

MUSTREAD

Boy killed, father injured in Manipur blast

Imphal: A five-year-old boy was killed and his father grievously injured when a bomb exploded at Taolingpung, Namkaolong Part-II village under Khoupum Police Station in Noney district, Manipur. Police identified the boy as Kalangam Pamei and his father as Thuankungam Pamei. The injured person was rushed to Imphal for medical treatment. The bomb was in the compound of the injured man. It exploded when he was cleaning the compound. Police have started an investigation into how the bomb was placed inside the campus.

Rain alert in parts of Maharashtra

Pune: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday issued a yellow alert for rainfall in parts of Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha, while warning of intense heat in some coastal districts of the state. According to the weather department, districts including Dharashiv, Beed, Gondia, Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Solapur, Sangli and Satara are likely to witness rainfall accompanied by gusty winds. A yellow alert has been issued for these areas as a precaution. Meanwhile, hot and humid weather conditions are expected to persist in the Konkan region. The IMD has also warned of a possible heatwave in Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad districts.

Two fire incidents engulf Mumbai property worth crores

Mumbai: Incidents of fire occurred at two different locations in Mumbai on Saturday, causing damage to properties worth crores of rupees, though no casualties were reported. According to the Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) sources, the first fire broke out in the Govandi area, at a timber godown, prompting the rapid deployment of emergency services. The city police control room received the report at 8:40 am, and firefighting teams were immediately dispatched. The blaze took place at a timber godown located at Plot No. 2, PL Lokhande Marg, in Chembur Janta Market, near Kuba Masjid in New Gautam Nagar, Govandi.

2 held as Punjab Police bust ISI-linked terror

Chandigarh: In a major counter-terrorism operation, the Amritsar Rural Police has dismantled an ISI-sponsored terror and cross-border arms smuggling module. During the crackdown, security forces apprehended two suspects and recovered a significant cache of sophisticated weaponry, including an AK-47 rifle, two magazines, 36 live cartridges, and three high-end Glock 9mm pistols. The operation is being viewed as a major blow to the attempts of hostile agencies to destabilize the peace in the border state.

3 die in sludge tank of a textile mills in Rajasthan's Balotra

Jaipur: Three factory workers died of asphyxia while cleaning a sludge tank in a textile unit in the industrial area in Balotra town of Rajasthan on Friday. The trio descended 10 to 12 ft down the sludge tank of the Laljiwala Mill for cleaning it, but fell unconscious therein. Sensing trouble, the fellow workers approached the tank after a while, only to find them unconscious. They were rushed to a nearby private hospital where doctors declared them dead. The deceased are identified as Gumana Ram (25), Vishambhar Tiwari (54) and Shraavan (32), police sources said.

Haryana MLAs camp in Kufri as RS Polls approach; political tension mounts

Shimla: Dramatic political scenes are unfolding in the hill resort of Kufri near Shimla, where a group of Haryana legislators has been shifted amid rising speculation of cross-voting, poaching and horse-trading ahead of the March 16 Rajya Sabha elections for two seats from Haryana. As many as 31 MLAs belonging to the Congress have been lodged at Adventure Resort at Galu nearby Kufri, about 14 km from Shimla, under tight security arrangements. The legislators were reportedly moved from Solan to the hills in a convoy of vehicles, including three Tempo Travellers accompanied by nearly 10 other cars.

PM Modi launches development projects worth over Rs 23,550 cr in Assam's Silchar

New Delhi (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday laid the foundation stone and inaugurated multiple development projects worth around Rs 23,550 crore in Silchar in southern Assam, with a focus on boosting connectivity, strengthening agricultural education and accelerating infrastructure growth in the Barak Valley and the wider Northeast region.

The projects were launched during a public programme in Silchar in Cachar district, where the Prime Minister also performed the Bhoomi Poojan for several major infrastructure initiatives. Modi had arrived in Guwahati on Friday for a two-day visit to the state, during which he inaugurated and laid the foundation for projects worth around Rs 24,250 crore before travelling to Silchar the following morning.

A key highlight of the event was the foundation ceremony for the



166-kilometre Shillong-Silchar Corridor, the first access-controlled greenfield four-lane high-speed corridor in Northeast India. Built at an estimated cost of around Rs 22,860

crore, the expressway will connect Shillong in Meghalaya with Silchar in Assam, significantly improving regional connectivity.

According to officials, the corri-

BJP to go solo in 2027 Punjab assembly elections: Amit Shah



Chandigarh (UNI)

Sounding the poll bugle for the 2027 Punjab Assembly elections during a massive 'Badlav Rally' in Moga, Home Minister Amit Shah said that the BJP will be contesting the elections alone to form the government in Punjab.

