

AIADMK-BJP alliance is an alliance of defeat : CM, Stalin

Nainar Nagendran is 13th President of TN BJP, receives election certificate from senior leaders

Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin on Saturday said the AIADMK-BJP alliance is nothing but a corrupt alliance of defeat. In a statement, referring to the revival of electoral pact between AIADMK and the saffron party which was announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah yesterday, the Chief Minister said the AIADMK-BJP alliance is an alliance doomed to fail. It was the people of Tamil Nadu who handed repeated defeats to this coalition, he said.

"Now, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has reconstituted the same failed alliance", Mr Stalin.

Terming the press conference held by Mr Amit Shah was unworthy of the Constitutional post he holds, the Chief Minister said it might be his personal choice to confirm the alliance between AIADMK and BJP, but he did not disclose on what ideological foundation it was formed. Instead, he merely assured that a "common minimum programme" would be created, he added.

AIADMK claims to oppose NEET, the imposition of Hindi, the three-language policy, and the Waqf Act. They also claim to demand that Tamil Nadu's representation should not be reduced during constituency delimitation, Mr Stalin pointed out and sought to know whether all these are part of the "common minimum programme"? Accusing the Union Home Minister of neither speaking about any of these nor allowed the AIADMK leadership to speak, the Chief Minister said instead, Mr Shah used the press conference solely to criticize the DMK, the DMK government, and me personally--something everyone who watched would have noticed. Asserting that the DMK is a movement that stands to protect state rights, linguistic rights and Tamil culture, Mr Stalin said in contrast, the BJP-AIADMK alliance has been formed with a hunger for power and stands against all these ideals. People have not forgotten that AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi Palaniswami, in his thirst for power, mortgaged Tamil Nadu's dignity and rights to Delhi and brought ruin to the state, he charged.



Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : A former AIADMK strongman and BJP Legislature Party leader Nainar Nagendran was officially announced as 13th President of the Tamil Nadu BJP on Saturday evening.

His election coincided with the revival of ties with the main opposition AIADMK for the 2026 elections, which was announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Mr Nagendran was elected unopposed to the post and it was officially announced today by senior BJP leaders including Union Minister G.Kishan Reddy, who is in-charge of

Tamil Nadu, Mr Sudhakar Reddy, outgoing President K Annamalai and others after the elections for the posts of BJP National General Council members at a private marriage hall at Vaanagaram.

Mr Kishan Reddy and other leaders also handed over the certificate electing him as the next President of TN BJP, as shouts of "Bharat Mata ki Jai" by a large number of

BJP cadres, rent the air. Mr Nagendran, who joined the BJP in 2017, was elected to the State Assembly from the southern Tirunelveli in the 2021 polls and emerged as the front runner to

succeed Mr Annamalai who chose to stay away from the race for the elections to the post. During the filing of nominations yesterday at the BJP headquarters 'Kamalalayam',

Mr Nagendran was the only candidate to have filed the papers for the post and was declared elected unopposed. His candidature was proposed by top BJP leaders including Annamalai, senior leaders like Union Minister L

Murugan, former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan, BJP MLA Ms Vanathi Srinivasan, H Raja and others. As the new BJP President, Mr

Nagendran has a major task of guiding the NDA by galvanising the grassroot workers along with his parent party AIADMK, which would be heading and leading the alliance in the elections, with the sole aim of unseating the ruling DMK from power.

Mr Nagendran has a wide political experience, having been elected to the State Assembly thrice.

He was elected for the first time in 2001 from the Tirunelveli seat and served in the J.Jayalithaa-led AIADMK Cabinet handling the key portfolios of Transport, Industries, and Electricity. Though he was re-elected from Tirunelveli in 2011, when the AIADMK returned to power again, he was not accommodated in the Cabinet.

He had lost the 2006 and 2016 Assembly polls by a narrow margin, before winning for the third time in 2021 on BJP ticket and elected as the Legislature Party Leader. Mr Nagendran had also unsuccessfully contested in the 2019 and 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli seats respectively.



14 lakh houses to be allotted in Bihar in 8 months: Chauhan

Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan said that 7 lakh 90 thousand houses were given to eligible beneficiaries of Bihar last year under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Chauhan, who was on a day-long visit to Patna on Saturday, reviewed the central schemes for Rural Development in Bihar. Later, he told news persons here that 5 lakh 20 thousand more houses will be given to those living in kucha houses to build permanent houses.

(See on page 2)

EAM Jaishankar, Italian FM Tajani renew commitment to ...



Visiting Italian Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held bilateral talks here during which they renewed their commitment to take forward the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) strategic initiative. In this context, EAM also welcomed Italy's appointment of a Special Envoy for IMEEC.

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US, Iran hold indirect talks in Muscat, agree to continue ...



The Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that the indirect talks with the United States ended in Oman with the parties agreeing to continue the talks next week. The Iranian and US delegations are holding talks in Oman's capital, Muscat, to discuss the Iranian nuclear programme.

