

NIA and TN ATS begin probe into explosion at Sirumalai in TN

Dindigul, Mar 1 (UNI) : The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) unit of Tamil Nadu police has begun an investigation into an explosion, leaving two police personnel and a forest department official injured in a private estate near the 17th bend on Sirumalai ghat road in Dindigul district.

Police sources said here on Saturday that following a complaint from the locals that a foul smell emanating from the estate, a joint team comprising police and forest department went to the site and found a decomposed body on Friday.

Explosives, including detonators, batteries and wires were found near the body, which was later identified as Shibu John (59), a native of Kottayam in Kerala.

Two police men and a forest official suffered minor injuries in an explosion of batteries when they attempted to recover the explosive materials from the spot. The injured were treated at Government Medical College Hospital at Dindigul.

Dindigul Superintendent of Police A.Pradeep rushed to the spot and held an investigation.

Police investigation revealed that Shibu John had been leasing the mango orchard in the estate. He had travelled to Sirumalai from Kottayam a month ago and had not been reachable on his mobile phone for a week by his family members.

Following the recovery of explosive materials, the NIA and Tamil Nadu ATS police began probing the case on Maoist nexus angle.

The NIA and ATS sleuths visited the spot on Saturday, combed the estate and held a detailed probe, the sources added.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs a meeting to review security situation in Manipur, in New Delhi.

Stalin turns 72, President, VP, PM, Governor leaders extend birthday greetings

Chennai, Mar 1 (UNI) : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M.K. Stalin turned 72 on Saturday.

As usual it was a low key birthday fete as he began the day by offering floral tributes to a portrait of his father and late Chief Minister and DMK Patriarch M Karunanidhi.

Later, accompanied by Ministers and senior party leaders, MPs and MLAs, he paid floral tributes at the memorials of DMK Founder and former CM C N Annadurai (popularly called as Perarignar Anna) and Mr Karunanidhi at the Marina beach front where he took a pledge to fight against Centre's attempts to impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu and the 3-language formula.

He also visited the Periyar Thidal and paid floral tributes at the memorial of social reformer Periyar E V

Ramasamy. Later, he visited late Mr Karunanidhi's Gopalapuram residence and got the blessings of his mother Dayalu Ammal. He also visited his sister and Lok Sabha MP Kanimozhi's CIT colony residence and got the blessings from Ms Rajathi Ammal.

Mr Stalin then drove down to DMK Headquarters Anna Arivalayam, where he cut a cake in the presence of Ministers and party functionaries and workers and celebrated his birthday. He also accepted greetings and wishes from party leaders and cadres.

Mr Stalin also administered a pledge to Ministers, MPs, MLAs, local body representatives, district functionaries and cadres.

The pledge titled "Only goal" was not to compromise in protecting to

protect the welfare of Tamil Nadu and its future, always oppose Hindi imposition and fight unitedly for securing the State's rights.

He said "Tamil Nadu will fight...Tamil Nadu will win". Earlier, talking to reporters in front of the Gopalapuram residence, Mr Stalin said his commitment to protecting the state's autonomy and the two-language policy was his birthday message.

Mr Stalin also launched an enrollment drive in government schools to mark the occasion.

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, Congress and INDIA bloc leader Rahul Gandhi, leaders of DMK alliance parties, PMK

Founder Dr.S.Ramadosh, PMK President and Rajya Sabha MP Dr Anbumani Ramadosh, besides actor Rajinikanth, among others greeted him on the occasion of his birthday.

In her wishes, Ms Droupadi Murmu said "I convey my best wishes on your birthday".

"May God bless you with good health and happiness and many more years of continued and dedicated service to the nation", she said in her greetings letter to Mr Stalin. In his greetings, Mr Jagdeep Dhankar said "Warm greetings and good wishes on your birthday today".

"May God bless you with a happy, healthy and long fruitful life dedicated to the service of the nation", the Vice-President in a letter to Mr Stalin.

Couple riding two-wheeler dies after roadside tree falls on them

Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu), Mar 1 (UNI) : In a gruesome tragic incident, a couple riding on a two-wheeler was killed on the spot, after a tree fell on them near Melavaladi village at Lalgudi Taluk in Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu late on Saturday evening. Police said Sudarshan (40) and his wife Punitha (36), hailing from Manakkam in Chennai, came to Lalgudi on a two-wheeler to visit their relatives at Srirangam, the roadside tree suddenly fell on them.

The couple was crushed under the tree.

Fire broke out, after one of the branches of the tree pulled down an overhead electric wire that came into contact with petrol leaked from the two-wheeler.

Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services department personnel rushed to the site, extinguished the blaze and rescued the grievously injured couple from the fallen tree and rushed them in an ambulance to the Srirangam government hospital, where the doctors declared them brought dead.

Samayapuram police have registered a case and are investigating.

Man held with Rs 77.06 lakh unaccounted cash from Howrah express train

Ariyalur (Tamil Nadu), Mar 1 (UNI) : The Railway Protection Force (RPF) on Saturday seized Rs 77.06 lakh unaccounted cash, suspected to be 'hawala' money from a passenger aboard the Kolkata-Tiruchirapalli Howrah Express Train at Ariyalur railway station. RPF was carrying out a special surveillance operation to check illegal transportation of goods under Tiruchirapalli railway jurisdiction, during which a passenger identified as V.Vinodhkumar (28) of Melamathur village in Perambalur district was detained on suspicion, when the Howrah express train in which he was travelling arrived at Ariyalur railway station, police said.

Upon search, RPF personnel found he was in possession of Rs 77.06 lakh cash mostly in Rs 500 denomination in a bag.

As he did not produce mandatory documents to possess the huge amount, Vinodhkumar along with the seized money was handed over to the Income Tax department officials for further investigations. It was suspected that the seized money may be linked to hawala transactions. However, a detailed investigation is underway.

The accused travelled from Chennai Egmore railway station to reach his native in Perambalur in the train, police added.



Shah instructs authorities to ensure free movement of ...

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday chaired a high-level review meeting on the security situation in Manipur here and instructed the authorities to ensure the free movement of people on all the roads in the state from March 8. During the meeting, he directed that strict action should be taken against anyone attempting to create obstructions. Shah also directed that the fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest.

(See on page 4)

Union Minister J P Nadda offers prayer at Vaishno Devi Shrine



BJP National President and Union Minister for Health, Chemicals and Fertilizers, J P Nadda on Saturday visited the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and paid obeisance at the sanctum sanctorum. He was accompanied by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh. Upon their arrival at Katra, the base camp of the Shrine.

(See on page 2)

Air defenses destroy 48 Ukrainian drones over Russian



This night, air defenses intercepted and destroyed 48 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement. "This past night, air defense systems on duty intercepted and destroyed 48 Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles," the ministry said.

(See on page 5)

India's German Open run ends as Tanisha-Dhruv exit in ...



India's campaign at the German Open 2025 came to an end as Paris 2024 Olympian Tanisha Crasto and her mixed doubles partner Dhruv Kapila bowed out in the semifinals here on Saturday.

(See on page 7)

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Land records to be updated by expanding the village area : Minister Chandrashekhar



(Standard Post Bureau) Mumbai, March 1 : The village area has not been expanded in the state for the last several years. Therefore, Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule directed the Town Planning Department to submit information regarding the

land records will be updated by expanding the village area. For this, Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule directed the Town Planning Department to submit information regarding the

matters to be included as per the Town Planning Rules. A meeting was held in the Ministry regarding the implementation of the ownership scheme for properties outside the village area. Additional Chief Secretary of the

Minister B Basu escapes unhurt after allegedly attacked by SFI activists

Kolkata, Mar 1 (UNI) : West Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu escaped unhurt on Saturday after being attacked allegedly by SFI activists of Jadavpur University but his car was vandalized, official sources said. Basu was rescued by his security personnel and drove straight to the SSKM Hospital where he was given first aid.

"I am fine, I have no problem but my car in which I was sitting in front was vandalized the windshield broke and the car tyres are deflated," Basu told reporters after coming out from the SSKM Hospital.

He said security men took him to the back seat to escape further attacks.

Basu went to the JU campus to address a meeting of the West Bengal Professors Association (WBCUPA). As soon as he began to speak, the ruckus broke out and the SFI activists attacked him. His security personnel immediately escorted him to his car, which was vandalized.

"I do not know why the TMC people are not allowed on the campus and why WBCUPA can not hold meetings in JU," asked Basu. The student protest

began when Basu began addressing the SFI activists demanding for holding a student union election.

During vandalization, some students were also injured after the convoy car dashed against a student, whose head was bleeding, the students alleged.

Some FIRs were also lodged with the Jadavpur Police station, sources added. Denouncing the incident, Trinamool Congress leader and the party's state General Secretary Kunal Ghosh said, "We are shocked. They planned and attacked Bratya Basu. We will not tolerate such hooliganism."

CM reviews implementation of liquor ban in Bihar

Patna, Mar 1 (UNI) : Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday reviewed performance of Excise and Prohibition department to assess how effectively prohibition was being implemented in the state.

Kumar during review meeting, directed the officials to ensure that liquor ban could be implemented effectively in all parts of the state. Those found involved in violation of liquor ban should not be

spared at all, he added. "Crime control should be on top of priority of the police administration and there should be strict vigil on those trying to create disturbance and violence in the society", the Chief Minister said, adding that there was need to be extra alert to maintain law and order during the festivals.

Liquor ban had greatly helped in checking crimes and also domestic violence causing much harassments

to women, Nitish pointed out. "We noticed that there is a feeling of happiness among poor families whose income are now being saved due to liquor ban and it is now being utilised to arrange important needs like education of children and facilities of comforts" Kumar noted. People should be made aware about ill effects of liquor ban. It would help in successful implementation of liquor ban, he remarked.

ED finds embezzlement of Rs 2.5 cr Govt fund by forest officials in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, Mar 1 (UNI) : The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Bhubaneswar Zonal Office, conducted search operations at the offices and residences of forest range officials of Jaipatna Range in Odisha's Kalahandi district.

The raids were conducted in connection with the alleged misuse and diversion of government funds meant for compensatory afforestation. Investigations revealed that approximately Rs.2.5 crore from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) during 2023-24 was transferred to mule accounts.

According to ED sources, the raids were carried out on Friday based on an Operational Analysis Report related to Money Mule Accounts, which was received from the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

Preliminary investigations indicated that certain forest department officials were involved in using multiple mule accounts

to divert large sums of money and misappropriate funds allocated for various government schemes.

The probe further revealed that officials, including forest guards and rangers, were involved in opening 121 mule accounts under different names. These accounts received funds via NEFT transfers from the range office, followed by immediate withdrawals through ATMs. Notably, many of these accounts were linked to the same mobile numbers.

ED sources suspect that the total diversion of Forest Department funds exceeds ₹2.5 crore. The funds were transferred from the Jaipatna Range Office to mule bank accounts via National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) and were immediately withdrawn using ATMs.

During the search operations, ED seized various ATM cards linked to mule accounts, mobile phones, withdrawal slips, digital devices, incriminating documents, and an illegal suspected tiger skin.

Further investigation is underway.

Revenue Department Rajesh Kumar, Director General of Yashda Niranjani Sudhanshu were present on the occasion. While Jamabandi Commissioner Suhas Diwase, Director of Town Planning Mr. Patil participated through the video system.

Revenue Minister Mr. Bawankule said that in the first phase, the village area will be expanded and its records will be prepared. Due to this, the income generated from it will be available to the Gram Panchayats. After that, a separate decision will be taken regarding the development of this area in the second phase. For this, initially, some village stations will be expanded as a pilot project, he also said on this occasion.