Addressing a charged crowd while wearing a saffron turban, Shah cate-

gorically ended long-standing speculations regarding a potential tie-up with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD).

He asserted that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will contest the upcoming elections as a primary force to form its own independent government in the state, stating: "Only the BJP government can make Punjab free from drugs... Punjab has collapsed due to the terror of gangsters, debt, and religious conversions."

Shah also criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, saying, "The AAP government is a government of broken promises and corruption." He accused the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann-led administration of functioning as a "remote-controlled government" and an "ATM for Arvind Kejriwal," alleging that Punjab's resources are being siphoned off to Delhi.

Soldier dies days after wife in cylinder fire tragedy in Jalaun

Jalaun: A tragic incident has emerged from Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh, where a paramilitary soldier succumbed to severe burn injuries nine days after his wife died in a kitchen fire caused by a leaking LPG cylinder regulator.

The incident occurred on March 4 during Holi in Umri town under Rampura police station. The deceased soldier, 30-year-old Brijendra Singh Jodhavat alias Vicky, was serving as a Havildar in a paramilitary force and was posted in Guwahati. He had come home on a month-long leave on February 15.

On the day of the festival, his wife Sangam Devi, 28, was cooking in the kitchen when gas leakage from the cylinder regulator triggered a fire. Her saree caught fire, and when she screamed for help, Brijendra rushed in to save her but was also badly burned.

dor will reduce the distance between Guwahati and Silchar and cut travel time from about 8.5 hours to roughly five hours, facilitating faster movement of goods and passengers while promoting trade and economic growth in the region.

Addressing the gathering, Modi said the projects launched from Silchar would strengthen connectivity and improve the agricultural ecosystem in the region. "From Silchar, several projects aimed at strengthening connectivity and boosting the agricultural education ecosystem in the region are being launched," he said.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the growing strategic and economic importance of the Northeast in India's foreign and trade policy. "Today, the Northeast is at the center of India's Act East Policy. It is becoming a bridge connecting India with Southeast Asia," Modi said.

Want this unjust war imposed on Iran to stop: Omar Abdullah

Srinagar (UNI)

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said he wants the "unjust war imposed on the people of Iran to stop."

He said any development that helps India keep fuel prices low is beneficial, but stressed that lasting benefit will come only when peace prevails in West Asia.

"Anything that allows us to keep our prices low is a good thing. Whether that means buying oil from Russia or being able to transport our gas and fuel supplies through this strait, which is otherwise closed to everybody else, it's good for us," Omar told reporters in Srinagar when asked about two crude oil tankers allowed by Iran to pass



through the tense waters of the Strait of Hormuz.

However, he added that economic benefits should not overshadow the need for peace in the region.

"At the end of the day, what we want is peace. We want this unjust war imposed on the people of Iran to stop," he said.

Omar also criticised attempts by external powers to influence Iran's leadership.

"As I've said time and again, America and Israel don't get to decide who the leadership of Iran is. Israel and the US do not get to decide who the supreme leader is. That is for the community, that is for the people, that is for the citizens of Iran to decide," he said.

BJP questions Rahul Gandhi's conduct at Makar Dwar

Patna: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday criticised Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over his alleged conduct at the Makar Dwar of Parliament along with some Congress MPs. Addressing a press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Guru Prakash Paswan alleged that Gandhi had violated parliamentary decorum and termed the incident as inappropriate.

Paswan said Parliament is regarded as the temple of democracy where serious debates and discussions take place, and such conduct amounts to disrespect for parliamentary traditions. He also questioned Gandhi's conduct and said constitutional institutions such as Parliament should be treated with dignity.

TN polls: Seat-sharing deadlock in DMK Front as Left and VCK not prepared to accept reduction in seats

Chennai (UNI)

Extending a largesse to accommodate new entrants into the alliance by reducing the quota for the long standing allies like the CPI, CPI(M) and the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), has resulted in a deadlock for the ruling DMK, heading the formidable Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) in finalising the seat-sharing pacts with them for the upcoming Assembly elections, the schedule of which was expected to be announced by the ECI in the next couple of days.

"Our demand is for more seats than we contested last time. Seats should be allotted in tune with our strength. There is no justification to reduce our share of seats on the pretext of accommodating new en-

trants," P Shanmugam, the Marxist party's Tamil Nadu unit Secretary, told reporters.

With the CPI(M) firm in securing its pound of flesh, the second round of talks between the party and the DMK on seat sharing scheduled for today (Saturday), has been postponed.

The party, which contested 6 seats last time like the CPI and VCK, had clearly indicated its intention to contest double-digit seats this time around.

"The talks with both the Left parties, deferred now, will resume in a few days," he hoped, but asked "When the Congress could be allotted more and media reports saying that the DMKD (of Premalatha Vijayakanth) being offered more, how

can we be expected to accept lesser number of seats?"