(See on page 5)

Abhishek shatters IPL records with 141-run blitz



Abhishek Sharma of Sunrisers Hyderabad etched his name into the IPL record books with a scintillating 141-run knock against Punjab Kings at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Saturday. The explosive innings, which is now the third-highest individual score in IPL history,

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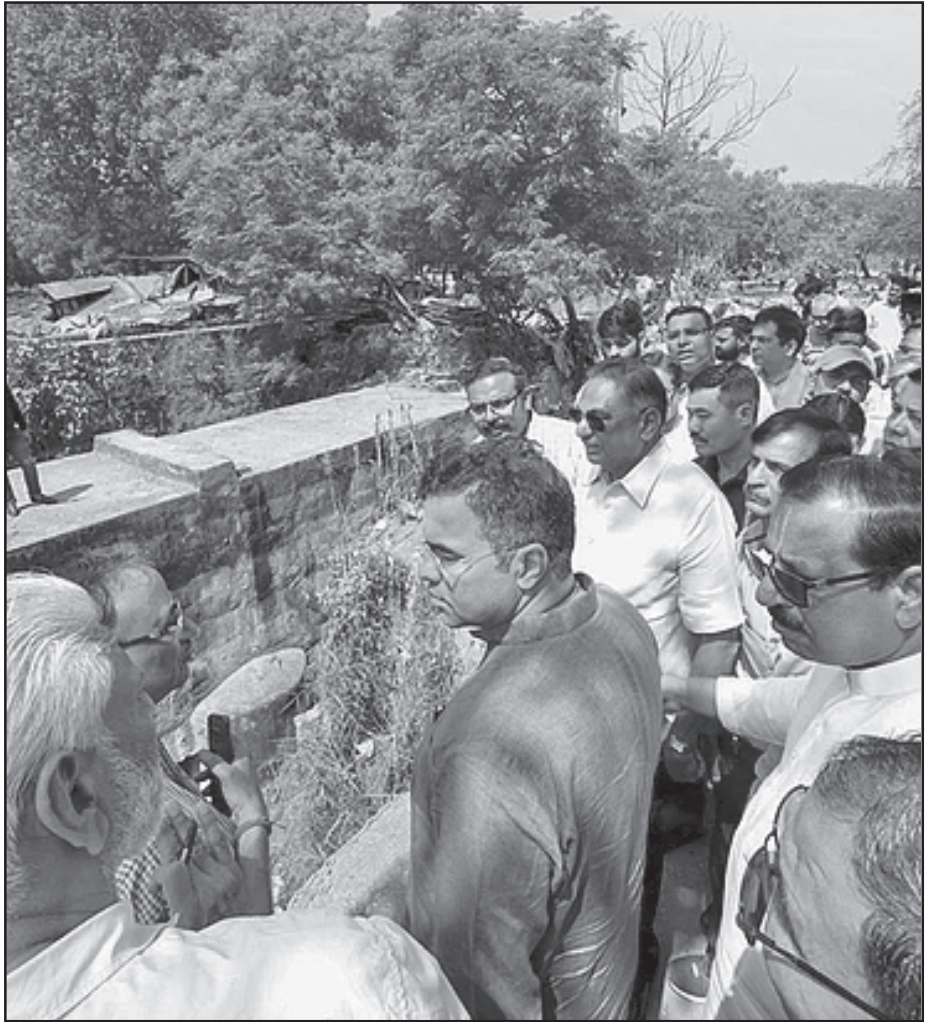
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Delhi Irrigation & Flood Control Minister Parvesh Verma with BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri inspects a drain in Srinivasपुरi area, in New Delhi on Saturday.

Factory output slows down to 2.9 pc in February

New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : India's factory output measured in terms of Index on Industrial Production (IIP) grew at 2.9% year-on-year (YoY) in February 2025 as compared to 5% rise in the previous month, as per official data released on Friday.

Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) data showed mining sector output rose by 1.6% in the month of February this year while manufacturing sector activity expanded at 2.9% during this period.

Electricity sector output rose by 3.6% during the month under review."The

Quick Estimates of IIP stands at 151.3 against 147.1 in February 2024. The Indices of Industrial Production for the mining, manufacturing and electricity sectors for the month of February 2025 stand at 141.9, 148.6 and 194.0 respectively," MoSPI said. Commenting on IIP numbers, ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar said that the deceleration in the month of February this year was broad-based, with all the use-based categories, as well as two of the three sectors barring electricity, witnessing a slower growth in February 2025 vis-à-vis the previous month.

"Following the base effect induced slowdown in February 2025, the YoY performance of most of the available high frequency indicators improved in March 2025, including electricity generation and the mobility and transport-related indicators, such as GST e-way bill generation, port cargo traffic, diesel consumption, petrol consumption, and vehicle registrations. While steel consumption declined in March 2025, this was dampened by a high base," she said.

ICRA expects the IIP growth to print at 3% in March 2025, similar to the levels seen in February 2025.

Governor greets people on Baisakhi

Chandigarh, April 12 (UNI) : Punjab Governor and Administrator, Union Territory, Chandigarh, Gulab Chand Kataria on Saturday extended warm greetings to all Punjabis living in country and abroad on the eve of Baisakhi.

In his message, Kataria said that Baisakhi has a multi-faceted importance. It marks the ripening of the Rabi harvest, a time of great joy for the farmers to reap the fruits of their hard labour.

He pointed out that this auspicious occasion has a special significance in the glorious history of Sikhism, as on this day in 1699, the 10th Guru of Sikhs, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji founded the 'Order

of Khalsa' at Sri Anandpur Sahib to fight against the tyranny of the Mughals and to protect human and secular ethos, and sacrificed his entire family for this cause.

Kataria further said that this day also marked a watershed in our freedom movement in 1919 as many known and unsung martyrs sacrificed their lives in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, at the altar of freedom. This massacre gave a great impetus to the Independence movement.

The Governor appealed to the people to celebrate this festival collectively rising above considerations of caste, creed and religion in a spirit of harmony, social cohesion and National unity.

Fresh snowfall at HP higher reaches ; tourists enjoying snowfall

Shimla, April 12 (UNI) : A fresh spell of snowfall in the higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh and widespread rain across the state brought much-needed relief from the rising temperatures, even as it disrupted normal life in several areas.