Russian cosmonaut Oleg Artemyev meets PM Modi

New Delhi, March 1 (UNI) : Russian cosmonaut Oleg Artemyev, participant of three ISS expeditions, had a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, on the sidelines of the NXT Conclave here. Oleg Artemyev presented PM Modi with the flags of the two countries that had been onboard the ISS, as well as the book 'On the Moon' by outstanding Russian theoretical space scientist Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, a Russian Embassy statement said. PM Modi highly praised the level of international cooperation in space exploration, and specifically noted the bilateral collaboration between Russia and India on space projects, including Russia's contribution to the national manned space mission 'Gaganyaan', it said.

BJP engaged in fooling people of country: Ram Gopal

Etawah (UP), March 1 (UNI) : Samajwadi Party's (SP) national chief general secretary Prof Ram Gopal Yadav on Saturday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is engaged in fooling the people of the country.

While talking to journalists on the occasion of the inauguration of a private hospital in his home district Etawah, Ram Gopal said that the people of the BJP government have neither any policy nor any development agenda. "The BJP has nothing to do except fooling the people of the country. Inflation is at its peak in the country, apart from this unemployment is increasing continuously," he said.

He said that the law and order of the country and the state has collapsed, the BJP is stating foolish things to divert the attention of the people of the country.

On Samajwadi leader IP Singh's statement regarding the resignation of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the SP general secretary said that we do not want to comment on the words of such fools. He said that whatever has come before the countrymen regarding the government-sponsored

Union Minister J P Nadda offers prayer at Vaishno Devi Shrine

Jammu, Mar 1 (UNI) : BJP National President and Union Minister for Health, Chemicals and Fertilizers, J P Nadda on Saturday visited the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and paid obeisance at the sanctum sanctorum. He was accompanied by Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh. Upon their arrival at Katra, the base camp of the Shrine, the dignitaries were received by Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The CEO briefed the Union Ministers about the various initiatives undertaken by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, including the upcoming Medical College being set up at Kakryal.

The CEO highlighted the Board's efforts to upgrade and expand the existing infrastructure to provide enhanced facilities and services to the ever-increasing number of pilgrims visiting the Holy Shrine.

Nadda expressed appreciation for the endeavors of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board aimed at facilitating the journey and holy Darshans of the pilgrims.

He commended the Board's commitment to ensuring a smooth, safe, and spiritual experience for all devotees visiting the Shrine.

Mukul Saran Mathur takes over as GM, SWR

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, March 1 : Mr Mukul Saran Mathur took over charge of General Manager, South Western Railway on 1st March 2025. He is an Indian Railway Traffic Officer of 1988 batch and holds a Law Degree from Delhi University and a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management from Management Development Institute, Gurgaon. Before joining the present assignment, he was Additional Member Commercial Railway Board.

In his career spanning more than over three decades he has served on Central Railway, Northern Railway, East Coast Railway, West Central Railway & Railway Board in various capacities.

Previously he had held important assignments of PED/Infrastructure, Principal Chief Operations Manager/West Central Railway, Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Divisional Railway Manager/Waltair, and Executive Director/PPP,



Railway Board, among others. He has handled key infrastructure projects including Dedicated Freight Corridor Projects, High Speed Rail Project and Port and Mine Connectivity Projects. Also he has contributed towards enhancing passenger experience through Digital Solutions.

He has also worked as the Head of Asia office of International Union of

Railway and has contributed to rail developments in the Asia-Pacific region. For his works in the past, he has been awarded by Railway Minister MR Award in 2005, Change Agent Award in 2018 by Railway Minister and Leadership Excellence Award in 2019 by Hon'ble Railway Minister. He succeeds Mr Arvind Srivastava who got superannuation on 28.02.2025.

J&K Govt tightens noose on illegal mining, initiates action against Joint Director

Jammu, Mar 1 (UNI) : In a decisive move aimed at tackling the menace of illegal mining in the Union Territory, the Jammu and Kashmir government has attached Joint Director, Geology and Mining, Jammu, H L Langeh, with the Administrative Department, ceasing all powers vested in him with immediate effect.

The order, issued by the Mining Department comes in the wake of directives received from the office of the Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, reinforcing the administration's commitment towards ensuring transparency and accountability in the mining sector, an official spokesman said on Saturday.

He said that the government has taken this step in response to rising concerns over unauthorized mining activities that have been causing severe environmental degradation and revenue loss to the state exchequer.

In light of this, the Director of Geology and Mining, J&K, has been directed to submit a comprehensive report addressing complaints related to illegal mining and the issuance of disposal permits, allowing authorities to initiate further scrutiny and take necessary corrective measures. The officials have been instructed to ensure strict compliance with mining regulations to prevent any further unlawful extraction of mineral resources, he added.

Surinder Choudhary, while addressing the matter, underscored the government's firm stance against illegal mining, stating that the administration would not tolerate any misconduct or negligence in the execution of duties.

He affirmed that illegal mining not only endangers the environment but also deprives the government of rightful revenue, impacting developmental initiatives. Stressing the need for stringent enforcement mechanisms, the Deputy Chief Minister assured that those found complicit in unauthorized mining activities,

irrespective of their position, would face strict legal consequences.

Choudhary also urged the public to actively participate in reporting any illegal mining operations, emphasizing that community vigilance plays a crucial role in safeguarding the region's natural resources.

Illegal mining has been a longstanding issue in Jammu and Kashmir, with unregulated extraction causing extensive damage to riverbeds, groundwater levels and local ecosystems.

The government has reiterated its commitment to sustainable and legal mining practices, ensuring that all mineral extraction activities are conducted within the ambit of law and environmental norms.

Efforts are being intensified to introduce advanced monitoring technologies, including satellite surveillance and digital tracking to curb unlawful mining operations, he said.

The action against the Joint Director of Geology and Mining serves as a strong message that the government will not hesitate to take stringent action against any official found to be negligent or complicit in illegal activities, said the spokesman.

The government has urged all stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies and local communities to work in unison to eliminate illegal mining, he added.

The spokesman said that with a clear emphasis on accountability and legal enforcement, this move signals a renewed effort to protect Jammu and Kashmir's natural wealth while fostering responsible economic growth. The citizens are encouraged to report any instances of illegal mining through designated helplines and online grievance portals, reinforcing the administration's objective of public participation in governance and environmental conservation.

Congress activists gherao CM's residence to protest rising atrocities against Women

Bhubaneswar, Mar 1 (UNI) : Activists from various front wings of the Odisha Congress staged a protest demonstration outside Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's official residence on Saturday, condemning the rising atrocities against women in the state.

Led by newly elected party President Bhakta Charan Das, members of the District Congress, Mahila Congress, Youth Congress,

and Chhatra Congress marched from the party office to the Chief Minister's residence, carrying placards and posters. When Congress members attempted to breach the police barricade to reach the CM's house, security forces intervened, preventing the agitators from advancing and forcefully detaining some Congress leaders in a police van. Das alleged that as many as 54 rape cases

had been reported in Odisha during the past eight months of BJP rule, exposing the failure of the so-called "double-engine government" to curb crimes against women.

He further stated that gang rape cases had been reported from various districts, and three minor girls giving birth to babies in government-run schools indicated a complete breakdown of law and order in the state.

505 students graduate from ISB Hyderabad campus

(Standard Post Bureau) Hyderabad, Feb Mar 1 : A total of 505 students of various programmes graduated from the Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad campus on Saturday.

Mahesh Kolli, Founder and Group President, of Greenko Group, who was the chief guest at the event, urged the graduates to embrace the transformative opportunities that lay ahead of them.

He emphasised the importance of cultivating strong beliefs, identifying megatrends, and fostering sustainable partnerships as

essential pillars for impactful careers and entrepreneurial success.

Kolli underscored that sustainability is not merely an environmental necessity, but a powerful economic opportunity, capable of driving growth through innovation.

Congratulating the graduating classes on their remarkable achievement of completing rigorous programmes, ISB Dean Prof. Madan Pillutla, urged graduates to reflect on the knowledge and skills gained at ISB and use them not only for professional success,

but also to create meaningful impact in their industries and communities.

He also emphasised the need to be lifelong learners to stay relevant and achieve great success. He reaffirmed ISB's pride in their accomplishments, pledging the school's continued support as they move forward in their journeys.

ISB celebrated academic and leadership achievements, wherein Scholar of Excellence awards were presented to outstanding students from each programme.

23 public servants arrested by ACB

Hyderabad, Mar 1 (UNI) : The Anti corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday said that it has trapped/arrested 23 public servants, including two outsourcing employees, in 17 cases registered during the month of February in Telangana.

They were remanded to Judicial Custody. Of the total cases during last month, 15 are trap cases and two cases of Disproportionate assets, ACB said in a release here.

The Bureau got conviction in one trap case. G M Sudarshan, Panchayat Secretary of Kotagiri Village in Nizamabad District, who had been trapped in 2014 was convicted recently.

Around Rs 7.60 lakhs amount was seized in trap cases of BC Welfare, Energy, Home, Forest, Agriculture and Cooperation, Education, Social Welfare, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Revenue, MA and UD and Transport, R and B departments. In two disproportionate assets cases, assets worth about Rs 4.13 crore have been unearthed.

AIMIM celebrates 67th Foundation day in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Mar 1 (UNI) : All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has celebrated its 67th Youm-e-Tasees (Foundation Day) with a grand public meeting at the party headquarters in Darussalam, here on Saturday.

Delivering a special address after hoisting the party flag, symbolizing the party's enduring legacy and unity, AIMIM President and Hyderabad Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi highlighted the present political scenario of the country reflecting on the party's journey and its future aspirations and commitment to the welfare of marginalized communities.

Owaisi reiterated the party's dedication to advocating for justice and equality, particularly for marginalized communities, underscoring AIMIM's role in the nation's socio-political landscape.

Party floor Leader Akbaruddin owaisi, while

addressing on the occasion, shared insights into the current political landscape, discussing challenges and opportunities.

He emphasized AIMIM's strategic vision and its commitment to addressing the aspirations of the underrepresented.

The event was attended by prominent leaders, including MLAs, MLCs, corporators, and party dignitaries.

Earlier, the party taken out a bike rally organized from various parts of the old city to the party headquarter in the city, symbolizing solidarity and enthusiasm among party supporters.

The event concluded with a renewed pledge to uphold the principles of justice, equality, and representation, which have been the cornerstone of AIMIM's philosophy since its inception.

The party celebrations are also held in various district units in the state.

No fuel for vehicles older than 15 years in Delhi after Mar 31: Minister

New Delhi, Mar 1 (UNI) : To control pollution in the National Capital, the Delhi government took a big decision on Saturday that vehicles older than 15 years will not get fuel.

The announcement was made by Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, after a meeting with senior officials of the government. He said the government's initial focus will be on heavy vehicles entering Delhi and teams will check whether the laid-down rules are being followed. Announcing several other anti-pollution measures, Sirsa said that the newly formed BJP government is taking stringent steps to curb vehicular emissions and pollution. Restrictions on older vehicles, mandatory anti-smog measures, and the transition to electric public transport were among the issues discussed. The Minister said, "We don't have information about vehicles coming from outside but we have decided to stop giving fuel to vehicles older than 15 years after March 31, 2025. A team will be set up to identify such vehicles".

"We are going to make it mandatory for all big hotels, office complexes, airports, commercial complexes and construction sites in Delhi to immediately install anti-smog guns to control pollution" he told reporters.

Sirsa also announced that nearly 90 per cent of the public CNG buses in Delhi will be phased out and replaced by electric buses by December 2025. He said that the BJP government will get permission from the Centre to implement cloud seeding and induce artificial rain whenever air pollution levels spike in the National Capital.

Industry needs to march along with changing times to meet challenges: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Mar 1 (UNI) : IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Saturday said digital innovation is moving at a rapid pace and the industry needs to march along with the changing times to meet challenges.

