in the name of women. In the previous BRS government, then chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao sought votes in the name of double bedroom houses and deceived people. That's the reason, people have buried KCR regime and elected the "Indiramma Rajyam"," Revanth Reddy alleged.

### Telangana CM offers prayers at Yadadri temple

**Hyderabad, March 11 (IANS) :** Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy offered prayers at Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at

Yadadri on Monday. Accompanied by his wife Geetha, the Chief Minister participated in Brahmothsavam of the ancient cave shrine in Yadadri Bhongir district,

about 70 km from Hyderabad. The couple participated in a special puja amid chanting of Vedic hymns.

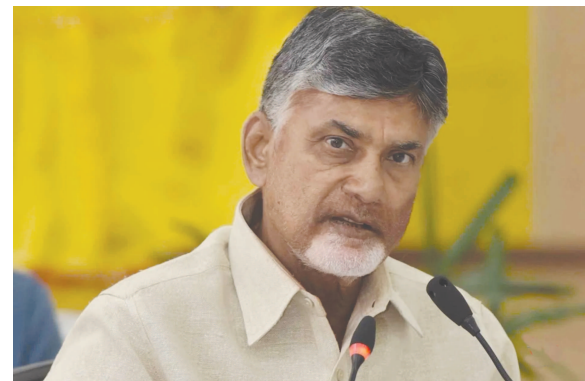


### PM Modi lauds DRDO scientists for first flight test of Agni-5 ICBM with multiple warheads

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed Mission Divyastra, the first flight test of homegrown Agni-5 ICBM with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle technology (MIRV), terming it a landmark achievement by DRDO scientists. "Proud of our DRDO scientists for Mission Divyastra, the first flight test of indigenously developed Agni-5 missile with Multiple Independently Targetable re-entry vehicle technology," he posted on X.

### CID files charge sheet against Chandrababu Naidu in Amaravati assigned lands case

**Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), March 11 (IANS) :** The Andhra Pradesh CID on Monday filed a charge sheet against TDP President and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, former minister P. Narayana, and others in Rs 4,400 crore Amaravati capital city assigned lands scam case. Anne Sudheer Babu, former tahsildar of Thulluru mandal, and K.P.V. Anjani Kumar (Bobby), Managing Director of Ramakrishna Housing Pvt Ltd, are the others named in the charge sheet. The case was registered in 2020 at the CID police station in Mangalagiri under the Indian Penal Code's (IPC) Sections 420 (cheating), 409 (criminal breach of trust), 506 (criminal intimidation), 166 & 167 (public servant disobeying law), 217 (public servant framing incorrect record).



### Dwarka Expressway will boost economic activities in Delhi-NCR, says PM Modi

**Gurugram, March 11 (IANS) :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, after inaugurating the Dwarka Expressway, said that the project will boost economic activities in Delhi-NCR (national capital region), and also improve the quality of life of the people. The Prime Minister said that the massive infrastructure construction work going on in the country would make India the third-largest economic power in the world. Criticising the opposition, PM Modi said: "While the country has changed in the last 10 years, the Congress and its allies could not change. They are unable to sleep because of the developmental work being done. The Congress and its 'ghamandia' alliance have

lost their sleep because of the development work by the present government. "They are saying that Modi is doing all the work worth lakhs of crores of rupees because of elections. The country has changed so much in the last 10 years, but the views of Congress and its friends have not changed.

**Continued on pg 02**



### Deputy CM is being insulted by upper caste congress leaders: BRS party

**Hyderabad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** The main opposition BRS party today claimed that the upper caste leaders of the congress party had insulted deputy CM of the state Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and state minister Konda Surekha during the visit of Yadadri

Temple. The BRS party leaders Balka Suman , Devi Prasad and Vasu Deva Reddy while addressing a press conference at the Telangana Bhavan alleged that the deputy CM and Konda Surekha were made sit on the floor by the upper caste leaders.

### Lok Sabha elections 2024 : EC briefs its observers from various wings of govt

**New Delhi, March 11 (IANS) :** With the announcement of the Lok Sabha elections 2024 around the corner, the Election Commission (EC) on Monday held a meeting

with its observers, including officials from the police, general administration, and expenditure departments. The meeting was attended by over 2,000 officials, including from the IAS, the IPS.



### People will punish congress government : Ponnala Lakshmaiah

**Hyderabad, March 11 (NSS):** Former minister and BRS party leader Ponnala Lakshmaiah today warned the ruling congress party of facing punishment from the people if the promises made during the election campaign were not implemented.



### TDP, BJP, Jana Sena begin talks on seat sharing for Andhra Assembly, LS polls

**Amaravati, Mar 11 :** Leaders of the TDP, BJP and Jana Sena Party began crucial talks here on Monday to finalise their seat sharing arrangement.



## Stalin questions PM Modi over past promises

**Chennai, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M.K. Stalin on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of failing to fulfil his promises. In a statement, he contended that the promises PM Modi had made ten years ago were not fulfilled even now. Stalin, who interviewed aspirants seeking DMK tickets for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, also claimed that the opposition INDIA bloc had succeeded in sowing the idea that the BJP should be defeated at any cost in the mind of the people. "The leaders of the alliance are holding talks in various states to ensure that the anti-BJP votes are not split." Stalin said that in Tamil Nadu, the alliance led by the DMK

had completed seat-sharing with its alliance partners including the Congress, the CPI-M, the CPI, the VCK, the MDMK, the IUML, and the KNMDK (the last which would be contesting on the DMK symbol) and that his party would contest 21 of the state's 39 Lok Sabha constituencies. He also said that MNM founder and actor Kamal Haasan had joined the DMK alliance and would campaign for its candidates. Kamal Haasan will be allotted a Rajya Sabha seat in 2025, he added. The DMK chief, in a diplomatic manner, noted that it was not his DMK that was giving seats to alliance partners, but all the parties in the alliance sat together and took decisions unanimously on seat-sharing. "We are united by the single-minded pur-



suit of defeating the BJP and the same sentiments would pave the way for victory in 39 seats," he said. Stalin called upon the DMK cadres to work for the alliance's victory in all 40 constituencies in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. He also said that it was necessary to usher in a political change and formation of a government at the Centre that would respect the state governments. The DMK leader also said that the INDIA bloc would highlight the achievements of the 'Dravidian Model' government in Tamil Nadu in three years.

## Not afraid of political challenges: Himachal CM

**Solan, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Asserting that he is not afraid of political challenges, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Monday said the government has come up with developmental schemes and policies for the welfare of the people. Addressing a public meeting here, the Chief Minister announced Rs 10 crore each for the construction of parking and in-

door stadium in Solan. He said by adopting zero-tolerance policy on corruption, the government has succeeded in curbing the corrupt practices and the resources of the state were being used for welfare of its citizens and overall development of the state. He said while the focus of the government was entirely on taking Himachal forward on the path of sustainable growth.



## Sandeshkhali will turn around BJP's fate in LS polls : Bengal LoP

**Kolkata, Mar 11 (IANS) :** West Bengal Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Suwendu Adhikari on Monday said that Sandeshkhali would turn around the fate of BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. "Sandeshkhali alone can change the equation in the entire Lok Sabha election. We are expecting a lead of at least one lakh votes from Sandeshkhali alone," the LoP said while addressing a meeting organised by BJP in Sandeshkhali along with BJP State President Sukanta Majumdar.



## Tripura Police seize drugs valued at Rs 5 crore, 3 held

**Agartala, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Tripura Police on Monday seized 55,000 methamphetamine tablets valued at Rs 5 crore from Agartala-bound vehicle near Bagbasa Naka Point in north Tripura and arrested three youths, police officials said. North Tripura district Superintendent of Police Bhanupada Chakraborty said that acting on

a tip-off, the police intercepted a vehicle at Bagbasa along Tripura-Assam inter-state border and recovered the highly addictive methamphetamine tablets, also locally called Yaba tablet or party tablet. "The drugs smuggled from Myanmar and entered Tripura through Mizoram and Assam states. We are now interrogating the detainees to obtain further details. The arrested drug peddlers

belong to Karimganj in southern Assam," Chakraborty told IANS. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, who also holds the home portfolio, appreciating the role of the police in seizing the drugs, said on the X: "Tripura Police's role towards our vision of building Nasha Mukta Bharat is commendable." Methamphetamine tablets smuggled in from Myanmar are

one of the most trafficked drugs in recent years. These drugs have a huge demand in northeastern states, and other parts of India and neighbouring Bangladesh. Meanwhile, the Assam Rifles organised an awareness programme as part of 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan' (drugs-free India campaign) at Radhanagar in Tripura's Unakoti District, Tripura on Monday.



## Time has come to get rid of BJP-JJP govt in Haryana: Bhupinder Singh Hooda

**Faridabad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Haryana Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Monday said the time has come to get rid of the BJP-JJP government with the power of vote. "The law and order situation is very bad. People themselves are victims and are facing problems. Not a day passes when there is no murder, robbery or threat of ransom," the LoP said while addressing the Jan Aakrosh rally. He said that the Central government figures show that Haryana has become the most unsafe state in the last nine years. "This morning itself, information was received about a person being shot dead in Murthal in Sonapat. Such type of news is coming every day. Haryana, which was number one in per capita income, per capita investment, job creation and law and order, is today number one in unemployment, inflation and crime," the Leader of the Opposition added. Hooda said that two lakh government posts are ly-

ing vacant in the state, and challenged the government to tell the people "if it has done any work in Faridabad in the past 10 years." "Thousands of small and big factories have been closed here. There are no teachers in schools, no doctors in hospitals and no employees in offices," he pointed out. He said that if the Congress government comes back to power in the state, an old-age pension of Rs 6,000 per month will be given. "Every family will be given 300 units of free electricity per month. To provide relief from inflation, LPG cylinders will be given for Rs 500. We will start permanent recruitment on 2 lakh vacant government posts, and will confirm the employment of sanitation workers," Hooda promised. He said that the Congress government will also re-start the scheme of 100 square yards free-plot and will provide government assistance to build a two-room house on it.

## Karan Singh chronicles his memorable encounters with remarkable women

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** It was a brief meeting with Hellen Keller that lasted a few minutes but it left a life-long impression on Karan Singh. And it remains etched in his mind as an encounter with "an iconic fighter for the cause of the disabled." His memorable meeting with Eleanor Roosevelt, whom he described as the first lady of the United Nations, took place when he was just 17 years of age. From the depths of his remarkable memory, veteran politician and public figure,

Karan Singh, has dug out these and many more fascinating nuggets relating to some of his most memorable encounters with women, and put them together in the form of his book 'Meetings with Remarkable Women'. Sure to be a collector's item, the book, in its Hindi edition and a new English edition, was released by the author himself at New Delhi's India International Centre. The English version, first published in 2014, as a compilation of his impressions of the remarkable women he had met in his life, has been updated with seven new additions including President

Droupadi Murmu. Both English and Hindi versions are the first publications of the newly formed Karan Singh Foundation in collaboration with Motilal Banarsidass Publishing House. Speaking at length about the book at the launch event, Karan Singh said: "In the course of my multifarious and varied public life, which began some eight decades ago, I have had occasions in India and abroad to meet with a large number of remarkable people...and they "have left an impression upon my mind." Those memories resided in the recesses of his mind until Jyotsana



prompted, his daughter and chairperson of the Karan Singh Foundation, and he decided to pen them down, he revealed. Many of the women who have made their way in his book were well-known around the world, however, some were not in the public eye. But, according to the author: "They shared a certain intangible quality which has led me to include them in this book of reminiscences."