Tourists thronged Koksar in Lahaul and Spiti to enjoy the picturesque white landscape, while low-lying regions remained under overcast skies throughout the day. Light drizzling added to the winter-like feel, unusual for mid-April, with thick clouds hovering over most districts.

The snowfall primarily affected higher altitudes including Kukumseri, Gondla, and Keylong, where 7.8 cm, 3 cm, and 1 cm of snow were recorded respectively.

The snowfall led to a

sharp drop in mercury levels across major tourist towns and hill stations. Keylong, the coldest in the state, registered a minimum temperature of 0.1°C. Manali dropped to 9.3°C, Shimla saw a low of 9.0°C, and Kalpa settled at 4.8°C. Kufri also felt the chill at 5.7°C. The temperature dip rejuvenated tourist spots but made roads slippery and movement difficult in high-altitude areas. In Lahul-Spiti district, the Udaipur road was impacted by landslides, affecting local connectivity.

Rainfall too lashed many parts of the state, with Dharamshala recording the highest precipitation at 40 mm, followed by Jogindernagar and Baijnath at 32 mm each. Jot received 24.4 mm, Dalhousie 22 mm, and Palampur 19.2 mm. Solan (15 mm), Mandi (14.8 mm), and Jatton Barrage

and Malraon (14 mm each) also reported moderate showers. Other notable amounts were recorded in Sundernagar (13.4 mm), Chamba (11 mm), Kothi (10.2 mm), and Jubberhatti (10.1 mm), indicating widespread but variable rainfall across the region.

The Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for April 12, warning of thunderstorms accompanied by lightning at isolated places across districts like Shimla, Kangra, Mandi, Kullu, and Sirmaur. "Though no hailstorm was recorded in the last 24 hours, a warning has been issued for possible hailstorm activity in some pockets. Residents and tourists are advised to stay indoors during storm activity and avoid sheltering under trees or near metallic structures." IMD said in the weather forecast.

14 lakh houses to be allotted in Bihar in 8 months: Chauhan

Patna, April 12 (UNI) : Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan said that 7 lakh 90 thousand houses were given to eligible beneficiaries of Bihar last year under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Chauhan, who was on a day-long visit to Patna on Saturday, reviewed the central schemes for Rural Development in Bihar.

Later, he told news persons here that 5 lakh 20 thousand more houses will be given to those living in kucha houses to build permanent houses. He said that in total Bihar would be getting 14 lakh houses in 7 to 8 months. He said the installment amount of the newly approved 5 lakh 20 thousand houses will be deposited in the accounts of the beneficiaries through a single click.

He said that Rural Development schemes were being effectively implemented in the state.

The minister said that 3 lakh Lakhpati Didi have been made here, and a target to make 20 lakh Lakhpati Didi has been fixed for the current year.

Army chief reviews operational preparedness of Vajra Corps along Western borders

New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : Chief of the Army Staff, General' Upendra' Dwivedi visited the Indian Army's Vajra Corps to assess its operational preparedness along the Western borders.

He was accompanied by General Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Command, an Indian Army statement said here on Saturday.

During a comprehensive briefing, the GOC, Vajra'Corps, updated the Army chief on the prevailing security environment and the Corps' readiness posture. General Dwivedi later visited select forward locations to gain a first hand appreciation of ground level preparations by frontline formations.

The Army Chief expressed his satisfaction with the seamless synergy among the Indian'Air'Force, Border'Security'Force, Punjab'Police, and other stakeholders in safeguarding both the border and the hinterland.

Commending the troops' high morale, professionalism, and unwavering dedication, he urged them to maintain the Army's exacting standards of operational excellence. General'Dwivedi also encouraged all ranks to harness cutting edge technologies in line with the Army's transformation roadmap toward a modern, agile force under the national vision of Viksit' Bharat' - 'India@2047.

Nadda inaugurates Central Research Laboratory at AIIMS Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, April 12 (UNI) : Union Health & Family Welfare Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda on Saturday inaugurated the state-of-the-art Central Research Laboratory — a transformative initiative aimed at advancing cutting-edge medical research and fostering innovation at AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

The facility is set to empower doctors, researchers, and scholars to develop impactful healthcare solutions and elevate AIIMS Bhubaneswar into the league of premier medical research hubs in the country.

Nadda also laid the foundation stone for the Multi-utility and Gastronomy Block, a modern infrastructure project designed to meet the evolving needs of students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

The block will offer essential amenities under

one roof, enhancing operational efficiency and community engagement within the campus.

Adding to the digital transformation of healthcare services, the Union Minister launched the revamped AIIMS Bhubaneswar website, equipped with user-friendly features and integrated services for patients and visitors. The website also proudly showcases Odisha's rich cultural heritage while improving access to the institute's healthcare facilities.

As a part of the comprehensive visit, the Union Minister also inaugurated the EHS Clinic and AMRIT Pharmacy, ensuring greater accessibility to essential health services and affordable medicines for all.

Nadda visited the Burn Centre — a one-of-its-kind facility in Eastern India that is making a significant impact in critical care. He

also toured the Swachhata Exhibition at the OPD foyer, the Integrated Health & Wellness Clinic, the Rheumatology & Geriatric Clinic, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Additionally, he planted a sapling at Smruti Upavan, symbolizing a commitment to a greener and healthier future.

Later, the Union Minister chaired a high-level review meeting, assessed ongoing developmental projects, and interacted directly with medical students, sanitary staff, and other employees.

Speaking on the occasion, Executive Director Prof. (Dr.) Ashutosh Biswas said the new research facility will catalyze scientific discovery and translational research, especially in the Eastern region.