Inaugurating the GROWTH X 2025 Summit organized by the ICT Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, after a meeting with senior officials of the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) with the theme "Go Digital Grow Business", Sridhar Babu said We need to transform our industries with a special focus on how to leverage Technology for GROWTH in the disruptive era of AI

The traditional approaches will not work. At the same time, there are challenges in this journey,

especially for MSMEs and SMEs. The MSMEs and SMEs have many limitations, shortage of capital, fear of change, and lack of awareness. He said until and unless MSMEs and SMEs harness new technologies, they will lose out on their competitiveness. They can't sustain in the long run.

The state Government's ambition is to make Telangana a one trillion US \$ economy. We will work with the FTCCI and ICT committee for the common good of the industry and the state, the Minister said.

He said the state is progressing well at the same speed as national growth or even more. The state's software exports growth registered at 17.98

percent against the national average growth of 8 percent. AI (Artificial Intelligence) is taking control across industries and individuals from all walks of life. If 'we don't harness and integrate AI into our industries, and businesses, we will lose efficiency, growth trajectory, and profitability,' the Minister said.

"Our Chief Minister Mr. Revanth Reddy has a very clear vision to keep pace with the changing technology", he said that the CM feels very strongly that all stakeholders of the state must also keep pace with emerging technologies. The Government of Telangana sees AI as the first and foremost technology to be embedded in its growth trajectory. It is top of mind

of the state leadership. The recently held Global AI summit was a step towards that direction, the Minister added. On the occasion, the Minister unveiled the "Thought Capital Report" brought out by EY, the knowledge partner of GrowthX2025.

Speaking on the occasion, FTCCI President Dr Suresh Kumar Singhal, said MSMEs make a significant contribution to the Indian economy, yet they are hesitant to adapt technology. They must embrace technology to stay competitive. More than 450 participants comprising decision makers/CXOs, FTCCI Members, IT, Policy Makers, Investors, and Startups participated in the summit. An Expo Zone was also organised along with the summit.

Complete land acquisition for ongoing development projects by Mar 15: UP CM

Lucknow, Mar 1 (UNI) : Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday directed the officials that the process of land acquisition and distribution of compensation for the ongoing development projects of central and state governments in various districts be completed by March 15.

During a review meeting to assess development projects under the central and state governments, the CM emphasised that adherence to timelines is crucial for development projects of public importance, as they not only enhance the lives of common citizens but also contribute to employment generation.

He said that project delays often necessitate cost revisions, which adversely impact revenue. He directed the district

administration to conduct regular reviews of land acquisition and compensation distribution for development projects, ensuring consistent communication with affected farmers and families.

Yogi directed the District Magistrates to conduct a weekly review, while the Commissioner should review progress every 15 days and submit a report to senior officials in the CM's Office, Chief Secretary's Office and the relevant departments.

The Chief Minister said that common citizens aspire for development and should be made aware of its positive outcomes. "They should also be informed in advance about the circle rate for compensation," he said. He emphasised that nodal officers must be deployed for all initiated projects, ensuring strict

adherence to quality standards and timely execution. Yogi directed that the construction of a 350-bed hospital by ESIC in Greater Noida and a 100-bed hospital in Gorakhpur should progress within a set time frame.

The CM said, "Any arising challenges should be promptly resolved. The Greater Noida hospital is expected to generate around 1,000 direct and 2,000 to 3,000 indirect jobs."

Yogi directed the officials to identify those obstructing development projects and take strict action against them. He reviewed various development projects in Varanasi and directed their timely completion. The Chief Minister reiterated that development and employment generation remain top priorities, urging officials to work with a zero pendency approach.

Pre-judging event held on eve of 58th Statesman Vintage & Classic Rally on Sunday

New Delhi, Mar 1 (UNI) : A day before classic cars from bygone era take over the streets of Delhi as part of the 58th Statesman Vintage and Classic Rally, a pre-judging event took place on Saturday in the capital's Modern School at Barakhamba Road.

Over 100 vintage and classic cars have been meticulously assessed over the past two days, celebrating the rich heritage and craftsmanship of automotive history.

The grand rally will kick off on Sunday (March 2) from Statesman House, Connaught Place. Undertaking a 44-kilometre journey and driving past some of the city's key landmarks along the route,

the participants in the rally will reach the National Stadium where the rally will conclude. A prize distribution ceremony will be held at the destination.

Among this year's most striking entry in the rally is Daman Thakore's 1950 MG YT convertible, affectionately known as "Lal Pari" within his family.

Thakore, a businessman from Gujarat, recounted his incredible 73-day journey from Ahmedabad to London in 2023. Covering 12,000 kilometres across 12 countries—including Croatia, Italy, and Turkey—his car even made a historic visit to Abingdon, Oxfordshire, the birthplace of MG cars. "This car is a rare gem," Thakore

remarked. "Only 900 were manufactured, and today, only around 150-200 remain globally," he added.

Another entry adding to the rally's grandeur this time is Gurpreet Singh's 1928 Rolls Royce Phantom 1 Open Tourer, originally owned by the Maharaja of Bhavnagar.

"This is more than just a car; it's a piece of India's rich automotive heritage," he said, expressing his satisfaction at preserving the car's original registration with the Gujarat Commissionerate of Transport.

While many people remain enthusiastic about vintage automobiles, it is increasingly becoming a challenge to keep the

classic car legacy rolling.

Judge Gyan Sharma stressed the need for governmental support to sustain the vintage car culture.

"With increasing driving restrictions and rising maintenance costs, fewer young enthusiasts are joining the movement. It was once a thriving hobby, but now only a dedicated few continue to pursue it. The Statesman deserves credit for keeping this tradition alive," he noted. Discussing the evaluation process, judge Pramod Bhasin elaborated that vehicles were assessed based on originality, upkeep, paint quality, upholstery, and authenticity of parts.

BJP slams Omar Abdullah for 'peace is not organic' remark

Srinagar, Mar 1 (UNI) : Senior BJP leader Altaf Thakur on Saturday launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for his remarks that "peace is not organic" in Kashmir and said that he lacks sufficient powers to govern effectively.

Thakur, who is also party's Jammu and Kashmir spokesperson, dismissed Omar's claims, asserting that the BJP-led central government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has made peace a "permanent feature" in Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

He said people are reaping the dividends of stability, and the region has witnessed unprecedented development over the past five years.

"Had there been no peace, Kashmir would not have seen the massive development that has taken place post-2019. The fact is that Kashmir

has never been this peaceful in the past seven decades," Thakur said in a statement.

Two days ago, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah while addressing a event in New Delhi had described the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir as "not normal," stating that "normalcy has been forced in Kashmir, it's not organic."

He cited the authorities' decision to disallow the funeral of Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's father-in-law at Srinagar's Jamia Masjid as evidence of the abnormality.

"If everything is normal, why wasn't the funeral allowed today?" the CM questioned

Taking a dig at Omar, the Senior BJP leader Thakur questioned why the CM contested elections if he believed he would have limited powers.

"Was he not aware of the governance structure before the polls? The

reality is that he is failing to deliver on the ground and is now looking for an escape route," Thakur said.

He further accused the National Conference leader of trying to create a false narrative to cover up his administration's inefficiency.

"Instead of acknowledging the positive changes in J&K, Omar is resorting to rhetoric to mislead the people. T

he BJP's vision has transformed the region, and no amount of political blame game can deny that," the Senior BJP leader added.

Thakur also highlighted that unlike in the past, when separatist activities and terror incidents disrupted daily life, today's Kashmir is witnessing record-breaking tourism, infrastructure growth, and improved law and order. He challenged Omar to focus on governance instead of playing victim.

With all formalities, and hoisting a flag meeting, BSF is scheduled to hand over the body to the deceased's family on Saturday, police said.

According to police, a group of Bangladeshi smugglers attacked BSF patrol party at Sonamura border, which left a jawan injured when BSF tried to prevent the smuggling attempt.

At around 7.30 pm, BSF jawans posted at Putia village noticed a smuggling attempt by a group of 20 to 25 Bangladeshi smugglers and they intruded into the Indian side. When alerted by a BSF patrol party, they attacked the party, in which one BSF jawan got seriously injured.

Subsequently, again the party was attacked and miscreants tried to snatch BSF personnel's weapons and in order to protect his own life, a BSF jawan fired one round of PAG (non lethal) for self defense, resulting the death of Alamin. Allegedly, after the incident, all Bangladeshi miscreants escaped to their country in presence of Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB). The incident sparked tension along the border and BSF made extra deployment to maintain peace.

Delhi court allows withdrawal of sedition case against JNU student leader Shehla Rashid

New Delhi, Mar 1 (UNI) : A court here has allowed the withdrawal of a sedition case filed against former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student leader Shehla Rashid.

It is alleged that in August 2019, Rashid in his tweets had alleged misconduct by the Indian Army in Jammu and Kashmir. It is alleged that Rashid in his tweets had claimed that the Indian Army violated the human rights of locals by entering houses at night and torturing residents of Kashmir. Advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava made a complaint against Rashid and subsequently an FIR (first

information report) was registered against him under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code. Assistant Public Prosecutor moved an application under section 321 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) before court for granting permission to withdrawal of the case against Rashid by submitting that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi had revoked the sanction to prosecute Rashid. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Anuj Kumar Singh, after hearing the application on behalf of Prosecution, allowed the prayer of the Assistant Public Prosecutor for withdrawal of the sedition case against Rashid.

STANDARD POST

Where's Kejriwal as Atishi struggles on Delhi roads

Sometimes, it is useful to stay home and reflect on situations to find solutions to issues. Perhaps this is what AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal appears to be doing.

It's been days since he was last seen or heard. He has largely remained absent from public view after his party's crushing defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections. Kejriwal, who lost to BJP's Parvish Verma in the New Delhi Assembly seat, was last seen on February 23 at AAP's legislative party meeting, where Atishi was named the Leader of Opposition in the House. He has also not posted much politically significant on his social media handles, including the X. Interestingly, he has neither reacted nor posted on the happenings of the Delhi Assembly, where his lieutenant Atishi, the former Delhi CM, seems to be waging a lone leader's fight. He has not said a word over the suspension of 21 AAP MLAs from the Delhi Assembly.

The only significant post made by Kejriwal was on the photo controversy, which Atishi tried to rake and make into a big issue. Reposting Atishi's post on X on February 24, Kejriwal wrote in Hindi (loosely translated): "The new BJP government of Delhi removed Baba Saheb's photo and put up the photo of Prime Minister Modi. This is not right. This has hurt millions of followers of Babasaheb...I have a request for the BJP. You can put the photo of the Prime Minister but do not remove the photo of Baba Saheb. Let his photo remain there."

AAP's efforts to make it a big issue have come to a cropper as the photo matter has not created any support for AAP. Atishi has been trying badly to hit the road on the issue, but, except for her 20 co-MLAs, not a single extra AAP worker or leader can be seen joining her protest in the streets. She has even written a letter to the Speaker, objecting to the suspension of 21 MLAs and has tried to make the Assembly ruckus as AAP's fight for Ambedkar. "On 25 February 2025, during the address of the Lieutenant Governor, MLAs of the ruling party raised slogans of 'Modi-Modi,' while the opposition MLAs raised slogans of 'Jai Bheem,' respecting the views of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. It is very unfortunate that no action was taken against any MLA of the ruling party, but 21 MLAs of the opposition were suspended from the House for three days for raising the slogan 'Jai Bheem,'" she wrote.

While Atishi has been trying to keep AAP 'activism' active in Delhi, Kejriwal has gone silent. It is not that Kejriwal has no involvement in whatever Atishi is doing, but the AAP chief seems to prefer to stay low and do jobs from the backroom.

Currently, in the national capital, only Atishi and Gopal Rai seem to be handling the Delhi affairs and the rest all seem to have just vanished after massive electoral defeats. Most of the rest of the AAP leaders seem to be busy with varied activities.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has also not been visible in the capital or on social media. Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh has been busy with the Haryana municipal polls. Former Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj is active mostly on X.