## Mamata fears Central agencies will target Trinamool LS candidates

**Kolkata, Mar 11 (IANS) :** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said that Central investigation agencies will soon knock on the doors of the Trinamool Congress leaders who have been asked to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections by the party. "You will see that ED and CBI will be active soon. But do not be afraid. If they come, ask for the search warrant. After their operation is over, you should demand the seizure list," Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said while addressing a mega rally of Trinamool Congress in Kolkata, from where the candidate list was

announced. She said that the BJP's main aim is to win the elections by unleashing the Central investigating agencies. "This legacy of torture will not continue for long. People will not tolerate the system where people are divided on basis of the religion; where a Sikh police officer is branded as a Khalistani; and a Muslim as a Pakistani," the Chief Minister said. Without naming anyone, the Chief Minister launched a scathing attack against the former judge of Calcutta High Court Abhijit Gangopadhyay who joined the BJP after resigning from judiciary services. "I always have immense regard for the members of the judiciary.



But there is one judge who acted wrongly while he was in the chair. I do not have respect for him," the Chief Minister said. Meanwhile, soon after the list was announced infighting in Trinamool Congress surfaced in Barrackpore Lok Sabha constituency, where the sitting MP Arjun Singh was dropped and the State Irrigation Minister Partha Bhowmik was nominated.

## Seven IEDs recovered in J&K's Poonch

**Jammu, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Security forces on Monday recovered seven improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from J&K's Poonch district. Police said that a team of the Rashtriya Rifles and the local police recovered the IEDs and a wireless set from the Dara Sangla area of Surankote tehsil in the district during a search operation. "All the IEDs have been removed safely out of the area by the security forces," police said.



## OPINIONmail

ELECTION PROMISES:  
NEEDED A MECHANISM TO  
PREVENT BLUFF GAMES BY  
POLITICAL PARTIES

The Indian election season is a vibrant spectacle. Rallies thrum with energy, multi-coloured flags flutter, and manifestos lay out grand visions for the future. Yet, beneath the celebratory veneer lies a troubling question: are these promises merely a game of rhetoric, with little chance of translation into reality? Maybe, it is time to institutionalise an ombudsman for election promises - a mechanism to hold parties accountable for the feasibility and follow-through on their pledges. The need for such checks and balances is particularly stark in the face of the increasingly ambitious promises doled out by both BJP and opposition Congress. In the 2019 elections, the BJP promised to double farmers' income by 2022, a target widely acknowledged by experts as unrealistic. Congress, on the other hand, pledged a minimum income guarantee scheme (Nyuntam Aay Yojana) - a social welfare program with significant budgetary implications. While these promises capture the imagination of the electorate, there's a crucial absence: accountability. Currently, there exists no mechanism to assess the veracity or feasibility of poll promises. Political parties craft manifestos with impunity, knowing the likelihood of being held to account is minimal. This lack of consequence breeds a culture of empty rhetoric, where promises morph into convenient talking points rather than concrete plans. The Election Commission of India is often cited as the potential guardian against outlandish promises. However, the ECI's role is primarily restricted to conducting fair polls and enforcing the Model Code of Conduct, a set of guidelines for campaigning. It lacks the authority to vet manifesto promises, leaving them largely unchecked. Further limiting the ECI's efficacy is the absence of a robust mechanism to track the fulfilment of promises after elections. Manifestos often gather dust after the celebratory confetti settles, with no systematic follow-up or evaluation of their implementation. This lack of follow-through weakens the very idea of democratic accountability. The Modi government has implemented a certain type of poll promises, but these were mainly meant to pursue a divisive agenda rather than promote inclusive democratic progress.

The call for an ombudsman stems from this lacuna. Proponents envision an independent body with the power to scrutinize manifesto promises for feasibility and financial viability. The ombudsman could also track the progress of promised schemes after elections, issuing periodic reports to the public and the ECI. Such a system would inject much-needed transparency and bring some teeth to the promise game. Political parties would be incentivized to craft realistic and achievable goals, knowing they would be subject to scrutiny. Voters, empowered by the ombudsman's reports, could make more informed choices at the ballot box. Opponents of the ombudsman proposal raise concerns about stifling innovation and micromanaging political discourse. They argue that manifesto-writing is an inherent part of the democratic process, and voters have the capacity to discern realistic promises from mere bluster. However, these concerns belie the current reality. The existing system, devoid of accountability, allows for fantastical promises that ultimately erode public trust in the political process. An ombudsman would not stifle innovation; it would instead encourage parties to be more creative and responsible in crafting their agendas. An ombudsman would also not stifle political discourse. Healthy debate about policy options is a cornerstone of democracy. The ombudsman's role would be to ensure that this debate is grounded in reality, not mirages of unrealistic promises.

The path forward requires careful consideration. The ombudsman's powers and limitations would need to be clearly defined to avoid infringing on the legitimate right of parties to present their visions. Perhaps a consultative approach could be adopted, where the ombudsman advises parties on the feasibility of their promises and flags potential red flags. Ultimately, the creation of an ombudsman is a step towards strengthening Indian democracy. It would empower voters, incentivize responsible campaigning, and foster a culture of accountability where promises translate into concrete action. In the vibrant tapestry of Indian elections, the ombudsman could play a vital role in ensuring that promises are not mere ornaments, but the cornerstones of a better future.

(By K Raveendran)

EDITORIAL  
the indian mailNARENDRA MODI'S GUJARAT MODEL FAILS  
TO REDUCE POVERTY IN HIS OWN STATE

According to a NITI Aayog survey report, Gujarat is failing in reduction of poverty despite emerging as the fastest growing state in industrialization. The ranking of Gujarat in poverty alleviation is even lower than West Bengal - one of the poorest states in the country. Gujarat ranked 16th with population living below Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in 2019-21. West Bengal was above Gujarat, ranking 15th. In Gujarat, population below MPI was 9.03 percent and in West Bengal, it was 8.60 percent. Argument and counterargument continued over Gujarat failing in poverty reduction and trailing behind West Bengal. Modi model of development followed in

Gujarat has been questioned by the opposition parties. Why has Gujarat failed to reduce poverty, while it is leading in industrialization. Faster growth in industrialization should have opened up more scope for employment opportunities in the state. In the recently held Global Summit, foreign and domestic investors crowded to invest in Gujarat. It was focused as only the state for potential growth in India and better livelihood in the state. The fallacy lies with geographical landscape of Gujarat. It is desert prone area. Nearly, 52 percent of the land in Gujarat is covered by desert. This demonstrates disadvantage for Gujarat to generate agricultural employment. Giving India agro based economy and larger part of people living in agriculture, livelihood in Gujarat



should have been generated mainly from agriculture. But, Gujarat was deprived of the scope for generation of agriculture employment and livelihood for the agriculture poor because of its geographical characteristics. This imparted a cascading impact on agricultural income in the state and potential to reduce poverty alleviation. Gujarat is restricted by scarce fertile land and irrigation facilities due to widespread desert in the

state. These restricted agrarian employment opportunities. As a result, it also restricted development of agro-based economy. In contrast, West Bengal is indebted with plain and fertile land, giving enough scope for agricultural employment. This led substantial support to agriculture farmers for their growth in income and push farmers above the poverty in West Bengal.

(IPA Service)

HOW CROWDFUNDING  
CONCEPT IS  
SWEEPING HOLLYWOOD  
FILM INDUSTRY?

In a visionary move that reshapes the traditional Hollywood financing landscape, Paul Scanlan and Jeff Annon materialized their brainchild, Legion M, not merely as a production studio but as a thriving community. Breaking away from the conventional model, Legion M is part of a Hollywood transformation that embraces crowdfunding, allowing film and television producers to seek donations while providing investors with substantial returns beyond exclusive merchandise, CNBC reported recently. Renowned for producing hits like Jay and Silent Bob Reboot, Colossal, and the much-anticipated William Shatner documentary You Can Call Me Bill, Legion M represents a paradigm shift in the industry. Jeff Annon, Legion M's Co-founder and President, views equity crowdfunding as more than just a financial strategy. He states, "It's a different way to fund your company, or a different way to fund your film. And we look at it as a fundamentally different way to build a fundamentally different type of business."

CLOSED BORDERS ALONG THE MYANMAR-INDIA  
LINE HAVING HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

Gawa, originating from a Mizo village in Myanmar close to the Indian border, escaped in December after her village was destroyed by fire. Now, as a mother of two, she is among the numerous individuals seeking shelter along the border, attempting to escape the intensifying civil conflict in Myanmar. To manage her finances, she earns a living by vending basic necessities on a route leading to India. From her small store, she sees a new trench dug by the Indian government to serve as a boundary. The trench stretches along the edge of the border, serving as a symbol of the local inhabitants' struggle, trapped between two conflicts. Since the military took over

Myanmar by removing the elected government in 2021, there has been a growing resistance movement against the regime. The government is being blamed for attacking villages where supporters of democracy live. They have also made strict new rules for military service that have caused a lot of fear. Since May 2023, there has been an ethnic conflict in Manipur, a northeastern state in India. This conflict involves a fight between the Meitei community, who mainly live in the valley areas, and the Kuki-Zo tribes, who live in the hills. The state government, mainly made up of Meitei lawmakers, is accused of favouritism, leading to Kukis moving from the valley to the hills and Meiteis heading in the opposite direction.

Military forces are now watching over areas that keep the two regions apart. The two conflicts have led to a humanitarian crisis, where false information and conspiracy theories worsen tensions, leaving many people without anywhere to seek refuge. In late January, a new issue arose when a Meitei militia named the Arambai Tenggol formed in Imphal, the capital of Manipur, which is 110 kilometres away from the border. On January 24, many members of the group appeared, wearing camouflage and carrying weapons. They insisted that N. Biren Singh, the Chief Minister of Manipur from Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, comply with demands that encompassed the construction of a border fence.

CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE  
SINCE FEBRUARY 22 GOING AGAINST BJP

The India TV-CNX survey, conducted between February 5 and 23, a period when BJP and PM Narendra Modi believed unprecedented gain after inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22 and a prospect of INDIA alliance falling apart, revealed that their hope of winning 370 on their own, and 400+ for NDA was just a result of exaggerated self-importance. The survey found that BJP could win just 335 seats and NDA 378. Since February 22, change in political landscape has been going against the BJP, which included agitation of farmers,

workers from both Public and Private sectors, and government employees; greater unity among INDIA alliance partners excepting only one JD(U) deserting and TMC contesting alone; and Modi government's hiding efforts of its murky donation business through electoral bonds. People are also not able to stomach two claims - official elimination of poverty and negligible level of unemployment - which they consider false. These could potentially harm the BJP's political prospect further, but how much is the billion-dollar question. India TV survey itself gives certain hints, though survey results are suspect to be slanted in favour

of BJP, because the organization has often been alleged to have been favouring BJP in the past. Nevertheless, even this is not factored in the survey result, one thing can certainly be said that the survey captures only the political sentiments of the people during February 5 and 23 only, not the political developments after February 22, the opinion poll results have come out on February 25, which makes the survey results entirely out of immediate political context. In absence of Congress-Samajwadi Party alliance in Uttar Pradesh.

INDIA BLOC MAY  
ANNOUNCE SEAT-SHARING  
IN JHARKHAND NEXT WEEK

With the mission to protect and sustain the Jharkhandi pride and its identity, the constituents of INDIA bloc have finalised the seat sharing and the draft proposal has been forwarded to the national coordination committee for its approval. The INDIA bloc is simply waiting for the election commission to release the Lok Sabha polls notification after which it would make public its list of the candidates. What has been most significant achievement for the INDIA bloc is, the seat sharing was formalised with wider consensus among alliance partners in Jharkhand.

## Iraqi PM reopens strategic plants in Basra

**Baghdad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani reopened three key plants in Basra, southern Iraq, following years of closure since the US-led invasion. In a statement on Monday, al-Sudani's office announced the reopening of a rolling mill plant, part of the State Company for Iron and Steel, which has been dormant since 2003. The plant boasts an annual production capacity of 500,000 tons, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Operating this factory will enable Iraq to reduce the import of iron, preserve foreign currency, and provide a national product and new job opportunities," the statement quoted

al-Sudani as saying.

Additionally, al-Sudani's media office said in a separate statement the reopening of a urea fertiliser plant with a daily production capacity of 1,000 tons and a DAP fertiliser plant with an annual capacity of 500,000 tons, both part of the Southern State Company for Fertilisers. These plants, closed for years, were reopened following contracts with two foreign companies. Emphasising Basra's pivotal role, al-Sudani added that the province has evolved beyond being just Iraq's port and oil hub to becoming a key industrial centre, rightfully earning the title of Iraq's economic capital, the statement said. The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 led to the closure of many Iraqi factories due to chaos,



tensions, and an unstable security situation. However, in recent years, the government has started to reopen some of these factories to

lessen the economy's dependence on crude oil exports, which make up more than 90 per cent of Iraq's revenues.



## 6 IS militants killed in Iraqi airstrikes

**Baghdad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Six Islamic State (IS) militants were killed in airstrikes in a desert area between the provinces of Salahudin and Nineveh, the Iraqi military said.

Iraqi warplanes carried out four airstrikes on six IS militants hiding inside a tunnel in the Tharthar desert based on intelligence reports, according to a statement on Monday from the Security Media Cell, a media outlet affiliated with the Iraqi Joint Operations Command.

Tahsin al-Khafaji, spokesman for the Iraqi Joint Operations Command, told Xinhua news

agency that the airstrikes killed all the militants inside the tunnel, without revealing the exact date of the airstrikes. He said that the destroyed tunnel was an important hideout for the militants, as its strategic location allowed terrorists to carry out attacks in the provinces of Salahudin, Nineveh and Anbar, Xinhua news agency reported. The security situation in Iraq has improved since the defeat of the IS in 2017. However, IS remnants have sneaked into urban centres, deserts and rugged areas, carrying out frequent guerilla attacks against security forces and civilians.



## India, Bangladesh border officials agree to settle issues 'amicably'

**Dhaka, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Curbing trans-border crimes, human trafficking, and enhanced joint-patrolling were some of the issues discussed at the 54th India-Bangladesh Director General-level border coordination conference from March 5-9 in Dhaka. While the Indian delegation was led by Nitin Agrawal, Director General of Border Security Force (BSF), the Bangladesh side was headed by Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman from Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). "Both sides appreciated each other's concerns and committed to settle border issues amicably through continued, constructive, and positive engagements at all

levels," a statement from the BSF said on Monday. They also agreed to implement the decisions of the conference at the ground level "in true spirit" during the talks that are held twice every year -- once in India and once in Bangladesh. On the incidents of assaults/attacks on the BSF personnel by Bangladesh-based trans-border miscreants, both sides agreed to increase coordinated patrols, especially during late night hours to early morning in vulnerable areas, and educate people living on either side of the international border. Reiterating the need for "synergistic efforts" to uphold human rights and curb violence on the

border, both sides agreed to enhance joint patrolling and vigilance, intensifying public awareness programmes and undertaking appropriate socio-economic development initiatives. They also agreed on sharing real-time information to ensure that incidents of deaths at the border will be brought down to zero with active cooperation from both sides. Highlighting the importance of the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) in curbing trans-border crimes, human trafficking, and illegal crossing, both sides agreed to pursue and share real-time information and investigation reports of traffickers (if any).

## Seven killed in road accident in Afghanistan



**Kabul, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Seven people have been killed and three others sustained injury after a vehicle overturned in Afghanistan's Nimroz province, provincial traffic police official Abidullah Mirwais said on Monday. The road accident occurred on Friday night on a road linking Dilaram district with the provincial capital Zaranj city, killing four men, two women and a child on the spot while injuring three others including a child, the official said, Xinhua news agency reported.

Details are awaited. This is the second deadly road accident reported in the past four days in Afghanistan. On Wednesday, six people were killed and 32 others injured when a passenger bus turned turtle in the eastern Ghazni province. Reckless driving, congested roads, lack of safety measures during travel and dilapidated highways are among the major factors claiming traveller's life in Afghanistan, according to Afghan officials. The latest data from national traffic authorities showed more than 1,600 people were killed with more than 4,000 others injured in road accidents in the Central Asian country over the past 10 months.



## Asif Ali Zardari elected Pakistan President for second time

**Islamabad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the 14th president of Pakistan on Monday, defeating the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed Sunni Ittehad Council candidate Mahmood Khan Achakzai. Asif Ali Zardari secured 411 votes while Mahmood Khan Achakzai bagged only 181, Geo News reported. Asif Ali Zardari, 68, is the husband of slain Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto and father of former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Asif Ali Zardari, who served as President from 2008 to

2013, was supported by the coalition government led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The new president would replace Arif Alvi, whose five-year term ended last year. However, Arif Alvi continued since the new electoral college was not yet formed. Earlier in the day, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said Asif Ali Zardari, who is a presidential candidate, will once again become president. In a post on X, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said, "Sardar bana that Zardari, phir sadar banega Zardari. Dam mast Qalandar Zardari."

## 13 killed in Israeli airstrike on house in Gaza

**Gaza, Mar 11 (IANS) :** At least 13 Palestinians, including children, were killed in an Israeli airstrike targeting a house in the Nusseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, Palestinian medical sources and eyewitnesses said. Eyewitnesses told Xinhua news agency on Monday that Israeli aircraft targeted a house with two missiles, destroying the house and causing damage to neighbouring homes. The Israeli airstrike killed 13 people, including children, and

several others were injured to varying degrees and were all transported to hospitals, medical sources said as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates accused Israel of "involving the entire population of Gaza in a whirlwind of imminent death". It also criticised that Israel consistently ignores all international decisions and requests regarding the protection and basic needs of civilians.



## Death toll in floods, landslides in Indonesia rises to 10

**Jakarta, Mar 11 (IANS) :** The death toll in floods and landslides in Indonesia's West Sumatra province has risen to 10, local management agency said on Monday. Ten people are missing in the flash floods and landslides, Xinhua news agency reported.

Pesisir Selatan disaster mitigation agency chief Doni Gusrizal said in a statement that rescuers were still searching for other missing people and evacuating those affected by the floods and landslides amid torrential rains. "The rain was still pouring until this morning. Several access

points were still cut off, making it difficult to get through. Then, we use boats to help those isolated villagers," he said. According to Gusrizal, more than 45,000 people fled to temporary shelters provided by the agency in each sub-district in the regency.



## Hamas demands ceasefire, Israeli withdrawal as prerequisites for prisoner exchange deal

**Gaza, Mar 11 (IANS) :** The Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, said in a statement that a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza are essential conditions for any prisoner exchange agreement.

The Brigades' spokesperson, Abu Ubaydah, emphasised in the statement on Monday that there would be no compromise on these demands, Xinhua news agency reported.





## Sukhbir Singh Badal calls for 'complete Panthic politics'

**Badal (Punjab), Mar 11 (IANS)** : Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Singh Badal, on Monday, gave a clarion call for "complete Panthic and Punjabi unity to secure social, economic and political justice for the state, and to take Punjab to the next era of development, progress and prosperity." Addressing a gathering on the first death anniversary of the five-time Chief Minister and Akali stalwart Parkash Singh Badal, the Akali chief also underlined the need for renewed dedication to ideals of peace and communal harmony under a people-friendly government in Punjab. "It is impossible to become Badal Sahab but I assure you I am ready to sacrifice everything for the 'quom' (community) and Punjab like him." Speaking about the late Chief

Minister, he said: "Badal Sahab was a nationalist, true democrat and secular in his approach. He respected all religions and took everyone along before making a decision. He never acted vengefully against anyone, which earned him the respect of his political opponents as well." He also highlighted how Badal always remained among people and even after retiring from active politics, he took up social work. Paying tributes to the former Chief Minister, Punjab Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Sunil Jakhar said: "Badal Sahab's humility was unparalleled." Terming the Akali patriarch as a Vikas Purush, Jakhar said the Akali patriarch was a true statesman who allied with the BJP after more than a decade of strife to usher in peace and communal harmony in the state. "I salute this

spirit." Jakhar also related how the former Chief Minister had always stood for more powers to the state and federalism. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami said: "Today, all political parties feel that strengthening the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) is the need of the hour. I appeal to everyone to come on one platform to strengthen SAD." He also called for the need to thwart designs to weaken SAD and the SGPC. In a function which witnessed a rare political consensus around the contribution and persona of Parkash Singh Badal, INLD patriarch Om Parkash Chautala said: "Badal Sahab spent more than a decade in jail for the welfare of Punjabis.