"It will open doors to pioneering treatments and improved healthcare outcomes," Dr. Biswas said.

Indian Army brings solar power to border village split by LoC in Kupwara's Karnah Valley

Srinagar, April 12 (UNI) : The Indian Army has brought electricity for the first time to Simari, a remote border village near Teetwal in Kashmir's Kupwara district, by harnessing solar power.

Situated along the Line of Control, Simari is a divided village, with one half lying across in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The village has been fully electrified and LPG-enabled through a joint initiative of the Indian Army's Kupwara based Vajr Division and Aseem Foundation, under the aegis of Army's Srinagar Chinar Corps, Srinagar.

The border village is designated as India's

polling booth number one.

"This project has transformed 53 households with solar microgrids and clean cooking LPG kits, significantly improving the quality of life," the Srinagar-based defense spokesman said.

Until now, the villagers struggled with limited power and primitive cooking facilities.

The initiative is dedicated in the memory of Col Santosh Mahadik, Shaurya Chakra, Sena Medal, who laid down his life in service of the Nation.

In a solemn tribute, Col Mahadik's mother, Kalinda Mahadik, Commander Tangdhar Brigade and Sarang Gosavi, Founder &

MD of Aseem foundation, will jointly inaugurate the solar electrification system in Simari on April 14.

The inauguration ceremony will be witnessed by the local population including women, children, elders, and civil dignitaries.

"This initiative is a testament to the Indian Army's steadfast commitment to border area development, in alignment with the Government of India's Vibrant Villages Programme. It reinforces the Army's role not just as defenders of the nation, but as partners in progress - bringing light, dignity, and opportunity to even the remotest frontiers of India," the spokesman said.

Were Abdullahs "complicit or careless"? LoP targets NC over past killings

Srinagar, April 12 (UNI) : Leader of Opposition and BJP legislator Sunil Sharma on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the National Conference (NC), questioning the party over the killing of nearly 10,000 of its workers.

He asked whether the NC leadership was "complicit in the killings, hand in glove with the perpetrators, or simply too negligent and ineffective" to prevent the killings.

"NC has been saying a very big thing both inside the Assembly and outside that around 10,000 of its workers were killed. They were killed Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah were holding the charge of Home department. Since the government of India took over the charge of law and order not a single worker of the National Conference was killed here. So, what does this show?" the LoP said while addressing a press conference in Srinagar.

"Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah must answer whether they were complicit in these killings or

hand on glove with the killers or too relaxed to handle the situation," he said.

The LoP said the workers of NC were safe presently because of Home Minister Amit Shah is responsible for their safety and security.

Sharma, who was accompanied by party colleague R.S. Pathania, also launched a scathing attack on the NC, accusing it of betraying public trust and mishandling the security situation during its previous tenure.

He said the NC deliberately disrupted Assembly proceedings under the pretext of the Waqf Amendment Bill to avoid answering pointed questions raised by opposition lawmakers.

"For the first time in the history of the J&K Assembly, the government itself disrupted the House for three consecutive days. The Speaker and government is yours and you don't allow the Assembly to run. It was drama and on the pretext of Waqf Bill they didn't allow

the Assembly to function," Sharma said.

He alleged that the move was aimed at preventing the discussion of public issues, as a record number of bills, resolutions, and call attention motions had been submitted by members.

"The government ran away because it didn't want to answer. It deliberately avoided debate," he added.

Sharma reiterated the BJP's commitment to the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

"Statehood is our promise—BJP's promise. The people didn't elect you(NC) just to sit here; they want solutions," he said.

He also questioned the status of key public promises, including employment. "You said you'd provide five lakh jobs—that's one lakh per year, or 50,000 government jobs every six months. Where are those jobs? Apart from a appointment linked to the National Conference through backdoor, what employment have you given to common people?" he asked.

NC hits back at BJP's Sunil Sharma, says he failed as Opposition leader

Srinagar, April 12 (UNI) : Hours after Leader of Opposition and BJP legislator Sunil Sharma questioned National Conference over the killing of nearly 10,000 of its workers, the NC on Saturday hit back, saying that Sharma had likely been scolded by his party leadership in Delhi for failing spectacularly as an opposition leader in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

NC Chief Spokesperson and legislator Tanvir Sadiq mocked at Sharma's recent press conferences, saying, "Two press conferences in two days, and the BJP's Leader of the Opposition still can't manage to explain anything, looks like he's been scolded by Delhi and his own party for failing spectacularly as an opposition leader in the assembly!"

In a post on X, Sadiq challenged the logic of LoP Sharma that around 10,000 NC workers were killed when Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah headed the Home Department.

"One of these days, we might just expose the full extent of his nonsense. But for now, let's address his latest gem: blaming the NC for the deaths of NC workers during our government. By that logic, is the BJP responsible for every single security force casualty from 2019 till today—including the tragic martyrdom of a JCO just now? May he RIP. Whose failure is it then, LOP sahab?," questioned Sadiq

Two students killed, 20 injured as college bus overturns in North Kashmir

Srinagar, April 12 (UNI) : Two students were killed and 20 others injured when a college bus in which they were travelling overturned in Handwara sub-district of North Kashmir on Saturday, officials said.

The officials said a bus carrying 27 students from Degree College Sogam in Kupwara, who were on a picnic to the popular tourist destination Pahalgam, met with a tragic accident near Vodhpura in Handwara this morning.

The vehicle reportedly skidded off the road and overturned, leaving at least 22 students injured.

"All the injured children were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital. Unfortunately, one of them was declared dead on arrival," an official said. "Out of the two critically injured who were shifted to Srinagar hospital, one succumbed to her injuries."