Kejriwal is said to be busy keeping his flock together in Punjab, where internal rifts are being reported. It is also said that he is seeking entry to Parliament through the Rajya Sabha route in order to keep his political scales up despite crushing defeat in Delhi. While he may or may not gain entry to the Upper House, his deeds of previous years are getting exposed in the Delhi Assembly.

It was quite expected for the ruling BJP to go aggressive with the 14 CAG reports that the previous AAP government in Delhi had hidden for fear of exposure. Some of them were presented to the L-G four years ago, but the then-Kejriwal government kept them under the carpet. The reports are now being tabled one by one, exposing the AAP underbelly. It was known that things were not right on the ground under the Kejriwal-led government, but the extent is now being exposed.

As per the CAG reports, everything seems to be wrong with the AAP dispensation in Delhi. These reports, including performance audits on several issues such as the cost of renovating former CM Arvind Kejriwal's residence, liquor supply in Delhi, prevention and mitigation of air pollution, functioning of the Delhi Transport Corporation, healthcare and Mohalla Clinics, gravely reflect the then Kejriwal government's working.

The coming days may not be good for Kejriwal and his party as action may ensue on the CAG reports.

He was in jail for five months last year for his alleged role in the excise policy. After the CAG expose, his legal troubles may mount. Equally distressing for him could be his political troubles.

Celebrate Strength, Resilience and Brilliance

(Standard Post Bureau)

Women' Day is celebrated to acknowledge the contribution made by women achievers in different fields. It is the day to recognize women unsung heroes who have and are making commendable contribution towards nation building in their own unique ways. On this day we celebrate 'Strength', 'Resilience', and 'Brilliance' of women around the world. Eleanor Roosevelt had once beautifully said, "A woman is like a tea bag - you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water." Indeed, God has blessed every woman with so much potential, unless she takes up the challenge and tests herself, she will not realize her fullest potential. Woman is a wonderful creation of God with a special plan and purpose.

Woman's day is not just a celebration but a reminder



that there is still a lot to be done for the welfare of women in society. It is about recognizing the contribution made by women in every segment of life. A homemaker, teacher, entrepreneur, healthcare worker, scientist, social worker, sports person, the

contribution of women is significant in every sphere. She has the capacity to wear multiple hats and balance every task with grace and fineness. The future is bright for women, and it is we women who can ensure that every other woman has the opportunity

to reach her fullest potential.

Speaking from my own personal experience, I believe that women have the power to transform society. Today, I am grateful to our Lord Jesus for His continual grace in fulfilling the vision to reach

out to the children of our nation and to the poor and needy of the society.

Being in the field of education, I am committed to empowering women through education and leadership, fostering a more inclusive and progressive society. 95% of my

workforce consists of women educators who are provided opportunities for fostering professional growth, leadership, and skill development. They are all committed to shaping young minds and driving social change through education.

"Education has opened up several avenues for women and with education as a tool in hand women can transform their family, society and generations to come.

On this day that is dedicated to all women, cheer one another and inspire fellow women to dream big. Let's inspire change to this world a better place to live in. Keep shining as there are endless possibilities to grow. You have a powerful role to play in shaping the future. Follow your Passion and always remember - "Forward ever, backward never..."

Cow, the Magical Being by Ashwini guruji of Dhyani Ashram



(Standard Post Bureau)

Our coming generations have a strong western bias and firmly believe that the vedic culture is mubo-jumbo and there is no science behind the worship and rituals. For the younger generation I would like to give certain facts about the efficacy and the global acceptability of the vedic principles.

I came across the diary of Sir Cunningham at national archives. He had sketched out a calf and a cow on the third page of the diary and discussed the scientific and logical benefits of preserving this animal. One can find

references to the cow across cultures - the egyptians worshipped her as Hathor, the goddess of fertility, those from this side of the indus called her the kamdhenu and nandi, greeks knew her as Io and the nordics as audhumbra, the primeval cow who licked ice and brought mankind into existence...What is it about the cow that caused it to be revered across cultures and also caught the attention of the learned archaeologist?

The cow is indeed a special animal, its every aspect is a boon to mankind. The vedic seers called it the mother, the

source of nourishment of creation and it lives up to the title through its various products - milk and its derivatives - ghee, curd, butter, etc form an important dietary component for us humans, the dung is a fuel and a natural fertilizer, the urine acts as a natural pesticide and has medicinal uses. In fact, there is a story in Mahabharata, where the great sage chyawan, in a barter deal with King Nahush, puts his worth as equivalent to a cow - indicating what how evolved a being it is. It is an intelligent being and the karmic implications of causing hurt to it are severe, likewise the karmic benefits of serving it are also manifold.

Various cultures describe the immense benefits of preserving and serving this animal. It is said that if you regularly feed cows and they lick your head then your hidden mental abilities fructify - this was true for the great saint kabir, his poetic abilities manifested only once he was licked by a cow on his head. Massaging the cows ensures strong and beautiful body with longevity.

Serving its calf gives the benefit of healthy relationships in your life. In no culture or religion, eating its meat is considered healthy.

TATA.ev Celebrates 2 Lakh EVs on the Road

(Standard Post Bureau)

TATA.ev, the pioneer of India's EV revolution and leader of the Indian EV market with over 2 Lakh EVs on the road, extended the celebration of this momentous milestone by thanking its customers and unveiling a set of limited period exclusive benefits for the next 45 days to not only encourage new customers to adopt sustainable and emission free electric mobility, but also allow current Tata Motors passenger and electric vehicle owners to upgrade to a new EV. TATA.ev's customer base of over 2 lakh satisfied EV adopters - who have collectively covered more than 5 bn KM in just 5 years, contributing in cutting down 7 lakh ton of CO2 emissions - has

solidified the company's leadership as the highest selling 4-wheeler manufacturer in the EV space, since effectively creating the category.

With over 8,000 EV users surpassing 1 lakh KM, TATA.ev's product portfolio proves its strong value proposition for the discerning customer. In addition to this, TATA.ev is actively investing in developing the ecosystem that makes EV technology more accessible to a mass audience. It recently announced efforts to double India's public charging infrastructure by installing over 400,000 charging points by 2027. By consistently pushing boundaries and maintaining an unwavering focus on

innovation, infrastructure, and market development, TATA.ev is shaping the future of mobility and contributing to India global EV aspirations, one milestone after the next. As a part of this 45 day bumper celebration, TATA.ev has unveiled a range of benefits for both new and existing customers looking to purchase their favorite Tata EV. These include an exchange bonus, lifetime battery warranty, and 100% on-road finance options. In an effort to enhance charging convenience, the company is extending the free charging benefit of 6 months at any Tata Power charging station, and is now providing free installation of a 7.2kW AC Fast home Charger with the purchase of an EV.

Shah instructs authorities to ensure free movement of people in Manipur from Mar 8

New Delhi, Mar 1 (UNI): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday chaired a high-level review meeting on the security situation in Manipur here and instructed the authorities to ensure the free movement of people on all the roads in the state from March 8.

During the meeting, he directed that strict action should be taken against anyone attempting to create obstructions.

Shah also directed that the fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest.

He said that to make Manipur drug-free, the entire network involved in the drug trade should be dismantled.

The Home Minister said that the Union Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains fully committed to restore peace in Manipur and is providing all necessary assistance in this regard.

The meeting was attended by Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Union Home Secretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Army Commander of the Eastern Command, Directors General of Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Assam Rifles, Security Advisor, Manipur and senior officers of MHA, Army and Manipur administration.



Smt. Priyadarshini Gaddam joins NMDC Board as Director (Personnel)

Smt. Priyadarshini Gaddam assumed office as Director (Personnel) at NMDC on Friday. She has been appointed as a Functional Director on the Board of the company by the Ministry of Steel.

Prior to this appointment, she held the post of Chief General Manager (Personnel & Administration) and the Head of Personnel for both the NMDC Corporate Office in Hyderabad and NMDC Steel Limited in Nagarnar. Joining NMDC as an Executive Trainee in 1992, she steadily rose through the company's ranks and has emerged as a leader, paving the way for more women in leadership roles in the mining industry.

In her over three decade long service, Smt. Priyadarshini has played a defining role in shaping an ecosystem that ensures a safe workplace for women and provides equal opportunities for persons with benchmark disabilities while setting the highest standards of employee welfare at NMDC.

She has streamlined processes and procedures in Industrial Relations, Recruitment, Medical Policies and Stakeholder Management within the company. She represented NMDC in the Second Pay Revision Commission with respect to the Pay Revision of CPSEs and has since achieved milestone outcomes in negotiating wage settlements.

Smt. Priyadarshini's leadership came to the forefront at NMDC Steel Limited (NSL) where she steered the R&R Policy, advocated for skill development initiatives for the community and swiftly established the Fire Department, Occupational Health Centre, and Primary Health Centre at NSL, all of which contributed to the overall well-being and safety of the workforce.

An alumna of Osmania University, Hyderabad, she holds a postgraduate degree in Social Work (Personnel Management and Industrial Relations) along with an LLB. With Smt. Priyadarshini as the Director (Personnel), NMDC is gearing up to set higher sights of productivity and collective growth for the industry.

Air defenses destroy 48 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions : Defense Ministry

Moscow, Mar 1 (UNI) : This night, air defenses intercepted and destroyed 48 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

"This past night, air defense systems on duty intercepted and destroyed 48 Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles," the ministry said. It said 21 drones were shot down over the territory of the Tver Region, 11 over Crimea, five over the Bryansk Region, three over the territories of the Belgorod and Rostov regions each, two over the Smolensk and Lipetsk regions each, and one over the Kursk Region.

US approves 3 bln USD arms sales to Israel

Washington, Mar 1 (UNI) : The U.S. State Department has approved potential arms sales to Israel totaling about 3 billion U.S. dollars, the Pentagon said Friday.

The packages, notified to Congress under emergency procedures, bypass standard legislative review processes.

The U.S. State Department said it had authorized a 2.04-billion-dollar arms deal with Israel, including 35,529 general-purpose bomb bodies for 2,000-pound bombs and 4,000 bunker-busting 2,000-pound warheads.

Deliveries are estimated to begin in 2026. But there is a possibility that a portion of this procurement may come from U.S. stock, potentially allowing for immediate delivery of some munitions, according to a Pentagon statement.

The second deal on 1,000-pound bombs and guidance kits, valued at 675.7 million dollars, is scheduled to be delivered in 2028. The third one is a 295-million-dollar deal on Caterpillar D9 Bulldozers, which is scheduled to be delivered in 2027.

This marked the second emergency arms approval to Israel this month without congressional review.

U.S. arms sales followed a fragile ceasefire last month that paused 15 months of hostilities between Israel and Hamas.

An Israeli delegation proposed in Cairo extending the first stage of the Gaza ceasefire agreement for an additional 42 days, an informed Egyptian security source told Xinhua on Friday. The talks have yet to address the second stage of the deal, which seeks to end the war in Gaza, and secure the complete Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the source said on condition of anonymity. Earlier on Friday, Hamas called on the international community to pressure Israel to enter the second phase of the Gaza peace deal immediately, with the 42-day initial phase of the three-stage agreement set to expire on Saturday.

Canada will not leave Ukraine without support : Minister

Washington, Mar 1 (UNI) : Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly held a conversation with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, during which she confirmed Canada's readiness to continue to provide assistance to Ukraine.

"Just spoke with Ukrainian Foreign Minister @andrii_sybiha to reaffirm Canada's unwavering support for Ukraine. Canada remains committed to providing the necessary assistance to ensure Ukraine's security, sovereignty, and resilience," she said on X.

Following a spat in the Oval Office between US President Donald Trump and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed support to Ukraine on X.