## BJP MP from Haryana Brijendra Singh joins Congress

**Chandigarh, Mar 11 (IANS)** : Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Haryana's Hisar constituency, Brijendra Singh, on Monday resigned from the primary membership of the party and joined the Congress. Brijendra Singh is the son of BJP leader and former Union Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh. He took voluntary retirement as an Indian Administrative Service officer after serving for 21 years and made his electoral debut in 2019. A few minutes after his announcement on 'X', Brijendra Singh reached the residence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi to join the grand old party. Brijendra Singh quit the BJP nearly five months after his father Birender Singh gave an ultimatum to the party at a rally in Jind in October 2023. Birender Singh had then said that he would leave the BJP if it continued an alliance with the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) of Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala in Haryana.



## Outsiders, BJP discards in Trinamool Congress' LS polls list: Amit Malviya

**Kolkata, Mar 11 (IANS)** : Soon after Trinamool Congress General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee announced party candidates for 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal, BJP said that the list is loaded with "outsiders" many of whom are "BJP discards". BJP's Information Technology Cell Chief and party's Central Observer for West Bengal Amit Malviya ridiculed certain names which featured in the list in his X post. Malviya targeted Shatrughan Sinha (Asansol), Kirti Azad (Bardhaman-Durgapur), Yusuf Pathan (Baharampur), Krishna Kalyani (Raiganj), Mukut Mani Adhikari (Ranaghat), Sujata Mondal (Bishnupur), Biswajit Das (Bangaon) and Biplob Mitra (Balurghat)? "TMC doesn't have enough candidates of its own? Shatrughan Sinha, Kirti Azad and Yusuf Pathan are Bohiragotos (outsid-

ers). TMC didn't find enough sons of the soil for the election" Malviya said in the post. Sujata Mondal, who is the Trinamool Congress candidate from Bishnupur Lok Sabha constituency is the estranged wife of the sitting BJP Lok Sabha member Saumitra Khan from the same constituency. The remaining four named by Malviya in his post are turncoat MLAs and leaders. Malviya has also criticised Trinamool for re-nominating the sitting party MP from Murshidabad constituency, Abu Taher Khan. "Abu Taher Khan, whose SUV dragged and killed a 6-year-old child, has been fielded from Murshidabad. Did TMC have any less criminals that Mamata Banerjee needed Taher on the list? And of course, Mahua Moitra, who was expelled from the Parliament for several violations and emerged as a face of impropriety," Malviya wrote.



## Yogi govt to gift free gas cylinders before Holi

**Lucknow, Mar 11 (IANS)** : The Yogi Adityanath government will provide a free LPG cylinder to underprivileged women and their families as a 'Holi gift', said a government spokesperson here. "The government decided to provide two cylinders for free in a year under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. As part of this initiative, the first cylinder was made available during Diwali, and now the second cylinder will be provided

during Holi," he said on Monday. The state government has allocated a budget of Rs 2,312 crore for the financial year 2023-24 to provide two free cylinder refills to approximately 1.75 crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in the state. In the first phase of the scheme, cylinder refills were distributed to a total of 80.30 lakh beneficiaries from November 1, 2023, to February 15, 2024.

## Gujarat govt announces go pc subsidy on cochlear implants

**Gandhinagar, Mar 11 (IANS)** : Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Monday introduced financial assistance for families seeking cochlear implant processors for their children. Under the new initiative, the financial burden on families will be reduced, making it easier for them to access essential healthcare services. Previously, children who received a cochlear implant through government assistance were expected to cover 50 per cent of the cost of a second implant processor. However, to support these families further, the Gujarat government has announced that they only need to contribute 10 per cent towards the second processor.



## NDA will soon finalise seat sharing in Bihar: Upendra Kushwaha

**Patna Mar 11 (IANS)** : Rashtriya Lok Morcha (RLM) Chief Upendra Kushwaha on Monday said that NDA will soon finalise the seat-sharing arrangement in Bihar for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. When asked about the delay in seat sharing in NDA, Upendra Kushwaha said: "There is still time for Lok

Sabha elections. Seats will be finalised keeping in mind the political landscape of the state." While reacting to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who said during the Paliganj rally, that the mafias would be hung upside down during the NDA rule in Bihar, Kushwaha said that there are many places in Bihar where mafias are in the dominating position.

"Wherever mafias are strong and penalising poor people, it is the responsibility of the government to arrest them. Strong action is needed to deal with such people," he said. Kushwaha said that RJD is a party of familism. "During the Gandhi Maidan rally, Lalu Prasad came with his entire family. Similar is the situation within the Congress," he said.

## AIADMK urges TN Gov to order inquiry in Jaffer Sadiq drug racket case

**Chennai, Mar 11 (IANS)** : AIADMK on Monday urged Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi to order an independent inquiry into the political links of the alleged drug racket kingpin Jaffer Sadiq. AIADMK General Secretary and Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPK) who met the Governor said: "We have been informing the Governor about the drug trafficking in the state and how the drug abuse has led to serious deterioration of law and or-

der situation." "Given the fact that there is a possibility that DMK, the Chief Minister and his family could be a direct beneficiary of the finances of this suspected drug cartel, it is necessary that an independent inquiry must be conducted," he said. He said that the Governor must order an independent probe into the role of the accused Sadiq in DMK and the family businesses of the Chief Minister and his son and Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Udhayanidhi Stalin. He said it is likely that Jaffer Sadiq



used his association with the DMK, its leaders and the family of the Chief Minister to administer an international drug cartel out of Chennai. He said that the accused Jaffer Sadiq was also named a criminal in a 2019 case for traffick-

ing drugs into Malaysia. EPS said that the people were expecting the resignation of Chief Minister Stalin and his son Udhayanidhi Stalin over the connection they had with the alleged drug kingpin.

## You all will become witnesses to 'Vikas ki Kranti': Piyush Goyal at Viksit Bharat Ambassadors artist workshop

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS)** : Union Minister for Commerce and Industry and Textiles, Piyush Goyal attended the Viksit Bharat Ambassadors Artist Workshop in the national capital on Monday, and hailed the pioneering and innovative artworks done by the artists to promote the idea of a developed India by 2047. He lauded the artists for their priceless and invaluable contribution in furthering the dream of Viksit Bharat 2047 and said all of them will witness the revolutionary growth and India's journey from here to a developed

nation. Piyush Goyal credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for galvanising the countrymen, and making the entire 140 crore population, a participant in the India growth story. He said that India is making its presence worldwide and this will only get emboldened in years to come. "I thank the Prime Minister for envisaging the Viksit Bharat 2047 dream and also turning it into a mass movement. It's because of his foresightedness and vision that the country is taking rapid strides. The day is not far when all the citizens will have access to all amenities.



## Statiq deploys its 1st EV charging facility in Ayodhya for green mobility

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** As people in Ayodhya begin to embrace electric vehicles (EVs), charging infrastructure provider Statiq on Monday inaugurated its maiden EV charging station in the holy city. Located at Laxman Kunj smart vehicle multi-storey parking, the station has been installed by Statiq with fleet partner MyEVPlus. The charging station is equipped with one 60 kW DC charger (dual gun) and four 9.9 kW AC chargers, each featuring three

sockets of 3.3 kW. The infrastructure allows simultaneous charging for up to 14 electric vehicles, the company said in a statement. "This installation not only supports tourism but also improves accessibility for devotees visiting Shri Ram Janmabhoomi," said Akshit Bansal, Founder and CEO of Statiq. The company has deployed over 7,000 charging stations across various cities, and has set a target of establishing 20,000 EV charging stations by this year. "While the charging station ad-

dresses the increasing need for EV infrastructure, at the same time, it also advances the broader objective of developing a sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation landscape," said Prashant Jain, Founder and CEO of MyEVPlus. In January this year, ride-hailing platform Uber flagged off its EV auto rickshaw service in Ayodhya, under its category Uber Auto, in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

## Sales of new Samsung Galaxy S24 rise 8 pc globally

**Seoul, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Samsung's new Galaxy S24 series smartphones enjoyed a robust start in the first three weeks of release, with their sales showing double-digit growth in key markets, industry data showed on Monday. Global sales of the Galaxy S24 between January 28 and February 17 expanded 8 per cent compared with the previous Galaxy S23 series during the same period last year, according to the data by market research firm Counterpoint Research.

In particular, Samsung saw sales of its latest smartphone model jump 22 per cent over its predecessor in its home market, reports Yonhap News Agency. In Western Europe, its sales vaulted 28 per cent driven by strong preorders in Britain, Germany and France.



## Elon Musk to open source Grok AI chatbot this week

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk on Monday said that his artificial intelligence (AI) startup xAI will open-source the AI chatbot Grok this week. "This week, @xAI will open-source Grok," Musk posted on X.

He also said that Sam Altman-run OpenAI is a lie while responding to a comment in the post. "OpenAI should do the same. If they are 'open' that is," a user commented.

To which, Musk said, "OpenAI is a lie". Recently, the tech billionaire sued the ChatGPT-maker and its CEO, alleging they breached their original contractual agreements around AI.

OpenAI then hit back at Musk's lawsuit, saying as the company discussed a for-profit structure in order to further the mission, "Musk wanted us to merge with Tesla or he wanted full control". Later, Musk said that he will drop the lawsuit if OpenAI changes its name to 'ClosedAI'. Last year, xAI extended Grok to India and 46 other countries, including Australia, Canada, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Singapore. The chatbot is currently available to subscribers of X Premium+, the top subscription tier of X. The microblogging platform has already rolled out access to its Grok AI (beta) to Premium+ subscribers in the US.

## Adani Green Energy operationalises 1,000 MW of 30,000 MW Gujarat renewable energy park

**Ahmedabad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) said on Monday that it has operationalised the cumulative capacity of 1,000 MW solar energy of the 30,000 MW renewable energy (RE) park at Khavda, Gujarat, the fastest such greenfield solar capacity addition in the country's renewable sector. With this, AGEL has achieved an operational capacity of 9,478 MW and continues its journey to the stated goal of 45,000 MW by 2030, the company said in a statement. AGEL delivered 1,000 MW in less than 12 months of com-

mencing work at the Khavda RE park, which is the world's largest. This involved installing approximately 2.4 million solar modules. "The accelerated progress underscores AGEL's commitment to India's goal of achieving 500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030," the company said. The world's largest renewable energy (RE) plant of 30,000 MW spans a staggering 538 sq km of barren land, which is five times the size of Paris. The project is expected to be completed in the next five years and will create over 15,200 green jobs, the company said. Several innovative solutions are

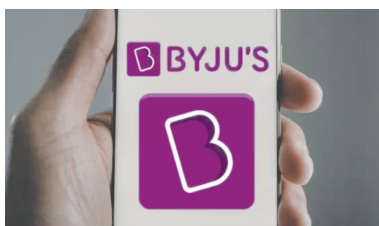
being deployed at Khavda to integrate sustainable practices. AGEL has committed to deploying waterless cleaning robots for the entire solar capacity to address dust accumulation on panels to increase energy output and help conserve water in the arid Kutch region. "This will enable AGEL's water neutrality goals aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6," said the company. Over the last five years, Adani Green conducted geotechnical investigations, seismic studies, a centrifuge study by Cambridge, resource assessment and land



studies, Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), Environmental and Social Due Diligence (ESDD), and a detailed feasibility study, among several oth-

ers, before embarking on the development of the site. Meanwhile, Adani Group Founder and Chairman Gautam Adani has said that he will invest an estimated \$100

billion into India's green energy transition over the next 10 years, with plans to scale up to 10 GW solar manufacturing capacity by 2027.