One of the deceased girl was identified as Tabassum Mushtaq. A case has been registered in Police Station Handwara and investigation has been taken up. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and several political leaders expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident.

BJP Govt misusing Central agencies against TN Govt : DMK on ED actions

Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : The Ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu on Saturday flayed the BJP government at the Centre of misusing the Central agencies like the ED, to target opposition parties, state governments and political leaders in non-BJP- ruled States.

Talking to reporters, N.R. Elango, Rajya Sabha MP and DMK Legal Wing Secretary said amidst the current situation regarding bank loans and interest payments, the ED has filed a case lacking legal foundation.

As part of the BJP's politically motivated conspiracy, the central agencies, including the ED are being misused to target opposition parties, state governments and political leaders, he said

Referring to the probe into the bank loan taken by a private company, he said it has been falsely portrayed as if it involves the Tamil Nadu Government and its officials. The ED has disseminated misleading and unverified information, he said. Noting that the recent ED action in Chennai pertains to a private company's bank loan, Mr Elango said the company has been repaying the loan and interest regularly, and there has been no legal violation.

Furthermore, the Madras High Court had already ruled that there is no evidence to justify involving ministers in this matter. This has been clearly stated in a prior court order, he said. The ED's allegations, without proper evidence or legal backing, are baseless and aimed at spreading disinformation, he said.Asserting that claims about illegal financial transactions within the government administration have no credible foundation, the Rajya Sabha Member said the ED has wrongfully initiated arrests based on such assumptions.

Regarding the government's administrative functions, without any official complaint, document, or legal proceeding indicating irregularity, the ED's justification for its involvement lacks any merit.

In this context, the DMK Legal Wing strongly condemns the ED's politically driven and baseless actions intended to malign the party's image, Mr Elango said.

"These political maneuvers, disguised as anti-corruption efforts, are clearly designed to harass opposition leaders under the guise of law", he said.

The ED instead of functioning independently as per the law, is being weaponized as a tool of the BJP-led government.These actions are unacceptable and must be viewed as politically orchestrated attacks and all such politically motivated ED operations will be legally challenged and defeated, he said.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Jayanti celebrated

New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : The birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, a great social reformer and revolutionary thinker who laid the foundation of women's education in India, was celebrated at Maharashtra Sadan in New Delhi.An official media statement stated that, resident Commissioner and Secretary R. Vimala offered

flowers and paid tributes at the program organized near the complete statue of Mahatma Phule in the premises of Maharashtra Sadan located at Kasturba Gandhi Marg and in the hall of Maharashtra Sadan located at Copernicus Marg.On this occasion, officers and employees present also offered flowers and paid tributes to the image of Mahatma Phule

J&K ACB books ex-revenue official among others for illegal mutation

Jammu, April 12 (UNI) : Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau on Saturday registered a case against former revenue officer and others into the allegations of illegal mutation.

The official spokesman here said that a case has been registered against one Tarsem Lal, then Tehsildar Vijaypur and Zassin Malik then Patwari, Patwar Halqa Gurha Slathia as well as beneficiary namely Rameshwar Singh and others.

The instant case was registered on the outcome of a verification conducted by Anti-Corruption Bureau into the allegations that the concerned revenue officer attested illegal mutation of Village Rajinder Singh Pura, Tehsil Vijaypur, in favour of Rameshwar Singh as tenant (Gair Maroosi), for land measuring 81 Kanals 19 marlas, contrary to the provisions of Agrarian Reforms Act 1976 and guidelines notified in the circulars and notifications by the government pertaining to the protection of state land besides procedure adopted in the proprietary land etc.

During verification, he said that it surfaced that the land in some khasra numbers is recorded as state land, but instead of evicting encroacher from state land, the same has been entered in mutation No. 1102 in order to confer undue benefit to beneficiary.

Similarly, the land in some Khasra numbers is recorded as proprietary land but as per Jamabandi of 1995-96, the said land in same Khasra numbers are recorded as state land, whereas in mutation no. 1102, the land of one Khasra number is entered as proprietary land, the land in other two Khasra numbers is entered as state land.

Annamalai among top TN BJP leaders elected to Natl Gen Council

Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : Strengthening Tamil Nadu BJP's presence at the National Council, top state leaders, including former TN President K Annamalai were elected to the General Council in the elections held on Saturday.This was announced by Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh and other senior leaders, while officially declaring former AIADMK Minister and BJP Legislature Party leader Nainar Nagendran as the 13th President of the State Unit.Apart from Mr Annamalai, among those unanimously elected to the BJP's National General

Council included former President and Union Minister L Murugan, former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan, former Telangana Governor Ms Tamilisai Soundararajan, BJP MLA Ms Vanathi Srinivasan, and senior leader H Raja and others.

TN Cyber Crime police warns public against fraudulent investment portals using celebrities names

Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : The Cyber Crime Wing of Tamil Nadu police on Saturday warned the people of social media posts promoting fraudulent investment portals using fake news of celebrities.

A release from the Cyber Crime Police Headquarters here said with the spread of social media posts containing sensational headlines involving well-known persons and forged logos of popular news outlets, promoting fake multi-bagger investment opportunities through trading, cryptocurrency, and other financial schemes, it has already issued an advisory to safeguard the public from falling prey to such cyber frauds.

The proliferation of such social media posts with fake news involving public figures like Shreya Ghoshal, Dr Sudha

Army foils infiltration bid, JCO martyred in Sunderbani sector

Jammu, April 12 (UNI) : A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) has attained martyrdom as the army has successfully foiled an infiltration bid in the Keri Battal area of the Sunderbani Sector here.