Talks between Zelenskyy and Trump regarding the peace settlement in Ukraine failed on Friday after a spat in the Oval Office. Trump's senior officials asked the Ukrainian delegation to leave the White House and canceled a joint press conference.

IMF completes 3rd review under 48-month Extended Fund Facility with Sri Lanka

Colombo, Mar 1 (UNI) The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board completed the third review under the 48-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with Sri Lanka, providing the country with immediate access to Special Drawing Right (SDR) 254 million (about 334 million U.S. dollars) to support its economic policies and reforms, the IMF said in a press release on Friday.

The International Monetary Fund said Sri Lanka's performance under the program has been strong and that all quantitative targets for end-December 2024 were met, except the indicative target on social spending.

The IMF said reform efforts are bearing fruit, and the recovery is gaining momentum. As the economy is still vulnerable, sustaining the reform agenda is critical to put the economy on a path toward lasting recovery and debt sustainability.

The International Monetary Fund said economic growth averaged 4.3 percent since growth resumed in the third quarter of 2023. By end-2024, Sri Lanka's real GDP is estimated to have recovered 40 percent of its losses incurred between 2018 and 2023. The recovery is expected to continue in 2025, the International Monetary Fund said.

The program supports Sri Lanka's efforts to restore and maintain macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability while protecting the poor and vulnerable, rebuilding external buffers, and enhancing growth-oriented structural reforms, including strengthening governance, the IMF said.

Zelenskyy says his ire with Trump began after negative comments

Washington, March 1 (UNI) : In the aftermath of an explosive Oval Office press conference with President Donald Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his frustration with the administration began after it issued a series of controversial comments in the five weeks after Trump's inauguration.

"It's not about [being] mad," Zelenskyy told Fox News' on "Special Report."

"[When you hear] president, vice president or somebody or senators — doesn't matter, big politicians — when they, for example, say that Ukraine is almost destroyed, that our soldiers run away, that they are not a heroes, that Ukraine lost millions of civilians, that his president is dictator.

"The reaction is that, where is our friendship between Ukraine and United States?"

Zelenskyy said it was important that Ukraine, the



US and Europe maintain their great partnership in the face of Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression.

But when asked if he feels he should apologize for the heated discussions that erupted in the Oval Office, which began after Vance accused Zelenskyy of being "disrespectful," the Ukrainian leader said "no." "I respect the president, and I respect the American people," he said.

"I'm not sure that we did something bad."

Zelenskyy noted again that security guarantees, which caused the blowup in the Oval Office Friday, are not an issue he can disregard because the threat of another Russian invasion is too great.

Zelenskyy also reiterated he would be willing to step down as president so long as Ukraine was given NATO membership.

"We want just and lasting peace. It's true. We

want security guarantees," he said. "If [the] United States will support NATO ... I think that is enough for Ukraine."

Trump, after speaking with Putin earlier this month, began pushing the idea that Ukraine should hold elections, claiming Zelenskyy has little support among the Ukrainian public.

But under Ukraine's constitution, it cannot hold elections when Martial Law is in effect during a time of war.

British PM Starmer meets Zelenskyy, tells him he has full backing of UK, a day after Oval Office clash

London, March 1 (UNI) : UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer embraced Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Saturday and told him he has "full backing across the United Kingdom" as the two met in Downing Street, a day after the blowout at the White House with US President Donald Trump.

Zelenskyy arrived to shouts of support from people who had gathered outside 10 Downing Street.

"And as you heard from the cheers on the street outside, you have full backing across the United Kingdom," Starmer told Zelenskyy. "We stand with you, with Ukraine, for as long as it may take." The

UK Prime Minister he was happy his country had "such friends", in the wake of the disastrous White House meeting with US President Donald Trump.

The two leaders embraced outside No 10 before heading inside to discuss efforts to bring the Russia-Ukraine war to an end. Starmer will host a summit of European leaders on Sunday on the matter - as well as wider European defence - while Zelenskyy will meet King Charles III at the request of the UK government. Those meetings are set to be overshadowed by events in Washington and concerns about a hardening of

relations with the US, the BBC reported.

In recent weeks, the UK PM has sought to cast himself as a bridge between the US and Europe as it adapts to the Trump administration's desire to be less involved in European defence, after having a cordial meeting with Trump a day before Zelenskyy's.

During the Thursday meeting at the Oval Office, Starmer hand-delivered a letter from the King inviting Trump - who is fond of the Royal Family - to an unprecedented second state visit, which the Scottish National Party MPs have called on the PM to withdraw following the

Oval Office spat.

Following the acrimonious White House meeting, Zelenskyy has attempted to paper over the cracks.

In a statement, he said of Trump: "Despite the tough dialogue, we remain strategic partners. But we need to be honest and direct with each other to truly understand our shared goals." "The Ukrainian leader wrote in a string of social media posts: "It's crucial for us to have President Trump's support. He wants to end the war, but no one wants peace more than we do." "We are the ones living this war in Ukraine. It's a fight for our freedom, for our very survival."

Landslide kills 6 in southern Afghanistan's Uruzgan

Tirin Kot, Afghanistan, Mar 1 (UNI) : A landslide killed at least six people, including women and children, in southern Afghanistan's Uruzgan province, a local official reported. The disaster occurred late on Friday after heavy rain and snowfall in the Sarmory area of the province's Gizab district, said Zamir Ahmad, provincial director of culture and information. Earlier, four people lost their lives and three others were wounded after the roof of their house collapsed in Urozgan's neighboring Kandahar province on Tuesday.

At least 36 people have died and 40 others were injured in rain-related incidents throughout Afghanistan, Spokesman for the national disaster authority Mullah Janan Saeq said Wednesday.

In the last couple of days, heavy rains, snow and flash floods have impacted most parts of the poverty-stricken country.

European leaders set to meet in London

London/Washington, March 1 (UNI) : European leaders are set to meet on Sunday for an emergency summit on Ukraine, amid the fallout from the bust-up between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Oval Office. France's President Emmanuel Macron, Poland's PM Donald Tusk, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, UK PM Keir Starmer and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen immediately threw their support behind the Ukrainian president after the White House shocker.

They are meeting on Sunday, March 2, in London for a summit on Ukraine organized by Starmer. Meanwhile, Zelenskyy is meeting with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer Saturday, a day after the tense verbal exchange between the US President, his Vice President JD Vance and Zelenskyy, which left the world gasping.

Britain's Starmer and President Emmanuel Macron of France have led efforts to convince Trump to continue supporting

Ukraine. The spat in the Oval Office in front of the media has called into question whether that support will continue, and if the United States will proceed with a dramatic rapprochement with Russia's Vladimir Putin. Most European countries came out in support of Ukraine, breaking with Washington as differences in the trans-Atlantic alliance built over the past 80 years burst into public view. "Today it became clear that the free world needs a new leader. It's up to us, Europeans, to take this challenge," European Union foreign minister Kaja Kallas said, NBC News reported.

Friday's meeting at the White House was meant to jump-start talks on a deal over Ukraine's critical minerals, but degenerated into confrontation. Zelenskyy's "dignity honors the bravery of the Ukrainian people," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen posted on X. "Be strong, be brave, be fearless. You are never alone, dear President Zelenskyy. We will continue working with you for a just and lasting peace."

SL Navy drives infrastructure devt for annual Kachchativu fete

Colombo, Mar 1 (UNI) : The Sri Lanka Navy is working in full swing to establish infrastructure and facilities for the convenience of devotees visiting Kachchativu Island in the Jaffna Peninsula to participate in the annual two-day Saint Antony's Church festival that begins on April 14. The Sri Lanka Navy in an official statement said here on Saturday that following the directives from Commander of the Navy and overseen by Commander of Northern Naval Area, the Naval personnel were actively involved in the development of

European leaders defend Zelensky after fiery White House meeting

Brussels, Mar 1 (UNI) The open clash between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House on Friday prompted an outpouring of support from European leaders for Zelenskyy and his country.

"Your dignity honors the bravery of the Ukrainian people. Be strong, be brave, be fearless. You are never alone," European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said on social media platform X, adding, "We will continue working with you for a just and lasting peace."

"Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians do. Therefore we are working on a common path to a lasting and just peace," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz posted on X. "Ukraine can rely on Germany -- and on Europe."

"We were all right to help Ukraine and sanction Russia three years ago, and to continue to do so," French President Emmanuel Macron said, calling for respect for those who have been fighting since the beginning.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said: "Dear Ukrainian friends, you are not alone."

Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar said her country "upholds the principles and respect of international law and international relations," noting "what we witnessed in the Oval Office today undermines these values and the foundations of diplomacy."

"We stand firmly in support of Ukraine's sovereignty," she continued. "It is time for Europe to take the lead on

the path to peace in Ukraine. With respect for international law, UN Charter, fairness and above all ... decency."

Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said: "We stand with Ukraine more than ever. Time for Europe to step up its efforts."

Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said: "Croatia knows from its own experience that only a just peace can last. The Croatian government stands firm in its belief that Ukraine needs such a peace -- a peace that means sovereignty, territorial integrity, and a secure Europe."

Other European leaders rallied to defend Ukraine in similar messages, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Antonio Costa, Irish Taoiseach Micheal Martin, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda, Moldovan President Maia Sandu, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

Zelenskyy in response quoted these posts with "Thank you for your support." But not all European leaders backed Ukraine. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban praised Trump on X, saying the U.S. president "stood bravely for peace. Even if it was difficult for many to digest."

Earlier in the day, a press conference at the White House where Trump and Zelenskyy were scheduled to sign the U.S.-Ukraine minerals deal was canceled, following the stunning clash between the two inside the Oval Office which ended with Zelenskyy leaving the meeting.

3 policemen injured in police station attack in Karachi

Islamabad, Mar 1 (UNI) : Three policemen were injured in an attack on a police station in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi on Saturday, officials said. Some unidentified assailants hurled a cracker explosive at the police station, and fled the scene, sources from Karachi police told Xinhua. The device landed inside the premises, causing injuries to the cops, and

infrastructure in Kachchativu, including setting up sanitation and drinking water facilities, temporary shelters, roads, jetties and ensuring electricity supply for the upcoming festival.

Apart from that, Sri Lanka Navy is set to deploy lifesaving teams and medical teams with a temporary Sick Bay for the safety and security of the devotees attending the festival, besides undertaking colour washing and repairs of the shrine, built by the Lankan Navy, and cleaning of surrounding area and roads leading to the premises.

The Navy also made all arrangements to ferry priests, officials, devotees as well as equipment needed for the festival, from Kankasanthurai and Kurikadduwan to the Kachchativu islet, it added.

Scores of Indian pilgrims, mostly fishermen participate in the St. Antony's church festival though the 275-acre uninhabited Islet was ceded to Sri Lanka by India in 1974 as a goodwill gesture. As per Indo-Sri Lanka agreement, fishermen of both countries were allowed to fish near the Islet, dry their fishing nets and offer prayers at the church.

damaging several parked vehicles.

The injured personnel have been shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. Authorities have summoned the bomb disposal squad to assess the situation, while security forces have cordoned off the area and launched an investigation to trace the perpetrators.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.

Tech & Career

Tips to crack your job Interview

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question.

Here are a few tips on how you can sail through your first job interview. The foremost issue all organizations face is that candidates do not match up to the needs of the job. Many job aspirants look at their careers from a myopic view of brands and fancy designations coupled with fat salaries. The first five years of one's professional life are formative, which is why this period should be utilized to gather profound professional experience. This is not the time to hunt for a cozy post.