## Byju's tells employees to WFH as it gives up office spaces amid cash crunch

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Embattled edtech company Byju's has apparently mandated all its employees to work from home as it gives up office spaces across the country amid several cash crunch, barring those working at its 300-odd offline tuition centres. The company, which managed to disburse a portion of the pending salaries for over 20,000 employees for the month of February, has given up office spaces as the leases expired, keeping only its Bengaluru-based headquarters, people close to the development told IANS on Monday. The move to give up offices is part of Byju's India CEO Arjun Mohan's restructuring exercise to save cash as proceeds from the rights issue (around \$250-\$300 million).



## Samsung to launch AI-powered washer-dryer combo globally in Q2

**Seoul, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Samsung Electronics on Monday said that it will launch its latest Bespoke Artificial Intelligence (AI) Combo washer-dryer globally within the second quarter (Q2) of this year. The Bespoke AI Combo, which combines a 25 kg washing capacity with a 15 kg heat-pump drying capability, debuted in South Korea late last month, reports Yonhap News Agency. Within just two weeks, it garnered significant popularity, with over 3,000 units sold in the country.

"We've already initiated shipments to the United States, and the official launch is scheduled for this month," Vice President Moo-hyung Lee of Samsung Electronics' home appliance division said in a Press conference. "The global launch is slated for the second quarter," he added. He said the new laundry appliance is targeting the South Korean and US markets, acknowledging the different consumer preferences in Europe, where smaller home appliances are favoured due to space constraints.



## Small-cap stocks face selling pressure as broader markets underperform

**New Delhi, March 11 (IANS) :** Small-cap stocks are under as the index fell more than 1 per cent on Monday amid concerns over valuations.

BSE Small Cap Index is down 1.2 per cent while the benchmark Sensex is down only 0.34 per cent, down by 255 points. Among the constituents, JTL Industries is down 15 per cent, BCL Industries is down 12 per cent, Sigachi Industries is down 12 per cent, Tata Chemicals is down 9 per cent, Neuland Labs is down 9 per cent, JM Financial is down 8 per cent, Arvind Ltd. is down 7 per cent, IIFL Finance is down 5 per cent.

## Global selloff impacts domestic market sentiments

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Continued selloff in global markets due to uncertainty over rate cuts impacted the domestic market sentiment, which is currently at an overbought level, Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said on Monday. While the Nifty 50 closed at 22,332.65 on Monday, down 160.90 points or 0.72 per cent, the Sensex ended at 73,502.64, down 616.75 points or 0.83 per cent. The stronger-than-expected US nonfarm payroll data and caution ahead of the release of US inflation data on Tuesday kept the investors on edge, Nair said. The broader market continued its underperformance due to

valuation concerns, while investors are rebalancing their portfolios to include safe-haven assets such as gold, he added. Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst at LKP Securities, said the Nifty has been fluctuating within an ascending channel, displaying a pattern of higher highs and higher lows. The overall trend continues to be bullish, although an intermediate corrective phase is currently in progress. In the short term, Nifty could experience weakness, possibly leading to a decline towards the range of 22,200-22,250. Looking at the upside, immediate resistance is identified at 22,400 based on closing prices.



## Yusuf Pathan, Kirti Azad and multiple cine-personalities add glamour to Trinamool's LS list

**Kolkata, Mar 11 (IANS) :** As Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee announced the name of former cricketer Yusuf Pathan as party's candidate from Baharampur constituency of West Bengal for Lok Sabha elections, there was a pin-drop silence for a moment at the mega rally at Brigade Parade Ground in Central Kolkata on Monday. The very next moment, the entire ground heard the roar of accolades, probably after the audience got over the initial surprise as the Pathan's name

was never any sort of discussion or speculation during the last few days as a probable party candidate. State Congress President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is the five-time sitting Lok Sabha member from that constituency. Few minutes later, there was another round of silence followed by accolades as Abhishek Banerjee announced the name of another former cricketer Kirti Azad as the party candidate from Bardhaman-Durgapur constituency in West Burdwan district. BJP's Surinder Singh Ahluwalia is the sitting MP from that constituency. In other major surprise, actor

Nusrat Jahan, the sitting MP from the Basirhat seat, has been dropped from the list. Party MLA Haji Nurul Islam has been fielded from the constituency. As expected, popular actor of yesteryears, Shatrughan Sinha, who is the sitting TMC Lok Sabha member from Asansol constituency also in West Burdwan district, got re-nominated this time as well. Another surprise in the list was fielding of Bengali cine-star and anchor of the popular reality show "Didi Number 1" Rachana Banerjee for Hooghly Lok Sabha constituency in Hooghly district. The sitting BJP Lok Sabha mem-

ber from that constituency is another actress-turned-politician Locket Chatterjee. Actress Saaayoni Ghosh, who is the currently the state president of the youth wing of Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, will be contesting from the Jadavpur constituency after actor and the sitting MP from that constituency Mimi Chakraborty announced that she wanted to quit politics. Another actress-turned politician June Malia, who is already a Trinamool Congress legislator, will be contesting from Medinipur constituency in West Midnapore district. BJP's former national



vice-president and former state president in West Bengal, Dilip Ghosh, is sitting Lok Sabha MP of the seat. Actor Prasun Banerjee, who is already the sitting Lok Sabha member from Howrah constituency in Kolkata adjacent

Howrah district, has also been re-nominated. Mahua Moitra, who was expelled from the Lok Sabha in a bribe-for-question scam, has been renominated from the Krishnanagar Lok Sabha constituency.



## North India's 1st govt homoeopathic college to come up in J&K's Kathua : Union Minister

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** North India's first government homoeopathic college, centrally funded and costing Rs 80 crore, will come up in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said on Monday. He said the institution will be spread over more than 8 acres, and the adjoining three acres may also be added to the existing premises in the future. "The proposed structure will include a hospital complex, a college, an administrative block, and one hostel each for male and female students," the Union Minister said after visiting the proposed site in Jasrota in Kathua, a government release said. He also said that the institution

will not only be a great boon for aspirants of homoeopathy degree in north India, which was not available earlier but also provide cost-effective treatment to needy patients. "It will also be in keeping with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's healthcare approach, which involves synergising allopathic with Ayush streams of medicine, including homoeopathy, ayurveda, and naturopathy," the Minister added. According to the Minister, the government homoeopathic college will make Kathua an integrated and cost-effective healthcare centre of north India in times to come. It will emerge as a state-of-the-art centre of medical facilities.

## OPS faction in TN to interview potential candidates for LS elections

**Chennai, Mar 11 (IANS) :** OPS includes MLAs R. AIADMK deposed leader and former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, O. Panneerselvam (OPS) will on Monday conduct interviews of potential candidates from his faction for Lok Sabha seats. OPS group AIADMK Workers Rights Retrieval Committee will enter into seat-sharing with potential partners soon and before that the former Chief Minister is planning to prepare the list of potential candidates. This is to ensure that his group gets maximum seats during the discussions. The committee constituted by

OPS includes MLAs R. Vaithalingam and Manoj Pandian, former MLA JCD Prabhakar, and former MPR. Dharmar. The committee also has V. Pughazendhi and Alagu Marudharaj, both are the spokespersons of the OPS group. P. Ravindranath, son of OPS, had won the 2019 Lok Sabha election from the Theni seat. This was the only seat lost by the DMK-led alliance in 2019 Lok Sabha polls out of the 39 seats. OPS, who belongs to the powerful Thevar community of south Tamil Nadu, is banking on the community's support for a political re-entry. The former Chief



Minister, according to those close to him, will be entering into a political alliance with the BJP. The alliance between OPS and BJP would lead to the front get-

ting an advantage in the Kanniyakumari Lok Sabha seat. The BJP's former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan had won the polls in 2014.



## Sand mining case: Lalu Prasad's close aide Subhash Yadav arrested

**Patna, Mar 11 (IANS) :** RJD leader Subhash Yadav, a close confidant of former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate from his residence in Patna in connection with the sand mining case. The leader was arrested late Sunday night after separate teams of ED conducted raids at his several places in Patna and Ranchi and seized more than Rs 2 crore cash and various documents from his residence in Danapur, Maa Marachia Devi apartment in and his biscuit factory located at Nasriganj locality. The ED officials are currently interrogating him to find out sources of the seized money.



## Manipur to deport 77 Myanmar nationals

**Imphal, Mar 11 (IANS) :** The Manipur government will deport 77 Myanmar nationals, including 55 women and five children, by Monday, officials said here. The Myanmar nationals fled to Manipur after the Military junta seized power in that country on February 1, 2021. A senior official said here on Sunday that the first batch of seven Myanmar nationals was deported on March 8 through

the Moreh border town in Manipur's Tengenoupal district. The state home department had sought the Assam Rifles support for necessary assistance to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Tengenoupal district in the deportation process. Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh earlier said that although India is not signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, it has given shelter and aid to those fleeing the cri-

sis in Myanmar on humanitarian grounds with a systematic approach. Since the Military took over in Myanmar three years ago and the armed clashes have been going on between the Army and the pro-democracy civilian armed forces, over 5,000 Myanmar nationals, including women and children, have taken shelter in Manipur while over 32,000 people have taken shelter in Mizoram.

## Country's progress visible under PM Modi's leadership: Jyotiraditya Scindia

**Bhopal, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday said that a great leader is one who always thinks about the progress of the country and under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is witnessing tremendous growth which is visible. "It is the first time in the last 75 years that 15 new airport terminals, including three airports, are being inaugurated at

one time. It is a historic day for the country's civil aviation department," Scindia said while addressing the gathering of BJP leaders during the inaugural ceremony of a new terminal at Gwalior airport. PM Modi on Sunday inaugurated and laid the foundation of as many as 15 airports in different parts of the country, including two in Madhya Pradesh - Gwalior and Jabalpur.



## Seven TN fishermen arrested by Sri Lankan Navy

**Chennai, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Seven Tamil Nadu fishermen from Pudukkottai district were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy in the early hours of Monday. According to information available, they were arrested at Neduntheevu 'for trespassing into Sri Lankan waters after crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).