Army in a post on X said, "The GOC White Knight Corps and all ranks salute the supreme sacrifice of Braveheart Sub Kuldeep Chand of 9 PUNJAB."

He laid down his life while gallantly leading a counter-infiltration operation along the Line of Control in the Keri Battal area of Sunderbani on the night of Apr 11.

"His team's valour and Sub Kuldeep's ultimate sacrifice foiled an infiltration attempt by terrorists. We stand in solidarity with the bereaved family in this hour of grief," the army posted.

Jitendra Singh hails global certification for indigenously developed underwater Acoustic Test facility

Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday hailed the global recognition and international certification for the Underwater Acoustic Test Facility (ATF) at the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT),

Chennai, describing it as a proud milestone in India's journey towards scientific self-reliance in underwater acoustics and ocean technology.

After unveiling the commemorative plaque, Dr. Jitendra Singh witnessed a live demonstration of the facility's capabilities, which include precise testing and calibration of a wide range of underwater acoustic instruments such as hydrophones, transducers, and acoustic modems, which were vital for both strategic and civilian applications.

Describing the facility



as a "critical national asset," the Minister highlighted its pivotal role in strengthening India's self-reliance in ocean technology.

"The Acoustic Test Facility enhances our ocean observation capabilities, supports tsunami detection systems, and reinforces national security through its strategic applications," he said.

Established in 2004 under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the ATF is India's

only facility accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) for hydrophone calibration. Since 2005, it has consistently maintained this accreditation and caters to a broad spectrum of users, including naval laboratories, IITs, universities, and major industrial players such as BEL, L&T, and Tata Power.

In 2018, the facility's global competence was

validated when it participated in a Key Comparison Test organized by the National Physical Laboratory, UK, alongside laboratories from seven other countries, including the US, UK, and Russia. The ATF's calibration results matched international benchmarks, establishing its parity with top global labs.

In a significant milestone, the facility was recently recognized as India's "Designated

founder Sadhguru, etc. are being used to promote fraudulent investment sites", it said.

Noting that the Cyber Crime Wing has identified 18 suspicious Facebook posts and 15 associated websites, it said efforts are underway to take down these posts and fake news websites.Explaining the modus operandi on how the scam worked, it said the scammers operate by posting fake and alarming news related to celebrities on social media platforms, primarily on X (formerly Twitter).These posts often come from verified accounts with few followers and are designed to grab public attention using sensational headlines.

When users click on these posts, they are redirected to random news websites that appear legitimate. These pages contain fabricated stories about well-known

celebrities, featuring morphed images and false claims that they earn huge profits through specific investment or trading platforms.

They also include links to fake investment websites, the release said.

The narrative then falsely states that the Income Tax department and the judicial system have reviewed the matter and found the celebrity to be innocent, declaring the investment platform to be legal and trustworthy.

This is a deliberate ploy to build credibility and manipulate readers into believing that the trading platform is legitimate.

By doing so, the scammers promote fake investment websites and trick unsuspecting individuals into investing their money in that website, thereby making them a victim to cyber fraud.

Issuing an advisory to

Laboratory" in the field of underwater acoustics under the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), Paris, through CSIR-NPL, effective January 30, 2024.

This means NIOT now holds the national standards for measurements in underwater acoustics—a crucial responsibility for ensuring measurement accuracy across strategic sectors.Experts say this recognition not only boosts India's scientific credibility but also opens up opportunities for global collaborations in underwater research and maritime technology.

As India scales up its ambitions in ocean exploration and maritime security, the Acoustic Test Facility is expected to play a defining role in shaping future technologies, offering both precision and indigenous strength to the nation's deep-sea endeavours.

Online Social Media Platforms, the Cyber Crime police said Social Media platforms like X, Meta are advised to put in place proactive measures to identify such posts trying to lure innocent citizens into becoming victims of fraudulent activities of these criminal networks.

It was noted that while these platforms are earning huge revenue by means of handle verification fees and advertisements, but efforts to curtail fraudulent activities are not noticeable.

Since this is a cause of concern, public were advised to avoid clicking on suspicious links or posts, especially those using celebrity news or images, making sensational claims, not to trust investment schemes or trading platforms promoted through unverified sources, even if they appear to be endorsed by public figures, it said.

A day after losing DMK party post, TN Minister Ponmudy tenders apology for uncivilised remarks on women

Chennai, April 12 (UNI) : A day after he was sacked from the post of Deputy General Secretary, senior DMK leader and Tamil Nadu Forests

Minister K Ponmudy on Saturday tendered an apology for his derogatory and uncivilised remarks against women.

In a statement he said, having been in public life for so long, he had slipped a bit and expressed regret for his remark. "I deeply regret as my remarks has hurt the sentiments of several people", he said.

"I once again tender an apology to all for wounding your sentiments", he added.

After facing backlash from various quarters, the ruling DMK had on Friday

removed Ponmudy from the key post of Deputy General Secretary for his derogatory and uncivilised remarks at a public event.

His removal form the party post was announced by Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin, who also appointed Rajya Sabha MP Trichy N Siva in his place.

Mr Ponmudy's remarks drew wide and strong criticisms from Opposition parties, including the BJP, and demanded his ouster from the State Cabinet.

It was DMK's tradition that such statements taking action against partymen would be issued by the DMK General Secretary. But

the fact that it was issued by Mr Stalin himself showed that the Party high command has taken a serious view of his remarks.

The DMK faced severe backlash, including from within the party, over the derogatory and misogynistic remarks made by Ponmudy, allegedly linking commercial sex workers with Hindu religious symbols following which Mr Stalin cracked the whip.The viral of Mr Ponmudy's uncivilised remarks, made at a event on April six, went viral in the social media leading to the DMK High Command stripping him of the party post, though the Opposition parties demanded his sacking from the Cabinet.