The CPI too is not happy with the DMK's scaling down its share. "We will consider it and our party committee which has been holding talks with the DMK, will take a final call on taking the offer," Party State Secretary M Veerapandian told the media.

Veerapandian said the party would abide by the decision taken by the Election Committee, which was expected to meet tomorrow after the DMK had told its alliance partners to reduce their numbers by one seat to accommodate new partners.

The DMK had already inked seat sharing pact with MDMK allotting it just four seats as against six in the 2021 polls.

NDA will easily win all five Rajya Sabha seats from Bihar: Minister

Patna: Senior Janata Dal (United) leader and Bihar's Rural Development and Road Transport Minister Shrawan Kumar on Saturday expressed confidence that the National Democratic Alliance will easily secure victory on all five Rajya Sabha seats from the state.

Kumar told media that the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal is occupied with internal conflicts and is struggling to keep its own legislators united. He said there was a possibility that some of the party's MLAs might vote against the party's official guideline during the election.

The JD(U) leader stated that the NDA was united and would comfortably secure the required support for the fifth Rajya Sabha seat from Bihar. According to him, victory of NDA candidates on all five seats.

Tamil writer Vairamuthu chosen for 60th Jnanpith Award

New Delhi (UNI)

Bharatiya Jnanpith on Saturday announced that the 60th Jnanpith Award for the year 2025 will be conferred upon the eminent Tamil litterateur R Vairamuthu. He is being honored for his remarkable contribution to Tamil literature, his creativity, and his distinctive poetic expression.

The decision was taken unanimously in a meeting of the selection board of Bharatiya Jnanpith. The committee comprised eminent scholars and literary figures, including Prof. Pratibha Ray (chairperson), along with members — Madhav Kaushik, Damodar Mauzo, Dr Suranjan Das, Dr A. Krishna Rao, Prafull Shiledar, Dr Keshu Bhai Desai, Dr Janaki Prasad Sharma, Dr K.



Srinivas Rao, and the senior publication officer of Jnanpith, Dr Maheshwar.

The renowned Tamil poet, lyricist, and novelist Vairamuthu was born on July 13, 1953, in Tamil Nadu. He is regarded as one of the significant contemporary writers in Tamil literature.

Vice President calls for Innovation in Higher Education at CUHP



Dharamshala (UNI)

CP Radhakrishnan on Saturday while addressing the ninth convocation ceremony of Central University of Himachal Pradesh (CUHP) in Dharamshala called for strengthening innovation, faculty development and academic collaboration to build a globally competitive higher education system.

The Vice President attended the ceremony as the Chief Guest and conferred degrees and gold medals upon meritorious students.

Among those present on the occasion were Himachal Pradesh Governor Kavinder Gupta, Agriculture Minister Chaudhary Chander Kumar, Leader of the Opposition in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly Jai Ram Thakur, Hamirpur MP Anurag Thakur and Kangra-Chamba MP Rajeev Bhardwaj, along with other dignitaries.

Vice-Chancellor Sat Prakash Bansal welcomed the Vice President and honoured him with a traditional Kangra painting and a Narsinga. He said the university continues to set new benchmarks in academic excellence, research innovation and community engagement.

Air India, Air India Express scale up ops to 80 flights

New Delhi (UNI)

Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express added two more flights taking a combined total to 80 scheduled and non-scheduled flights to and from the West Asia region on Saturday to maintain connectivity amid the evolving situation in West Asia.

On Friday, it flew a combined to-



round-trips from Mumbai to Jeddah while Air India Express will operate one flight each from Kozhikode and Mangaluru to Jeddah and back.

Air India Express will also operate its scheduled services to Muscat, including one round-trip each from Delhi, Kochi, Kozhikode and Mumbai.

In addition to the scheduled services, Air India and Air India Express would operate a total of 62 non-scheduled flights to and from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, subject to availability of slots and other prevailing conditions at the departure stations at the time.

These flights are being operated with the requisite permissions from the relevant Indian and local regulatory authorities.

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Many join Congress in Bokaro in presence of state party chief

Ranchi (UNI)

A large number of people from Bokaro district joined the Congress in the presence of Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee president Keshav Mahto Kamlesh on Saturday. The membership drive was conducted under the leadership of Mohammad Ishrafael Ansari.

Kamlesh welcomed the new members by presenting them with garlands and the party's symbolic scarf.

Addressing party leaders and workers after the induction ceremony, Kamlesh said joining his party with a glorious history was a matter of pride and dignity.

He stated the party currently



bears a major responsibility towards the country as people are facing difficult circumstances. Kamlesh alleged that while the Central government is responsible for ensuring easy access to public welfare services, it has failed to fulfill its duties, leaving citizens in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.