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self-assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question. Visualise yourself as a part of the organization:
How confident do you feel about being there? Is the work in line with your interest and natural abilities? The inner call, backed up by research, is crucial before you choose to go for the interview. There is a job for everyone; they just need to be in the right place.
- A lot of engineers may actually do well in creative positions than technical roles. If technical expertise is your area of interest and prowess, go for it. Evaluate which subject or activity you are best at. It shows your interest and natural inclination. If the inner call says, 'choose an alternative career,' please do so. Do not succumb to social pressure. It is better to succeed than to 'ape' and remain mediocre.
- The interviewer has been entrusted with the task of hiring the best in a competitive environment. It is thus your responsibility to convince him/her of your capabilities. Data and facts always help, so converge on tangible information rather than abstract points.

However, the statistics must be focused on competencies.
- Provide information on your strengths with evidence of its practical application in real life.
- Talk about your extracurricular activities and the difficult choices you made in life; it shows leadership attributes and job-fit skill sets.
- Talk about facts that show you make



brought you where you are today - it exhibits strength of character.
- Speak about your career vision. When you know how the job

fits in the grand picture of your career, the interviewer is most likely to choose you because it creates certainty. This is rare because many engineering graduates are disillusioned and openly talk about being explorers. Be clear where you wish to go. Employers would not like to waste time, money and effort on individuals who are continually

exploring. If that is the case, go for career advice or seek other professional help before interviews. In the case of engineers, interviewers' expectations are going to be specific. They look for thought leadership, precision in all you do, the ability to comprehend a problem and create solutions, an innovative mindset and critical thinking. As an engineer, your ability to lead a team will carry tremendous weight. Above all, one must "look and feel" like an engineer and not a casual person from nowhere. Lastly, understand that rejection has nothing to do with you personally. It is about an understanding that your abilities do not suit the job. So, gear up for the next opening.

Recruitment as a Career option after 40

Looking for a career post 40? Maybe you can turn to recruitment. You have been working for about 15-18 years. You have seen your role grow and expand and you have matured as an individual, but on the work front, there is a lot of operational maintenance and opportunities for growth may be getting limited both laterally and upwards.
Even if you move to another company, after the initial months of being onboarded and throwing yourself into work, you may realise that there is nothing new being added to your experience. You are in a limbo as to where your career is heading. What can you do that will keep you engaged intellectually, put to best use your network and knowledge and at the same time, give you back your zest for risk taking and FINANCIAL rewards?
Does this sound familiar?
If yes, have you considered professional executive recruit



- As a candidate, how was your experience of working with recruiters?
- Lastly, how many times did you meet work with a recruitment partner who came from a similar background and understood you and your need thoroughly and were able to meaningfully contribute to the discussions?
The truth is that there is a dearth of professional executive recruitment service providers in a vast MARKET like India. And more than ever, with the war for talent brewing in many industries, this is the right time to get into the recruitment business and start mentoring the careers of people who

lack direction. You may ask, "I don't have a recruitment HR background, how will I recruit?" So, we will let you in a little secret recruitment begins as a science. It's highly methodical you learn it by the book and over a period of time, you hone it into a fine art. And here is another open secret anybody can recruit. Not convinced yet? Here are two great reasons why recruitment becomes a choice of vocation in your 40s:
Your experience:
By the time you are 40, you have gained enough experience in the MARKET - this gives you an edge over many recruiters who recruit with no industrial knowledge. You know the industry by its length and breadth, understand what talents and skills are required to fill a role, know how the remuneration cycle works within that industry and the kind of talent that is available in the market.
Your network:
During your tenure with a particular industry, you've probably met all the movers and shakers within your industry and that again gives you the edge over your competitors. Aside from the connections you already have, you're decades ahead of the competition in terms of interpersonal skills. There is also movement of employers preferring to work with niche recruiters. Niche recruiters are specialists they don't cater to all sectors; they cater to the industry market that they are familiar with and confident about; and this is what makes them successful. They know the needs of their clients and understand talent in their sector and hence are able to understand the best talent for their clients.



ment as a business opportunity? To help you understand why this could be a meaningful proposition for you, think back to your corporate life and ask yourself:
- How did you find people talent for your team?
- What were your expectations from your recruitment partners and how well were they met?
- Have you ever wished you could recruit your team members yourself, but couldn't due to paucity of time?



Here's how to influence People at work

Being authoritative is not the only way in which you can exercise power within a team or an organization. Here are a few simple tips to help you influence those around you in the workplace without coming across as too bossy.

Take a situation where you have just been promoted and are now in charge of leading and motivating others. You want to drive new initiatives and will need others to agree and cooperate with you. How will you inspire action? If you think formal authority alone is enough to be persuasive, think again.
To quote Kate Blanchard, co-author of One Minute Manager, "In the past, a leader was a boss. Today's leaders must be partners with their people. They can no longer lead solely based on positional power." The authority that stems from your position as manager is just one of the many sources of power that you can rely on to get things done. Your knowledge, network, reputation, character and personal charm are other sources you can and should tap into in order to accomplish your mission. Here are some strategies to activate your other power bases that will allow you to make a difference in your organization:
- GAIN CENTRALITY AND

ENHANCE YOUR CREDIBILITY
"Knowledge is power" ~ Francis Bacon
It can hardly be debated that people who lack formal power can exert very little influence on others. Your recent promotion might have brought you more formal power than you had before, but it may not be enough to fulfill your high-level ambitions. If you aspire to gain access to important organizational resources or visibility with top-level executives, you must enhance your credibility and gain centrality in the organization.
To achieve this, ask yourself if you have something unique to offer to your organization that will make you indispensable. Perhaps you enjoy an enviable reputation for being honest or dependable; how about your knowledge and expertise? Knowledge indeed is power. If people perceive you as someone knowledgeable, hard-working or trustworthy, they are more likely to be influenced by you.
- DEVELOP NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES
"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" ~ Old



African proverb
When you become a manager, you don't just get formal authority but also new duties and responsibilities. You must learn to manage not only your team, but also the context within which it operates. Oftentimes, you will have far less time and autonomy than you might have imagined. This is why you need to rely on the cooperation of other people to get things done swiftly. These individuals could be people

within the organization (such as your peers, supervisors or direct reports) as well as people outside the organization (such as customers, vendors, and competitors). You cannot demand commitment from people; you have to earn it.
One way to do this is by building networks and alliances to accomplish your goals. Create opportunities to spend time with your supervisor, peers or customers. You can do this at office as well as in less formal settings such as over lunch. Be open to being an active participant in your organization. Getting involved in community projects or other special organizational initiatives will allow you to get to know people from other divisions.
- DEVELOP AND EMPLOY ELOQUENCE
Studies have shown that people who are more expressive generally have a greater ability to lead and influence others. Why? Because they are more aware of their ideas, emotions and reactions; they, therefore, have a tendency to reach a greater audience than less expressive people. So, the final recommendation would be to develop your communication skills and eloquence. It will allow you to inspire and motivate people. However, remember, that if you don't walk your talk, an 'inspiration gap' will surface which will eventually cause you to lose credibility.
In conclusion, it pays to remember that power is not about having absolute control, exploiting people in selfish ways or manipulating others. The proper attitude to have towards power is to see it as a tool to influence people in an ethical way to achieve desired organizational outcomes. Staying true to your core values and beliefs and engaging others when exercising power will allow you to use it in a more authentic and responsible manner.

India, New Zealand clash for top spot in Group A

Dubai, Mar 1 (UNI) : The Champions Trophy is reaching its decisive phase, with the group stage nearing its conclusion and teams battling for supremacy. India has already sealed a semifinal berth, while New Zealand has also progressed, setting the stage for a highly anticipated Group A clash between the two sides here on Sunday.

New Zealand has consistently proven to be a formidable force in ICC tournaments, and their performances in this edition have been no exception. The Kiwis opened their campaign with a commanding victory over the hosts and followed it up with a convincing win against Bangladesh. India, on the other hand, showcased their dominance with a comprehensive win over Bangladesh before Virat

Kohli's masterclass against Pakistan ensured the arch-rival's early exit.

Both teams have executed their game plans effectively, with key players stepping up at crucial moments. Michael Bracewell played a stellar role in New Zealand's win over Bangladesh, receiving ample support from the bowling attack. India's spinners played a decisive role in dismantling Pakistan, while Kohli's magnificent century highlighted his return to form. Additionally, Rachin Ravindra made a significant impact, etching his name in the record books with a stunning hundred.

With a semifinal spot confirmed, India may opt to rest captain Rohit Sharma and pace spearhead Mohammed Shami for the upcoming encounter. However, the presence of an in-form Kohli will pose a

major challenge for New Zealand's bowling unit, led by Mitchell Santner. The former India captain's stellar knock against Pakistan reaffirmed his ability to deliver on the big stage.

Ravindra, meanwhile, has been a standout performer for New Zealand. The 25-year-old's match-winning 112 against Bangladesh underlined his ability to thrive in ICC tournaments, marking his fourth century in such events. His form will be crucial for the Kiwis as they look to challenge the Indian attack.

Both teams possess formidable bowling arsenals. While Bracewell and William O'Rourke have led New Zealand's charge, India has relied on the pace duo of Shami and Harshit Rana. The upcoming encounter will serve as a key test for both sides.

India's vice-captain Shubman Gill has been one of the tournament's standout batsmen. The 25-year-old began his campaign with a century against Bangladesh and followed it up with a crucial 46 against Pakistan. Having delivered notable performances against New Zealand in the past, including an unbeaten 80 in the 2023 World Cup semifinal, Gill remains a key player for India.

New Zealand has historically troubled India in ICC events, but the Men in Blue ended that streak with their semifinal triumph in 2023. With both teams through to the semifinals, the upcoming contest will determine the group leader. India, with its current form, holds the advantage and will aim to maintain an unbeaten run.

The match is scheduled for 2:30 pm IST on Sunday.

Markram leaves field due to hamstring discomfort

Karachi, Mar 1 (UNI) ; Stand-in South Africa captain Aiden Markram left the field due to discomfort in his hamstring during the ongoing match against England in the Champions Trophy, with Heinrich Klaasen taking over leadership duties in his absence here on Saturday. Markram was leading the side in place of regular skipper Temba Bavuma, who missed the match due to illness. The information regarding Markram's injury was relayed through the broadcast feed.

The extent of Markram's injury remains unclear, but team management confirmed that while he will not return to the field, he will bat in the second innings if required.

Dussen, Klaasen power SA past England in Champions Trophy



Karachi, Mar 1 (UNI) : Rassie van der Dussen's composed 72* and Heinrich Klaasen's scintillating 64 off 56 balls powered South Africa to a commanding seven-wicket victory over England in the ICC Champions Trophy at the National Stadium here on Saturday.

With this win, the Proteas finished as table-toppers of Group B, while England bowed out of the tournament with their third defeat, capping off a disappointing campaign.

Klaasen's knock saw him register his fifth consecutive fifty-plus score in ODIs, joining an elite list of South African batsmen, including Jonty Rhodes and Quinton de Kock.

His fluent stroke play, coupled with van der Dussen's solid anchoring, ensured South Africa chased down England's modest target of 180 with

125 balls to spare. Opting to bat first, England's innings never gained momentum as they faltered against South Africa's disciplined bowling attack. Marco Jansen struck early, dismissing Philip Salt (8) and Jamie Smith (0) within the first three overs. A brief resistance from Joe Root (37) and Harry Brook (19) was short-lived as Keshav Maharaj and Wiaan Mulder dismantled the middle order.

Captain Jos Buttler endured a frustrating stay at the crease, struggling for fluency before falling for 21 off 43 balls. Jofra Archer's valiant 25 off 31 deliveries provided some late runs, but England were bundled out for 179 in 38.2 overs.

Jansen led the bowling effort with 3/29 in seven overs, while Mulder (3/25) and Maharaj (2/35) ensured England never recovered. Lungi Ngidi (1/33) and Kagiso Rabada (1/42) complemented the attack

with disciplined spells.

In reply, South Africa's chase began shakily as Archer removed Tristan Stubbs for a duck and later dismissed Ryan Rickelton (27). However, Klaasen and van der Dussen steadied the innings, dominating the England bowlers with clinical stroke play.