STANDARD POST

UP gears up for grand Ambedkar Jayanti celebration with full state honours

The 134th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, will be celebrated with great fervour and state honours across Uttar Pradesh on Monday, April 14. A series of events have been planned throughout the state to mark the occasion.

In view of the celebrations, the state government has declared a public holiday.

Under the direction of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the day will be observed with grandeur and dignity. Districts across the state will host grand events, seminars, and tribute ceremonies dedicated to Babasaheb’s life and legacy.

On Sunday, a day before the celebration, special cleaning drives will be conducted in all public parks and memorials across the state—particularly those housing statues of national heroes and great personalities. Residents, public representatives, government officials, and employees will also participate in the cleanliness campaigns.

On Monday, district officials, government staff, and local representatives will pay floral tributes and garland Dr. Ambedkar’s statues. Special programmes focusing on his life, work, and contribution to the Indian Constitution will also be organised.

Various events across the state will highlight Dr. Ambedkar's ideas and his role in drafting the Constitution. The Chief Secretary of UP has directed all divisional commissioners and district magistrates to personally take part in these events and ensure the active involvement of public representatives, intellectuals, and students.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of the state on the occasion of Baisakhi.

He stated that Baisakhi symbolises India's rich traditions and glorious heritage.Celebrated during the harvest season, the festival reflects the agrarian roots and cultural vibrancy of the nation. Baisakhi also marks the day when the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, founded the Khalsa Panth.

The festival is celebrated in various forms across India, often symbolising the start of a new year.

The Chief Minister wished that the festival of Baisakhi brings joy, prosperity, and happiness to everyone's lives.

Xi Jinping’s leadership: Nicholas Burns

The US' high tariffs on China will be a major test for President Xi Jinping’s leadership amid the economic slowdown while the Trump administration’s levies on Beijing could be far more effective if the US takes allies along, former US ambassador to China Nicholas Burns has said.

US President Donald Trump slapped 145 per cent tariffs against Chinese exports and China retaliated with 125 per cent levies on its imports from America.

China is the only country to have retaliated with tit-for-tat levies.

Midway through his tariff campaign against a number of countries, Trump paused the additional duties on other nations for 90 days while imposing more punitive levies on China leaving Beijing to wage a lonely battle to defend its interests.

"The tariff war with the US will be a major test for Xi Jinping simply because the Chinese economy has not performed well in the last few years. Their GDP growth rate is slowing down," Burns told BBC on Friday.



“They still have a major hangover from the property bubble," which had caused a severe crisis in the real estate market, the mainstay of the Chinese economy, Burns said.“They are facing a demographic crisis over the next decade or so. Capital has been fleeing," he said, adding that the Foreign Direct Investment fell by 32 per cent last year in China.

“I don’t think the Chinese government wants to have a sustained trade war. They want to get a trade deal with the United States,” said Burns, who was appointed by former US president Joe Biden and

served as American Ambassador to Beijing from 2022 to early this year.He also said Trump should take the US allies along to make the trade war against China more effective.

“The other issue is the major miscalculation by the Trump administration. We didn’t include on our side of the trade battle, our major trade partners the EU, Japan, and South Korea and those countries along with the US represent more than 60 per cent of the global GDP”.

“So, the way to battle the Chinese effectively, I certainly found as ambassador in Beijing is to get your allies on your

side with us. Because the Chinese cannot match that. Instead, the US has put stratospherically high tariffs on those allies depriving us of that unique advantage," he said, referring to Trump’s imposition of tariffs on a host of countries.

Commenting on China’s tit-for-tat response, Burns said: “It is not surprising the Chinese would have matched us blow by blow...That is what they were doing when I was there as ambassador for over three and half years”.

He said it is important to remember former US president Biden also continued tariffs imposed

by Trump in the previous presidency.

“The reason is China is a major violator of international rules. The Chinese government has not protected the intellectual property rights of the American companies in China," he said.

“Chinese practised forced technology transfer. So, there is a lot of wrong in this picture the Chinese have caused. But the problem for the Trump administration is 145per cent tariffs on Chinese goods. Now the Chinese have nearly matched us," he said.

“The US and China are the world’s largest economies and if the trade war between them continues more than six months it could effectively decouple the economic relationship of the two countries," Burns said.The total trade between China and the US was USD 642 billion in goods and services last year and China is America’s 3rd largest trade partner after Mexico and Canada, he said.

“The tariffs will have a profound impact on the American economy and a

big impact on China globally. We hope at this moment the two governments will find a way to talk," he said.

He discounted claims that China could successfully navigate the crisis.

“It is not true that the Chinese can weather the trade war if it lasts as long as they claim. If the trade war continues at this level of tariffs for six months that would cut into the China-US relationship in a very significant way," Burns said.

The tariffs will affect exporters and importers on both sides.

“That will produce a crisis in the economies of both the countries. That is why this is such an important issue until it can be resolved”, he said.

On who will blink first he said “it is a massive game of chicken" on "an Olympian diplomatic scale". "I don’t think you can ask the other side to blink first and make a compromise, which is not the way it works at this level of diplomacy and politics. But what we can do is to stay in touch with them and talk behind the scenes,” he said.

EAM Jaishankar, Italian FM Tajani renew commitment to take forward IMEEC

New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : Visiting Italian Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held bilateral talks here during which they renewed their commitment to take forward the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) strategic initiative.

In this context, EAM also welcomed Italy’s appointment of a Special Envoy for IMEEC.