The fishermen had set sail on two mechanised boats bearing the registration numbers IND TN08 MM 0054 and IND TN18 MM 1862 from the Jegathapattinam fishing harbour on Monday morning. Tamil Nadu coastal police authorities told IANS that the fishermen along with their mechanised boats were taken to the Kankesanthurai Naval base. The arrested fishermen are identified as S. Kaliappan



(53), P. Akilan (18), P. Kodi Mari (65), S. Sheikh Abdullah (35), K. Thangaraj (54), A. Jayaraman (40) and S. Saravanan (24). Tamil Nadu

fishermen welfare association general secretary M.R. Mariappan while speaking to IANS said, "There is no end in sight for our woes.





## Confusion over who fell in Delhi borewell, NDRF digs parallel

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Even as confusion prevailed over the age and identity of the person who has fallen into a 40-50 feet deep borewell in Delhi's Keshopur area, the rescue operations were on a war footing basis and the NDRF started digging a parallel hole on Monday.

Earlier, the Director of Delhi Fire Services Atul Garg has said that a child had fallen in the borewell, but Delhi Minister Atishi after her visit to the spot said that a person had fallen in the borewell and it appeared that there was an attempt to forcefully break and enter the area.

The borewell is located in the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) area in Keshopur Mandi.

“An incident of a person falling into a borewell has come to light in Keshopur. Upon reaching the scene, I assessed the situation. Rescue operations are underway by the NDRF and the Jal Board. The borewell was in a locked room. Initially, it appears that there was an attempt to forcefully break and enter. The police will investigate this matter,” she wrote on X.

“To ensure such incidents do not recur, the Jal Board has been sternly instructed to weld and seal all private and government borewells in Delhi within 48 hours, and a report must be submitted to me,” the tweet added.

Director of Delhi Fire Service Atul Garg said that initial message “was received at around 1 a.m. that a person had fallen in the water treatment plant following which teams along with five tenders were rushed to the spot which is DJB, Keshopur Mandi”.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Vichitra Veer said that after receiving a police control

room call at Vikaspuri police station, a police team rushed to the spot.

“Efforts are being made to take the person out. Identity or other details about the person, who has fallen, are not available as of now,” the DCP added.

Atul Garg had earlier said that a child had fallen in a 40 to 50 feet deep borewell pipe (diameter 1.5 feet).

For over eight hours, the rescue team attempted various strategies to extract the person from the borewell without success. This morning, an NDRF team arrived and, following careful consideration, devised a plan to rescue the person by excavating a new borewell adjacent to the existing one.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, “In Keshopur area, where the incident of a person falling into a borewell has come to light, rescue work is going on by NDRF and Delhi Jal Board.



## European Commission launches Gaza aid project

**Nicosia, Mar 11 (IANS) :** European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has announced the immediate launch of a project to establish a maritime aid corridor from Cyprus to Gaza.

“We are now very close to opening this corridor, hopefully and I'm very glad to see an initial pilot will be launched today,” she told journalists on Monday after visiting Cyprus's Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in the port city of Larnaca, Xinhua news agency reported. “We are launching this Cyprus maritime corridor together: the EU, the UAE

and the US,” she added. In a joint statement endorsed by the European Commission, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Cyprus, the UAE, the UK, and the US, the European Commission said: “Together, our nations intend to build on this model to deliver significant additional aid by sea, working in coordination with UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza Sigrud Kaag -- who is charged with facilitating, coordinating, monitoring and verifying the flow of aid into Gaza under UN Security Council Resolution 2720.”

## Cancer screenings at all health centres in UP soon

**Lucknow, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Cancer screening will now be available at all health and wellness centres across Uttar Pradesh.

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said on Monday that cancer screening will soon be offered at all health centres. He said timely screening, examination, and treatment can significantly help in dealing with the disease.

Three types of cancer screening will be conducted at these health and wellness centres. This includes breast cancer, oral cancer, and cervical cancer.

Doctors will conduct screenings based on symptoms. Pa-



tients with suspected cancer will be referred to specialized centres. Pathak said people experiencing symptoms such as mouth sores, white patches, or wounds should seek advice from a doctor. Screening for cervical cancer can be done

in cases of excessive bleeding. He emphasized that 40-50 per cent of cancers are caused by tobacco and cigarette consumption. Quitting tobacco can significantly reduce cancer risk.

## Liquor trader shot dead in Haryana's Sonipat

**Chandigarh, Mar 11 (IANS) :** A liquor trader was shot dead in a car on the National Highway 44 in Murthal in Haryana's Sonipat district on Monday morning, police said. The assailants pumped at least 30 bullets into his body from close range near Gulshan dhaba.

The victim has been identified as Sunder Malik of Saragthal village in Gohana. He was currently living in Sonipat.

More details were awaited. On February 25 INLD's Haryana chief Nafe Singh Rath and party worker Jai Kishan were killed after multiple rounds were fired on their vehicle in Bahadurgarh in the state's Jhajjar district.



## Dharmendra Pradhan bats for access to education in mother tongue

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday said that access to education should be in the mother tongue which would help the students grow from early

childhood. The minister, while launching the 52 Primers initiative, said that it will be an inspirational journey for young minds, paving the way for deeper understanding, lifelong learning, more familiarity.

## Not even given a chance to speak in Delhi assembly: BJP MLA

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA from Rohini, Vijender Gupta, on Monday accused the Delhi government of not giving a chance to the opposition to raise even a single question throughout the ongoing budget session. Hitting hard at AAP-led Delhi Government, Gupta said that the government is afraid of questions over the corruption, committed by Arvind Kejriwal. “Opposition members have been kept out of the assembly for almost 20 days now. Orders are brought from the court and then Article 280 is used to silence opposition leaders. Opposition is not even given a chance to speak in the assembly,” Gupta claimed. He said that during the ongoing budget discussions, not a single opposition member was allowed to participate. He said it's unheard of that a budget of 80 thousand crores is being presented, and opposition members are not even allowed the right to speak.



## ‘Maitri Setu’ between Tripura and B'desh to be operational soon: Tripura CM

**Agartala, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said on Monday that the India-Bangladesh ‘Maitri Setu’ (friendship bridge) connecting the border town of Sabroom in Tripura with Ramgarh in Bangladesh will be operational soon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated and laid the foundation for multiple development projects worth more than Rs 8,500 crore in Tripura, including the vital Land Port (integrated check-post) at Sabroom, virtually from Arunachal capital Itanagar. The Land Port, which has been constructed at a cost of about Rs 250 crore, would facilitate trade, tourism, and movement of people between India and Bangladesh using the Maitri Setu. Saha, who attended the vir-

tual event with his Cabinet colleagues, said: “We are eagerly waiting for the ‘Maitri Setu’ to become operational. It will turn Tripura into the gateway of Southeast Asia.” After the integrated check-posts in Akhura (West Tripura), and Srimantapur (Sepahijala district), the Land Port in Sabroom is the largest in Tripura, the Chief Minister said, adding that the people from the northeast and other states can easily access the Chittagong international sea port through the Sabroom ICP and the Maitri Setu. Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation for the Sabroom Land Port in March 2021, when he and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the ‘Maitri Setu’, which has reduced the distance between Sabroom and the Chittagong port to just 75 km.



## India to be 3rd biggest economy in Modi govt 3.0: Fadnavis shares roadmap for Viksit Bharat 2047

**Pune, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday shared a broad roadmap for Centre's Viksit Bharat 2047 ambition and stated that the nation is set to become world's third largest economy, sooner than later. “India has already become fifth largest economy in the world. In third term of Modi government, the country will grow further and become third largest economy,” Fadnavis said, addressing the Viksit Bharat Ambassadors program

in Pune. He said that country has been witnessing swift growth and transformational changes in all sectors ranging from farmers welfare to telecom penetration to technology upgradation and all this has laid a strong foundation for Viksit Bharat by 2047. “India has potential to become third largest economy of the world by 2027,” Fadnavis told the audience amid loud applause. Senior BJP leader pointed out that India has begun its journey and march towards the Mission 2047 and with its goals and objectives firmly in

place, the nation's growth trajectory has already left its contemporaries unnerved. Counting the achievements of Modi government, Fadnavis said: “In past 5 years, more than 25 crore have been lifted out of poverty line. Small and medium scale industries are mushrooming on back of business-friendly environment while the country is continuously rising the charts of growth and prosperity. All global bodies are today recognizing India's growing stature.”





## Haryana CM announces projects worth Rs 700 crore for Nuh

**Chandigarh, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, while announcing developmental projects of Rs 700 crore for Nuh district, on Monday said the comprehensive development would be undertaken in all three assembly constituencies of the region. He reassured that there would be no discrimination with this area, unlike in previous governments. The Chief Minister was addressing the state-level function organised in honour of Shaheed

Raja Hasan Khan Mewati in Nuh. The Chief Minister said that previous governments had exploited the people of Mewat solely as a vote bank, neglecting their welfare and failing to foster prosperity in the region. "Since assuming power in 2014, the government has adhered to the fundamental principle of 'Haryana Ek-Haryanvi Ek', ensuring equitable development across the entire state," he said. The Chief Minister said regardless of any political advantage in

Mewat, he has pursued the same level of development initiatives in the region as he has in his assembly constituency of Karnal. He highlighted that till date any Chief Minister would have hardly made only five-visits to Mewat during his tenure. However, he has already visited the region 11 times in just nine years, demonstrating his commitment to addressing the needs of the area.

## Shahnawaz Hussain left out as BJP names 3 candidates for Bihar MLC polls

**Patna, Mar 11 (IANS) :** The BJP on Monday announced three candidates for the MLC elections in Bihar, with the name of senior BJP leader and former Union minister Shahnawaz Hussain being the notable omission. The party has announced the names of former Health Minister Mangal Pandey, Anamika Singh, and Lal Mohan Gupta as candidates for the MLC elections. One seat has already been given to Santosh Kumar Suman, the National President of the Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAM-S), under BJP quota.

The BJP has not considered the names of Shahnawaz Hussain and Sanjay Paswan, both current MLCs whose tenure will end along with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar (JD-U), Rabri Devi (RJD), Sanjay Kumar Jha (JD-U), Prem Chandra Mishra (Congress), Santosh Kumar Suman (HAM-S), Mangal Pandey (BJP), Ramchandra Purve (RJD), Khalid Anwar (JD-U), and Rameshwar Mahto (JD-U), in the first week of May. Apart from Mangal Pandey, the BJP did not repeat any other leader for the MLC elections.