Klaasen's aggression saw him reach his fifty in quick time, taking on the spinners and pacers alike. Van der Dussen, playing the anchor role, accelerated as the target approached, ensuring there were no hiccups in the chase.

Despite a late consolation wicket for England, Klaasen's form and South Africa's commanding performance sealed their spot atop Group B, making their way into the semifinals. England, on the other hand, endured a disappointing campaign, exiting the tournament on a low note.

Dhruv-Tanisha storm into German Open SFs

Mulheim an der Ruhr (Germany), Mar 1 (UNI) : India's Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto stormed into the semifinals of the German Open 2025 badminton tournament after defeating the People's Republic of China's Gao Jia Xuan and Wu Meng Ying in straight games at the Westenergie Sporthalle on Friday.

Paris 2024 Olympian Tanisha Crasto and her

mixed doubles partner Dhruv Kapila displayed a commanding performance to oust the Chinese duo 21-14, 21-17 in just 30 minutes.

Kapila and Crasto made a blistering start, surging to an 11-2 lead in the opening game. Although Gao and Wu staged a brief comeback to reduce the deficit to 13-10, the Indian pair swiftly reasserted their dominance to close out the first game. The second

game proved to be a tighter contest, with the Chinese pair putting up a spirited resistance.

However, Kapila and Crasto held their nerve to seal the victory and secure a semi-final berth.

Meanwhile, in men's singles, India's Tharun Manjappalli, ranked 59th in the world, bowed out of the tournament following a hard-fought 16-21, 21-17, 21-8 loss to France's third-

seeded Toma Junior Popov.

In the women's singles category, world No. 64 Unnati Hooda suffered a heartbreaking exit after a marathon battle against Japan's 41st-ranked Riko Gunji. Hooda claimed the first game 21-15 but squandered match points in the next two, ultimately falling 15-21, 25-23, 24-22.

India's Rakshitha Ramraj and Tasnim Mir also crashed out in the women's

singles section. Ramraj went down 12-21, 12-21 against fourth-seeded Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark, while Mir retired against Nguyen Thuy Linh of Vietnam. Mir was trailing 19-21, 21-12, 0-7 before conceding the match.

With Kapila and Crasto keeping India's hopes alive in the tournament, all eyes will be on their semi-final clash as they aim for a spot in the final.

DCW secure playoff spot with win against RCBW

Bengaluru, Mar 1 (UNI) : Delhi Capitals Women extended their lead at the top of the table and officially secured their place in the next round with a dominant nine-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bengaluru Women in the Women's Premier League (WPL) match at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Saturday.

A blistering unbeaten 80 from opener Shafali Verma powered Delhi to 151/1 in just 15.3 overs while chasing a target of 148. Shafali played an explosive 43-ball knock, smashing 8 fours and 4 sixes, and was well-supported by Jess Jonassen, who remained unbeaten on 61 off 39 deliveries, striking 9 fours and a six to seal the comfortable chase.

RCB managed only one breakthrough when Meg Lanning (21) was dismissed by Renuka Singh Thakur in the third over, caught by Ellyse Perry.

However, Shafali and Jonassen's commanding 146-run stand dismantled the RCB bowling attack, leaving the hosts with no answers.

Earlier, RCB posted 147/5 in their 20 overs, with Ellyse Perry anchoring the innings with a well-crafted 60* off 47 balls, featuring 3 fours and 3 sixes.

Raghvi Bist contributed 33 off 32, while Danielle Wyatt-Hodge chipped in with 21 before falling to Marizanne Kapp.

Budding stars train with professionals at tennis clinic

Bengaluru, Mar 1 (UNI) : More than 60 budding tennis players in Bengaluru had the unique opportunity to learn from professionals at a Tennis Clinic held at the KSLTA Tennis Stadium on the sidelines of the 2025 DafaNews Bengaluru Open on Saturday.

Interacting with 38th National Games gold medalists Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha and SD Prajwal Dev, along with the current edition's doubles finalists Blake Bayldon and Matthew Christopher Romios, and USA's Brandon Holt's coach, Bo Trays, the young players gained valuable insights into the sport.

The clinic featured a Q&A session, live drills, and hands-on coaching,

allowing the young athletes to engage with experienced professionals. Participants received guidance on fitness, nutrition, training routines, and match preparation while also demonstrating their skills in volleys and baseline shots.

Reflecting on the event and the growing stature of tennis in India, Poonacha expressed his enthusiasm: "It was really nice to represent and win a medal for Karnataka in the National Games, and I've noticed the level of young players is getting higher. They are better prepared. Days after that, seeing so many kids here eager to learn, eager to improve is a great sign. This gives us a strong platform for the future." Tournament

Director Sunil Yajaman emphasised the significance of such initiatives in promoting the sport. "It's wonderful to see the enthusiasm among young players. Events like these show the excitement kids have for tennis and reflect the sport's growing popularity in India. With this kind of energy and talent, the future of Indian tennis looks very bright. We hope to see some of the kids from today's clinic at the Bengaluru Open in a few years' time," he said.

Organised by the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association, the DafaNews Bengaluru Open, an ATP Challenger 125 event, began on February 24 and will conclude on March 2 with the singles final.

India's German Open run ends as Tanisha-Dhruv exit in semifinals

Mulheim, Mar 1 (UNI) : India's campaign at the German Open 2025 came to an end as Paris 2024 Olympian Tanisha Crasto and her mixed doubles partner Dhruv Kapila bowed out in the semifinals here on Saturday.

The Indian duo, ranked 30th in the BWF mixed doubles rankings, put up a valiant fight but fell short against the newly-formed Indonesian pair of Rehan Kusharjanto and Gloria Widjaja, losing 25-23, 10-21, 21-15.

Tanisha and Dhruv started strongly, racing to a 4-2 lead in the opening game. However, the experienced Indonesian pair, with world No. 10 Gloria Widjaja and 26th-ranked Rehan Kusharjanto, fought back to take a 12-7 advantage.

The Indian pair showed resilience, winning five consecutive points to level

the score at 12-12. They saved four game points before eventually conceding on the fifth. The Indian shuttlers came out aggressively in the second game and capitalised on their momentum to establish a five-point lead at the mid-game interval. They maintained their dominance to clinch the game comfortably, forcing a decider.

In the final game, both pairs were locked in a tense battle, with Tanisha and Dhruv holding a slender one-point advantage at the interval. However, with the score tied at 13-13, the Indonesians upped their tempo and claimed five consecutive points to secure their place in the final.

Earlier, in the quarterfinals of this BWF Super 300 event, Tanisha and Dhruv had outplayed China's Gao Jia Xuan and Wu Meng Ying in straight games.

Karun Nair century puts Vidarbha on brink of Ranji Trophy glory

Nagpur, Mar 1 (UNI) : Karun Nair's stellar century put Vidarbha in a commanding position on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy final against Kerala at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium here on Saturday.

At stumps, Vidarbha stood at 249/4 in 90 overs in their second innings, holding a formidable lead of 286 runs. Nair remained unbeaten on 132 off 280 deliveries, laced with 10 boundaries and two sixes, guiding his team towards a dominant position. Earlier,

Kerala was bowled out for 342 in first innings after Vidarbha made 379 in its first innings. Vidarbha weathered an early setback but soon found stability through the resolute partnership between Nair and Danish Malewar. The duo stitched a vital 182-run stand for the third wicket, frustrating Kerala's bowlers on a pitch that remained favourable for batting. Earlier in the day, Kerala had sniffed an opportunity after dismissing both openers - Parth Rekhade (1) and Dhruv

Shorey (5) - cheaply with just 7 runs on the board. However, a crucial lapse in the field saw Akshay Chandran drop Nair when he was on 31. The missed opportunity proved costly as the experienced batsman capitalised on it to reach his well-compiled century.

Malewar, who had already made a significant contribution in the first innings with 153 runs, played a solid supporting role, scoring 73 before his dismissal just before the tea break. Kerala bowlers, despite maintaining

discipline, struggled to find breakthroughs on a pitch offering little assistance.

With only one day left in India's domestic season, Vidarbha hold the upper hand, needing to bat out a portion of the final day to all but seal the prestigious Ranji Trophy title. Kerala, on the other hand, face an uphill task of pulling off a miraculous turnaround.

The final day's play will resume at 9:30 am, where Vidarbha will look to extend their lead further and cement their dominance in this high-stakes encounter.

Top seed Chandrasekar-Ho clinch Bengaluru Open doubles title

Bengaluru, March 1 (UNI) : Top-seeded pair Anirudh Chandrasekar and Ray Ho emerged victorious at the 2025 DafaNews Bengaluru Open, defeating Australia's Blake Bayldon and Matthew Christopher Romios 6-2, 6-4 in the doubles' final at the KSLTA Tennis Stadium here on Saturday.

The Indo-Taiwanese duo put on a dominant display to claim their sixth ATP Challenger title, further cementing India's strong doubles tradition at the Bengaluru Open. With this win, at least one Indian player has now featured among the champions in seven of the tournament's nine editions. Organised by the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA), the Bengaluru

Open is an ATP Challenger 125 tournament and is India's biggest international tennis event. Chandrasekar and Ho received a cash prize of USD 9,900 and 125 ATP ranking points for their triumph.

Roared on by an enthusiastic home crowd, Chandrasekar and Ho set the pace early, combining deft net play with powerful groundstrokes. They broke their opponents in the third game, capitalising on consecutive double faults, and secured another crucial break in the seventh to take the opening set.

In the second, a stunning forehand winner by Chandrasekar in the fifth game proved decisive, as the duo maintained their composure to close out the match in just over an hour.

Printed by R. Srinivasan,
Published and Owned by Mohammed Shafi

Printed at Global Graphics,
H.No.60, Thennan Salai Road,
Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, Puducherry - 605013 and
Published from # H.No.156, First Floor,
Thiruvalluvar Salai, Pillaitthottam,
Puducherry - 605013.

Editor: Mohammed Shafi

RNI No.: PONENG/2017/77178

Cell : 9849881368

Email : standardpostpuducherry@gmail.com

Minister of Railways reviewed the progress of various ongoing railway infrastructural projects in Gujarat

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, March 1 : Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics & Information Technology, during his visit to Gujarat on 1st March, 2025, inspected Ahmedabad, Anand & Dahod railway stations and took stock of the progress of various ongoing railway infrastructural projects at these locations.

Minister of Railways Mr Vaishnav on reaching Ahmedabad station, conducted inspection of the station. He also reviewed the progress of the ongoing station redevelopment work. Thereafter, Mr Vaishnav interacted with the media representatives. He informed that this year Rs 17,155 cr have been allocated for Gujarat state, which is 29 times of average annual outlay of 2009 - 14. The investment by Railways in Gujarat is around Rs. 1,27,000 cr including Bullet train. Giving details about Ahmedabad station redevelopment, he mentioned that the work is going on in full swing. The design has been done considering the structural requirements and integrating it aesthetically with local heritage values. A Concourse Roof Plaza have been planned over the railway tracks equipped with waiting area and passengers' facilities. The project also envisages elevated road network connecting Kalupur ROB and Sarangpur ROB which will be more than twice the surface area of existing roads and will facilitate seamless transportation by multimodal integration of railways with National High Speed Rail Terminal (Bullet Train), Metro & Bus Rapid Transport (BRT). Hon'ble Minister of Railways informed that the sequence of work has been planned in such a manner to ensure least inconvenience to passengers and with minimum train cancellation. Then, Hon'ble Minister of

Railways proceeded to Anand and conducted inspection of Ahmedabad - Anand section. Minister of Railways arrived at Anand railway station and conducted inspection of the station. He also visited the One Station One Product (OSOP) stall at the station. Talking to media representatives at Anand station, Shri Vaishnav informed that since 2014, more than 1000 Rail Over Bridges & Rail Under Bridges have been constructed in Gujarat. Also, 3,144 km has been electrified since 2014. The work of KAVACH is also progressing at a rapid pace. The work of Dedicated Freight Corridor is completed in Gujarat. This has enhanced Port connectivity in the region. He further mentioned that 87 stations in Gujarat are being re-developed under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. Later, MR visited

and inspected the Track Construction Base (Rail Welding Work) of Bullet Train project followed by inspection of ongoing Anand High Speed Rail (HSR) station work. Mr Vaishnav interacted with the workers and applauded them for their contribution to nation building and he also took selfies with them.