## Committed to fill 30 lakh Central govt jobs if voted to power: Goa Congress

**Panaji, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) President Amit Patkar on Monday said that his party is committed to fill 30 lakh permanent government jobs for youth across the country if they are voted back to power in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Patkar, while addressing a press conference, alleged that in the last two terms of the BJP government, they failed to create employment. He said that in the second leg of the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Rajasthan, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after reaching the

tribal-dominated Banswara region promised 30 lakh permanent government jobs for youth. "Our Party is committed to help the unemployed youths by filling the vacant posts in various departments of government, which BJP has failed. There are 10 lakh sanctioned posts that are vacant in Central ministries and departments," Patkar said. He said that once Congress comes in power, his party will give priority to fill vacant posts, launch one-year apprenticeships with a private or a public sector company, prevent paper leaks, create a Rs 5,000 crore corpus for start-ups, and

work for the welfare of gig workers. Patkar said that Congress has also guaranteed a new Right to Apprenticeship Act to provide a one-year apprenticeship with a private or a public sector company to every diploma holder or college graduate below the age of 25. "We will ensure that they get Rs 1 lakh a year, which could be around Rs 8,500 per month. With this every qualifying person will get placement," Patkar said. "Congress will create Rs 5,000 crore corpus, with allotments spread across all districts of the country for a period of five years.



## Two held in Rajasthan with 70 gm heroin

**Jaipur, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Two persons on Monday were arrested in Rajasthan's Pilibanga town, the police said, adding 70 gm of heroin was seized from their possession. The arrested individuals were identified as Jajwinder Singh and Baljindra Singh -- residents of Punjab's Bathinda district. Superintendent of Police, Vikas Sangwan, said that a special anti-drug abuse campaign is being conducted in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, under the 100-day action plan of the Rajasthan government. During checking, a police team detained Jajwinder Singh and Baljindra Singh, who were travelling in a Verna car bearing a Delhi-registration number plate. SP Sangwan said that a case has been registered under the NDPS Act and both the arrested individuals are being questioned in connection with the drug seizure.



## Election Commissioner Arun Goel steps down weeks before LS polls

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Weeks before the Lok Sabha elections, Election Commissioner Arun Goel, resigned from his post on Monday. According to the officials in the know of things, Goel's resignation has been accepted by President Droupadi Murmu. "In pursuance of Clause (1) of Section 11 of The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, the President is pleased to accept the resignation tendered by Shri Arun Goel, Election Commissioner, with effect from March 9, 2024," read a gazette notification issued on Saturday. According to sources, Goel could have become the next Chief Election Commissioner, as the incumbent CEC Rajiv Kumar is set to retire in February 2025.

## 'Jaichand' barbs return to Rajasthan ahead of LS polls

**Jaipur, Mar 11 (IANS) :** The name of Jaichand, a historical figure often referred to as a 'traitor', is now being used frequently by the senior politicians in Rajasthan, both in the backdrop of the Assembly elections held in November last year, and in the run-up to the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. Jaichand (1173-1193) was a ruler of the Kannauj kingdom in northern India. He is often called a traitor in Indian history because of his alleged role in the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan, the Rajput king of

Ajmer. Soon after the Assembly polls, BJP's former leader of the opposition Rajendra Rathore blamed the 'Jaichands' within the party as the reason for his defeat from Tara Nagar, where he had lost to sitting Congress MLA Narendra Budania. Rathore had shifted his seat from Churu to Tara Nagar ahead of the Assembly polls. Now, the BJP MP from Churu, Rahul Kaswan, has again referred to Jaichand after being denied a ticket from the seat, which will be contested by Paralympian Devendra Jhajharia this time. On Friday, Kaswan reached his

hometown for the first time after being denied a ticket, where he indirectly targeted Rajendra Rathore while addressing his supporters. Kaswan said, "Those who live among Jaichands, also talk about Jaichands. Can any single person decide who should live and who should die? We will decide our future ourselves." On being denied a ticket, Kaswan said, "I have been asking the same question for the past six days - what was my fault? But the people in the party are not taking my calls, and even if they do, they remain silent." The MP added: "Give me



two days. I will try to tell you whatever you want to hear," hinting at some announcement that he might make in the next few days. On the question of joining the Congress, Kaswan said: "I had already said that I will not contact anyone without talking to the people. I have spoken to the

people now. My next step will be based on this conversation. I have worked with passion in my constituency since 2010." Three months back, Rajendra Rathore had blamed the 'Jaichands' for his defeat in the Assembly elections.

## Resignation not accepted yet, Arunachal Cong chief to continue in his post

**Itanagar, Mar 11 (IANS) :** A day after resigning from the post of Arunachal Pradesh Congress President, former Chief Minister Nabam Tuki said on Monday that he would continue to discharge his responsibilities in that post as the party high command is yet to accept his resignation. "Hence, I thought I should resign from the post of state party President for the convenience of the other possible candidates," the 55-

year-old Congress leader told the media. He also dismissed media reports that he had quit the post "on moral grounds" after the recent defection of three party MLAs to the BJP. An Arunachal Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) leader claimed on Monday that Nabam Tuki has resigned on "moral grounds" as he failed to prevent the defection of three party MLAs to the ruling BJP. A

prominent figure in the state's political landscape, Nabam Tuki has been at the helm of the APCC for several years, overseeing the party's strategies and engagements.



## Elderly woman dies in stampede during political event in Nagpur

**Nagpur, Mar 11 (IANS) :** A 60-year-old woman was killed while at least five others were injured in a stampede during a political programme organised here on Monday, officials said. The incident took place after a huge crowd had gathered to collect household articles that were being distributed to the construction labourers at the S.B. Auditorium in the Reshimbagh area of the city. There was a rush of people to pick up the kits when one woman, identified as Manubai Tulsiram Rajput (60).

## Israel 'welcomes' maritime aid corridor from Cyprus to Gaza: Spokesperson

**Jerusalem, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Israel has said that it "welcomed" the inauguration of the maritime corridor from Cyprus to the Gaza Strip aimed at boosting the humanitarian aid to the embattled Palestinian enclave. "The Cypriot initiative will allow the increase of humanitarian aid to Gaza," Israeli Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lior Haiat said on Monday in a statement, without specifying the time frame for the arrival of the first shipment, Xinhua news agency reported. Haiat noted that Israel will control the entry of aid into Gaza by "conducting security checks in accordance with Israeli standards". During a visit to the Cypriot port of Larnaca, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday that it is hopeful that the maritime corridor for providing humanitarian aid to Gaza would open this Sunday, according to a press release by the Cypriot Interior Ministry. The EU Chief noted that an initial pilot operation will be launched on Monday for the maritime corridor initiated by Cyprus, the EU, the UAE, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Britain, and the US.



## Yemen's Houthis strike Singapore-flagged ship in Gulf of Aden

**Aden (Yemen), Mar 11 (IANS) :** Yemen's Houthi group has launched a missile attack on a commercial ship in the Gulf of Aden, continuing their escalation of tension in the region, said a pro-government Coast Guard official. The official, who requested anonymity, said on Monday that a Singapore-flagged cargo ship, PROPEL FORTUNE, was targeted by missile fire while sailing about 50 nautical miles off the coast of Aden, Xinhua news agency reported. He confirmed that at least two missiles detonated in the vicinity of the vessel, although there were no immediate reports of casualties among the crew. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations confirmed the incident, noting that it had

been alerted to two blasts near a vessel at around 15:00 GMT on Friday, nearly 50 nautical miles off the coast of Aden. So far, the Houthi group has not claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack follows a similar missile strike by the Houthis on Wednesday targeting the Barbados-flagged "TRUE CONFIDENCE" cargo ship, which the group claimed was American-owned.



## Yemen's Houthis claim fresh attacks against cargo vessel, US warships

**Sanaa, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Yemen's Houthi group has claimed responsibility for two attacks against a Singapore-flagged commercial vessel, which the group claimed was American-owned, and several US Navy warships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The attacks occurred on Friday, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said on Monday in a statement as quoted by Xinhua news agency report. Their "naval forces carried out two qualitative military operations. The first targeted the American ship Propel Fortune in the Gulf of Aden with a number of suitable naval missiles, while the second operation targeted a number of American warships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, using 37 drones," Sarea said in the statement aired by Houthi-run al-Masirah TV. "We will continue our operations in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden until Israel stops its aggression.



## Asif Ali Zardari's likely election as Pakistan President 'violation of constitution' : PTI

**Islamabad, Mar 11 (IANS) :** PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan on Monday said the likely election of PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari as the president of the country is a "violation of the Constitution", local media reported. Talking to mediapersons here, Gohar Ali Khan said that "assuming constitutional roles in an unconstitutional manner is a violation of the Constitution", Dawn reported. In a veiled attack on PPP and the PML-N, he said that earlier two families used to have control

over the country's resources and now, these two families are also taking control of the country's democratic institutions and positions." Earlier in the day, PTI member of National Assembly Amir Dogar said that Asif Ali Zardari is being "imposed on the country today" as presidential polls are underway. "Those who have stolen our mandate are corrupt. Their biggest king, Asif Ali Zardari, is being imposed on this country today," Amir Dogar posted on party's X handle.

For the office of President, Asif Ali Zardari, the joint candidate of PPP and the PML-N, and Sunni Ittehad Council's candidate Mahmood Khan Achakzai are in the fray. On Monday, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, who is also backed by jailed former PTI founder Imran Khan, had demanded the postponement of elections, saying that the electoral college was incomplete as some reserved seats in the National and provincial assemblies were vacant. Nixing Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) head Mahmood Khan Achakzai's plea.



## Seven missing after fishing boat capsizes in South Korea

**Seoul, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Seven people went missing after a fishing boat capsized off the southern coastal city of Tongyeong in South Korea on Monday, the Coast Guard said. Two South Koreans and seven Indonesians were aboard the 29-ton vessel when it overturned in waters 68 kilometers south of an island in Tongyeong, South Gyeongsang Province, at 6:29 a.m., according to officials, Yonhap news agency reported. Rescue operations are under way after a 29-ton fishing vessel capsized in waters off the southern coastal city of Tongyeong. Two crew members were later found unconscious inside the vessel, and have been sent to a hospital, they said.



## US records over 100 pediatric deaths from flu this season

**Los Angeles, Mar 11 (IANS) :** More than 100 flu-associated pediatric deaths have been reported in the US so far this season, according to data released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Seasonal influenza activity remains elevated nationally with increases in some parts of the country, Xinhua news agency reported.