Mr Ashwini Vaishnav, Hon'ble MR visited Locomotive Rolling Stock Workshop located at Dahod. MR conducted inspection of the Factory, including the Simulator at the Workshop and inspected the newly developed prototype of 9000 HP WAG Locomotive. MR inspected all aspects of this Locomotive which is one of the most powerful locomotives (9000 HP) being manufactured in Dahod workshop. Mr Vaishnav while addressing the media representatives mentioned that the



Railways proceeded to Anand and conducted inspection of Ahmedabad - Anand section. Minister of Railways arrived at Anand railway station and conducted inspection of the station. He also visited the One Station One Product (OSOP) stall at the station. Talking to media representatives at Anand station, Shri Vaishnav informed that since 2014, more than 1000 Rail Over Bridges & Rail Under Bridges have been constructed in Gujarat. Also, 3,144 km has been electrified since 2014. The work of KAVACH is also progressing at a rapid pace. The work of Dedicated Freight Corridor is completed in Gujarat. This has enhanced Port connectivity in the region. He further mentioned that 87 stations in Gujarat are being re-developed under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. Later, MR visited

and inspected the Track Construction Base (Rail Welding Work) of Bullet Train project followed by inspection of ongoing Anand High Speed Rail (HSR) station work. Mr Vaishnav interacted with the workers and applauded them for their contribution to nation building and he also took selfies with them. Mr Ashwini Vaishnav, Hon'ble MR visited Locomotive Rolling Stock Workshop located at Dahod. MR conducted inspection of the Factory, including the Simulator at the Workshop and inspected the newly developed prototype of 9000 HP WAG Locomotive. MR inspected all aspects of this Locomotive which is one of the most powerful locomotives (9000 HP) being manufactured in Dahod workshop. Mr Vaishnav while addressing the media representatives mentioned that the

prototype Loco is ready and the trials are underway. The Locomotive is made in India and is equipped with advanced features including KAVACH technology. Soon, the Loco will start being exported and it will make Dahod a global name across the world. This will in turn make, Dahod's Chandi ka Bhoriyu & Jhuldi also famous all over the world. Hon'ble MR mentioned that the work of the Workshop is nearing completion and will soon be dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister. He mentioned that this Workshop has generated employment opportunities for locals. Minister of Railways Mr Vaishnav was accompanied by Hon'ble MPs, MLAs, public representatives from the respective constituencies. Senior officials of Western Railway, NRSRCL, etc. were also present on the occasion.

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Track Slab Manufacturing Factory at Anand for Bullet Train Project T-3 Package

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, March 1 : A state-of-the-art track slab manufacturing factory has been established to support the ambitious project of India's first Bullet Train, marking a significant milestone in the country's high-speed rail infrastructure. The factory is designed to produce ballastless track slabs (J-slab) of different sizes, as required. **Till date nearly 35000 track slabs have been cast (from two factories), which are equivalent to nearly 175 track km.**

Location: The factory is strategically located near the alignment at 436 km (will be serving for km 393 to 508). This proximity to the project site ensures efficient logistics and timely delivery of track slabs for the bullet train construction.

Production Capacity: The pre-cast reinforced concrete track slabs are generally 2220 mm wide, 4900 mm long and 190mm thick and each slab weighs about 4 tonnes.

The track slab manufacturing factory is designed to produce 60 slabs per day, ensuring high efficiency and a steady supply of critical components for India's first Bullet Train project. The production scope of this factory is the manufacturing of nearly 46000 J-slabs.

This facility will produce track slabs for 115 route km of high speed rail track for MAHSR corridor in Gujarat & DNH (352 km)

Stacking Capacity: To support the large production volume, the factory is equipped with an extensive **stacking capacity of 24000 track slabs.** This allows for the organized storage of produced slabs, ensuring they are ready for transportation to the construction site as needed.

Over 4,100 Firearms Surrendered in Manipur Amid Peace Efforts

Imphal, March 1 (Waari Singbul Network) : In a significant development towards restoring peace and ensuring public safety, over 4,100 firearms looted from police armouries in Manipur have been voluntarily surrendered to authorities. The initiative began on May 31, 2023, when then-Chief Minister N. Biren Singh made an appeal to the public to return firearms looted from security forces and police stations. Stressing the importance of law and order, he had warned of strict legal action against those found in illegal possession of arms and ammunition. Additionally, he urged citizens to lift road blockades to facilitate the movement of security personnel and relief materials, ensuring essential supplies reached affected areas.

Responding to Biren Singh's call, thousands of people in Manipur demonstrated their commitment to peace. Before his resignation as Chief Minister on February

9, 2025, "3,422 firearms" had already been voluntarily handed over to police stations. This milestone, reflecting the collective efforts of the state government, security forces, and the public, played a crucial role in curbing violence. "Further strengthening the initiative, Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla reiterated the appeal on February 20, 2025, urging people to surrender any illegally held firearms. His appeal yielded around 700 additional firearms, including 246 weapons surrendered by the Arambai Tenggol on February 27, marking a significant moment in the ongoing disarmament drive. "Authorities estimate that 6,020 firearms were looted from police stations and armouries during the peak of the ethnic violence.

With over 4,100 firearms now returned, this initiative underscores the power of collective action and the importance of community involvement in public safety efforts.

Manipur has been grappling with ethnic tensions since May 2023, when violence erupted between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities over long-standing issues of land, identity, and political representation. What began as protests quickly escalated into large-scale clashes, leading to hundreds of deaths, mass displacement, and the looting of police armouries. The violence fractured the state's social fabric, deepening communal divides and causing a prolonged security crisis.

The conflict drew national and international attention as security forces struggled to restore normalcy. Despite multiple rounds of peace talks and military interventions, sporadic violence and the proliferation of illicit arms continued to fuel tensions. The surrender of looted firearms marks a critical turning point, signaling a step toward de-escalation and efforts to rebuild trust among Manipur's diverse communities.

4 People who beat up a Mahavitaran team have been arrested



(Standard Post Bureau)

Kalyan/Vasai/Palghar, March 1 : An incident of beating and abusing a Mahavitaran team while taking action against a person who was using electricity illegally even though the power supply was cut off due to arrears took place on Friday (28 February) in Kunde village of Bhiwandi taluka. A case has been registered against the four people in this case at Ganeshpuri police station and the police have arrested the accused.

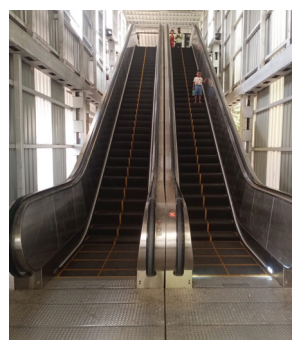
The names of the accused registered in this case are Dinesh Namdev Hoge, Naresh Agivele, Tukaram Agivele, Sharad Patil (residing in Kunde, Taluka Bhiwandi). Under the leadership of Deputy Executive Engineer Katakwar of Wada

Sub-Division, a team of Junior Engineers Abhishek Belsare of Ambadi Branch Office, Janamitra and security guards were conducting a recovery and electricity theft search operation in Kunde village since Friday morning. In this, the electricity supply was disconnected in Kunde village of Dinesh Hoge's house due to arrears and the meter was removed, and the theft of electricity was found. When the team was going elsewhere after completing the formalities, the accused abused the team and obstructed their work. The mobile phone of Janamitra Mahesh Rajput of the team was snatched from his hand and he was beaten up. Based on the complaint filed by Deputy Executive Engineer Katakwar regarding this incident, the

Ganeshpuri police registered a case and arrested the accused.

After this incident, Katakwar, without wavering, strengthened the team and took action against 13 electricity thieves in the campaign conducted on Friday in Kunde village. On Saturday (March 01), the team again conducted a search operation under police protection and took action against five more electricity thieves. With the backdrop of the end of March, the electricity workers have only two options: either recover the electricity bill arrears or disconnect the electricity supply to the defaulters. Considering the prevailing situation, Mahavitaran has appealed to the electricity workers on duty to cooperate. "---

Central Railway's Mumbai Division ensures safe and comfortable travel



(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, March 1 : Central Railway's Mumbai Division has taken positive steps to ensure a safe and comfortable travel by providing better amenities and facilities to its esteemed passengers.

Passenger Comfort:

- Two escalators have been commissioned at platform no 1 of Karjat station at the Kalyan end Foot Over Bridge.
- One Lift for passengers has been commissioned at platform no 1 of Shelu station at

Karjat end Foot Over Bridge. Both the escalators and lift will be beneficial to Senior citizens, Divyangjans, Pregnant Women and the sick.

Passenger Information:

- Four new GPS clocks have been installed at Sandhurst Road station.
- Old suburban train indicators have been replaced with new indicators with better visibility at Ghansoli, Rabale and Airoli stations.
- New All-in One Video Display indicators

have been provided at Ulhasnagar, Vangani and Neral stations

Passenger Ticketing:

- 575 new ATVMs (Automatic Ticket Vending Machines) have been installed on 86 stations of Mumbai Division.
- Process for procurement of 226 more ATVMs has already been initiated.

ATVMs provide fast ticketing solutions enabling passengers to be free of long queues at ticket windows.

Facilities to Divyangjan:

A total of 170 new buzzers have been installed at various stations on Main & Harbour line for the benefit of Divyangjan passengers.

These buzzers are extremely helpful to Divyangjan passengers especially the visually challenged to locate the place earmarked for Divyangjan.

Central Railway has always been at the forefront towards providing safe, efficient, affordable and customer-focussed transportation

solutions and has taken several initiatives, strengthened processes and executed various measures for making the journey of its customers and passengers pleasurable.

All old public announcement system speakers have been replaced with new ones at Ulhasnagar station. "Installation of GPS clocks and provision of better indications and PA system will greatly enhance sharing of train running information to passengers.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Project

(Standard Post Bureau)

Mumbai, March 1 : Total length: 508km (Gujarat & DNH: 352 km, Maharashtra: 156 km)

There are 12 stations planned. (Mumbai, Thane, Virar, Boisar, Vapi, Biliwara, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Ahmedabad, Sabarmati)

Status (As on 27th Feb 2025)

Viaduct construction is in full swing

Viaduct construction: 272 km

Pier works: 372 km
Pier Foundation: 386 km
Girder Casting: 305 km
Bridges on 13 rivers completed, viz. Par (Valsad

district), Purna (Navsari district), Mindhola (Navsari district), Ambika (Navsari district), Auranga (Valsad district), Venganiya (Navsari district), Mohar (Kheda district), Dhadhar (Vadodara district), Kolak River (Valsad district), Vatrak River (Kheda district), Kaveri River (Navsari district), Kharera (Navsari district) and Meshwa (Kheda district)

Six steel bridges and five PSC bridges have been completed

Noise barriers have been installed over 130 km

Progress of 112km of track bed construction has

been achieved so far in Gujarat

Overhead electrification work started in Gujarat

The work on 21 km tunnel between BKC and Shilphata in Maharashtra is under construction

Seven mountain tunnels are under construction in Palghar district, Maharashtra through NATM

Structural work is completed for six out of eight stations in Gujarat

Work has started on all three elevated stations, and the base slab at Mumbai Bullet Train station is being cast in Maharashtra