## Gaza's situation unprecedented, indescribable: UNRWA

**Gaza, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, has said that the situation in the Gaza Strip defies description and has not been seen "in any previous crisis". "We are facing a tragedy that is not related to food," Lazzarini said on Monday in a press statement, noting that people in Gaza suffer from deliberate starvation operations that could have been avoided, Xinhua news agency reported. He warned that the Gaza Strip, inhabited by about

2.35 million people, is on the verge of entering into a famine, and "children there are dying due to hunger and thirst," stressing the need to open land crossings for aid trucks to enter Gaza. "Airdrops cannot replace land aid," he added. According to the Gaza-based Health Ministry, at least 20 people, mostly children, have died as a result of malnutrition and drought caused by the war. Meanwhile, Lazzarini said that the agency "has not yet received any evidence confirming Israel's allegations that UNRWA employees participated in the October 7 attack," noting that it would be wrong to dismantle the UNRWA



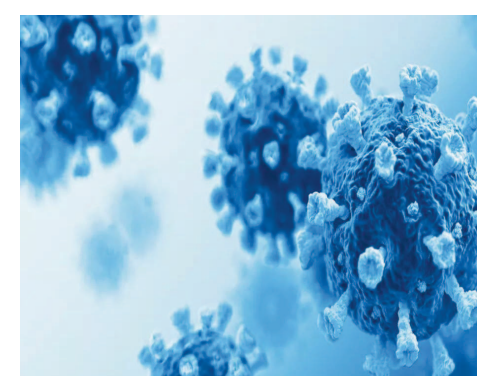
before reaching a permanent political solution. In January, the organisation was rocked by Israel's accusations that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in the October 7 attacks in southern Israel, carried out by Hamas. It led to several countries halting contributions of nearly \$440 million, representing nearly half of UNRWA's yearly funding. Lazzarini said late last month that the agency is facing repeated calls by Israel to dismantle UNRWA and freeze its funding by donors.

## Pact to monitor zoonotic diseases globally

**Nairobi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** More than half a billion people are estimated to have been infected during the Covid-19 pandemic, which also claimed millions of lives and significantly affecting the global economy. The possible origins of SARS-CoV-2 in wild animals have been debated among scientists, adding to a growing list of emerging diseases that are zoonoses, i.e., a result of a spillover of pathogens from wildlife to humans. This has led the global community of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to review the intricate relationship between international wildlife trade and zoonotic diseases, and to discuss the role of the Convention in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with CITES trade. In a significant stride towards international cooperation, the CITES Secretariat concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), focusing on critical areas of mutual interest, such as the safe, traceable, and legal international trade in wild species of animals, identification of zoonotic disease risks associated with CITES activities and CITES listed species, and facilitation of secure transport for biological samples from wild animals. On March 1, this landmark agreement was signed by the executive heads of WOAH and

the CITES Secretariats, aiming at further reducing risk of zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade. The agreement is part of the actions taken by the CITES Parties to address the pressing issue of pathogen spillover and transmission risks. The two signatories will work together through a joint programme of work to operationalise the MoU. This encompasses three primary areas: First, wildlife health and trade; second, training, capacity-building, and networking; and third, coordination and communication. The global community's endorsement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework underscores the importance of robust partnerships, such as the partnership between the Secretariats of CITES and WOAH. Target 5 of the Framework, focusing on sustainable, safe, and legal wildlife use, aligns with the mandates of both CITES and WOAH. Strengthening cooperation between the two bodies is integral to supporting countries in deliv-

ery on this target. The collaborative efforts underscore a collective commitment to safeguarding global health while preserving biodiversity. As work in the CITES committees continues, the proactive measures taken by CITES Parties to prevent and mitigate pathogen spillover within wildlife trade and associated supply chains has been shared on the CITES website. CITES and WOAH also remain attentive to the work being undertaken by the Quadripartite Collaboration on One Health and encourage the translation of the One Health approach into policy action. It is anticipated that such initiatives will catalyse the transformative agendas



needed to reduce the risk of future pandemics. CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero said: "Guided by our complementary mandates and common goals, this partnership will result in focused support to Parties in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade." WOAH Director General Monique Eloit pointed out "the importance of this partnership for contributing to a safe international wildlife trade but also for promoting the implementation of the One Health approach that ensures collaboration of relevant sectors and disciplines." She also highlighted the role of the partnership in facilitating the timely transport and sharing of wildlife diagnostic samples, which is essential for the protection of endangered and threatened species and for the prevention of zoonotic disease spillover events.

## Calm after storm in AICF as new office-bearers check in

**Chennai, March 11 (IANS) :** After the storm -- the elections, charges, and counter-charges -- there is calm at the All India Chess Federation (AICF), the apex body for Indian chess. A new set of office-bearers has been elected unanimously to manage the affairs of the AICF till 2027, and it will be interesting to see what steps it takes

on the earlier decision to go for a forensic audit of the Federation's accounts. Though the election results were a foregone conclusion -- only 15 nominations for 15 posts were filed -- the formal announcement was made by the two poll officials, Justice G.S. Sistani (retired), and Justice Rang Nath Pandey (retired), at the AICF General Body meeting held in Delhi on Sunday.

As reported by IANS earlier, Nitin Narang, Dev A. Patel, and Dharmendra Kumar have been elected to the posts of President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively. The six Vice Presidents are Anil Kumar Raizada, Grandmaster (GM) Dibyendu Barua, Raghvendra Singhania, D.P. Anantha, Mahaveer Ranka, and Repo Ronya.



## WPL 2024: 'I knew at the start of the over', DC spinner Jess Jonassen reflects on thrilling final over against RCB

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** After Delhi Capitals (DC) thrilling win over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), Australian spinner Jess Jonassen revealed her plans for the nail-biting final over that secured their victory on the last ball of the match. Jemimah Rodrigues (58 runs off 36) and Alice Capsey (48 runs off 32) starred in batting as they helped Delhi Capitals post 181/5 in 20 overs. Royal Challengers Bangalore came close to chasing the target, courtesy of Richa Ghosh's late onslaught of 29-ball 51. Needing 17 runs in the last over, Richa smashed two sixes off Jonassen's bowling to bring the equation down to 2 off 1, but faltered in the end as the home side clinched the last-ball win to secure their place in the playoffs for the second straight season. Speaking about the gruelling last over, Jonassen stated: "I internally knew that at the start of the over.



## Quality cricket being played in Ranji Trophy final between Mumbai and Vidarbha : Sachin

**Mumbai, March 11 (IANS) :** After India clinched the five-match Test series against England 4-1, all the focus has been on the ongoing Ranji Trophy final between Mumbai and Vidarbha, happening at the Wankhede Stadium.

Legendary batter Sachin Tendulkar feels that some quality cricket is being played in the Ranji Trophy final, where Mumbai have taken a 119-run lead over Vidarbha. "Some quality cricket is being played by Mumbai and Vidarbha in the Ranji Trophy final. Earlier, the Mumbai bowlers troubled the Vidarbha batters, and now the Vidarbha

bowlers are returning the favour. It has been a great match to watch! On day one of the final, all-round heroics from Shardul Thakur, who struck a 37-all fifty, took Mumbai to 224 in first innings, especially when it was a day where 13 wickets fell. For Vidarbha, fast bowler Yash Thakur and rookie left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey starred by taking six wickets collectively.

## Sports Ministry okays Mirabai Chanu's proposal to train in Paris ahead of Olympic Games

**New Delhi, March 11 (IANS) :** The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) on Monday approved weightlifter Mirabai Chanu's proposal to train at La Ferrière-Milon in Paris to prepare for the upcoming Olympic Games. Chanu, who won a silver medal in the Tokyo Olympics, will head to Paris nearly a month ahead of her Olympic event to acclimatise to the weather and prepare for the mega event, the Ministry informed in a release. "During the Paris training camp, Mirabai would be accompanied by two coaches and a physiotherapist, with their air tickets, visa cost, accommodation charges, food,

training cost, local transport cost, medical insurance, and sauna charges among other expenditures being covered under Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) funding," the release read. The ministry also approved financial assistance for hiring a Video Analyst for the world No.1 men's doubles badminton pair, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy. It also approved the proposal of equestrian player Anush Agarwalla to compete in eight competitions and buy equipment for his horses. TOPS will cover his and his coach's accommodation costs, entry fees, two horse feed costs, coach fees, and horse grooms costs among other expenditures.



## Stokes aggressive leadership faltered at a crucial time in Ranchi: Ian Chappell

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Former Australia captain Ian Chappell believes England skipper Ben Stokes' aggressive style of captaincy faltered at a crucial time in the fourth Test at Ranchi, which in turn propelled India to win the match and grab the series in their favour.

Under Stokes leadership, England have played an attacking brand of cricket and won 10 out of first 11 Tests. But they haven't won a series of late, drawing 1-1 with New Zealand and 2-2 with Australia before recently going down 4-1 to India.

## India's Nishant gets one step closer to Paris 2024 quota, advances to quarters at 1st World Olympic Boxing Qualifier

**Busto Arsizio (Italy), March 11 (IANS) :** 2023 World Championships bronze medalist Nishant Dev registered a convincing 5-0 win over Christos Karaitis of Greece to enter the men's 71kg quarter-finals at the 1st World Olympic Boxing Qualifier, here. Nishant is now just a win away from confirming his place at the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympic Games with the

ongoing qualifying tournament offering quotas for all four semi-finalists in the men's event. Continuing his dominating form, Nishant began the bout cautiously as Karaitis looked to secure some early points but not for long as the Indian found his rhythm and delivered some good combinations to secure points by using his speed to his advantage. Nishant looked super effective on the counter attacks and picked up the pace in the closing



seconds of the first round to win it comfortably. The southpaw looked lethal right from the start of the next round. He used multiple combinations to surprise the opponent

as the Greek pugilist looked clueless and even got a standing count after a left hook pierced his defense while Nishant continued to be a dominant force.



## Golf: Amandeep ready for all challengers in sixth leg of WPGT

**Gurugram, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Amandeep Drall, the convincing winner last week, will be among the favourites for the sixth leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour, which gets underway at the DLF Golf and Country Club this week. It will be an exciting week with 46 players, the highest ever on the WPGT Tour and the prize purse will be a whopping Rs. 25 lakh. For the second straight week, the players will be playing over four rounds and 72 holes. Amandeep, who won by four shots, will be challenged by Vani Kapoor who played last week in Singapore, Hitaashee Bakshi, who leads the WPGT Order of Merit and Sneha Singh, the only multiple winner this season.



## ISL 2023-24: Mumbai City FC targets all three points against shaken NorthEast United FC

**Mumbai, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Fighting for the top spot, Mumbai City FC will welcome NorthEast United FC at the Mumbai Football Arena for their Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 clash on Tuesday, hoping to maintain their chances.

## IPL 2024: Rayudu wants Rohit to lead CSK when Dhoni retires

**New Delhi, Mar 11 (IANS) :** Former India batter Ambati Rayudu said he would love to see Rohit Sharma make a switch to Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in 2025 and wished the Indian skipper to lead the franchise when MS Dhoni retires.

Rohit will not be leading Mumbai Indians in IPL 2024, starting March 22 as the 5-time champions appointed Hardik Pandya as the skipper of the franchise.



## Coney & Smith slam Mitchell for 'not defined by the outcomes' comment after series loss to Australia

**Christchurch, March 11 (IANS) :** Former cricketers Jeremy Coney and Ian Smith have slammed all-rounder Daryl Mitchell's comments over the New Zealand team "not being defined by the outcomes" post the 2-0 series loss to Australia at home. New Zealand were primed to win their first Test against Australia on home soil since 1993.