Tajani is visiting India from April 11-12, and is accompanied by the Minister of University and Research, Anna Maria Bernini, and a large delegation of businesses, leading universities and research institutions.

FM Tajani also met with the Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. Minister Bernini met with Ministers of State of Science and Technology, and Education.

During the delegation level talks, EAM and FM Tajani reviewed the growing bilateral cooperation under the ambit of the Joint Strategic Action Plan (JSAP) 2025-29, which included the areas of trade and investment, defence and security, space, science and technology, clean energy transition, culture, tourism and people to people ties, a statement said.

They expressed satisfaction at the regular high-level interactions and exchanges, and noted the vast potential of cooperation between India and Italy in areas of AI, cyber, telecom, digital technologies, renewable energy, biofuels, education and academic collaborations, scientific research and mobility of

youth and professionals, among others.

The Ministers reiterated their commitment to elevating the bilateral strategic partnership and ensuring concrete outcomes from the JSAP.

EAM Jaishankar and FM Tajani exchanged views on global and regional developments of mutual interest. EAM welcomed Italy’s continued focus on the Indo-Pacific. EAM and FM Tajani renewed their commitment to take forward the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC). In this context, EAM welcomed Italy’s appointment of a Special Envoy for IMEEC.

EAM, DPM Tajani and Minister Bernini co-chaired the inaugural India-Italy Business, Science and Tech Forum which seeks to facilitate tech collaborations, innovation, academic and R&D partnerships, co-production and joint business ventures.

The forum saw the participation of more than 100 Italian companies and counterpart Indian companies from four key sectors: Industry 4.0 and new technologies; infrastructure, transport and logistics; clean energy transition; and aerospace and defence.

Several B2B meetings were held with the objective of forging economic and commercial partnerships.

An Education, Science and Tech, Innovation Forum was also organized in which Heads of universities and research centres from both countries participated to explore research and innovation, and higher education collaborations.

The Ministry of Science and Technology, GOI and Ministry of University and Research , Italy signed an MoU for cooperation in the field of scientific research.

EAM and DPM also visited the painting of Caravaggio, the 17th century Italian artist at the Italian Cultural Centre. This, along with the exhibition of Roman mosaics and Italian textiles inaugurated during the visit, further enriched the strong cultural ties between the two countries.

India-Italy bilateral relations are acquiring diversity and depth, with regular Leaders level engagement and Ministerial dialogues. The visit and engagements of DPM Tajani were instrumental in taking forward the strategic partnership and diversifying bilateral cooperation across domains, as per JSAP 2025-29, the statement added.Ahead of his India visit, FM Tajani said: “We strongly believe in the Italy–India partnership, particularly in light of the Joint Strategic Action Plan aimed at strengthening our bilateral ties in key areas of cooperation.

“Energy transition, connectivity, advanced manufacturing, defence, security, tourism, migration and mobility are just some of the sectors we intend to promote together during the 2025–2029 period.“In 2024, trade between Italy and India exceeded euro 14 billion, with Italian exports growing by over 30% in the past seven years. The spirit of my visit to New Delhi is to give further momentum to these relations.”

32 civilians killed in paramilitary force's attack in Sudan's El Fasher : Army

Khartoum, April 12 (UNI) : At least 32 civilians were killed in an attack by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State, the Sudanese army said.

"The militia launched a swarm of suicide drones on El Fasher today (Friday), accompanied by simultaneous artillery shelling on the city," the command of the 6th Infantry Division of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) said in a statement on Friday.

The death toll included 4 women and 10 children, with 17 others injured and hospitalised, the army said.

The Coordination of Resistance Committees in El Fasher, a local volunteer group, confirmed the RSF attack, stating that drones and artillery targeted the northern and eastern parts of the city. The group asked residents to avoid the streets due to ongoing drone activity. The Sudanese Doctors Network reported a second RSF strike on the Zamzam displacement camp near El Fasher, though no casualties have been reported. The network condemned the use of heavy artillery in the attack, describing it as an escalation in RSF violence. Ibrahim Khatir, director-general of North Darfur State's Health Ministry, confirmed the attack on the Zamzam camp but told Xinhua that the casualty count remains unclear due to its distance from the city and communication issues.

Since May 10, 2024, fierce fighting has erupted between the Sudanese army and the RSF in El Fasher, part of the broader conflict that has engulfed Sudan since April 2023. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, cited by the United Nations, the conflict between the two factions has claimed over 29,683 lives. The International Organisation for Migration reports that it has also displaced more than 15 million people.

Malaysia to host ASEAN-GCC Summit; China also invited: Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim

Kuala Lumpur, April 12 (UNI) : Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that the country will create history as it gets ready to host the ASEAN-GCC Summit in Kuala Lumpur this May. The Malaysian PM said that China has also been invited as a guest in a show of its openness to all nations.

"Our system, our peace and our strong economic growth have attracted global attention for the summit to be held here," the Malaysian PM said speaking at Pantai Irama here today, according to Malay Mail.

Noting the confidence shown by regional and global partners in Malaysia's leadership and political stability, he said that China will also be attending the summit, highlighting Malaysia's openness to all countries to safeguard the people's interests.

"Malaysia will make history again. For the first time, we are organising a summit of Asean heads of state together with the leaders of the Gulf nations, namely Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman."

"... we've also invited China and there is a strong possibility that its Premier, Li Qiang, will be present."

He added that the country was open to constructive and productive international engagements with all nations, regardless of geopolitical blocs, while determined to safeguard its interests.

"We remain friends with all our neighbouring countries. And remain committed to safeguarding the interests of our people... our people must have access to good job opportunities. (We) Must attract new investments — if it is from (the United States of) America, we accept; from Arab countries we accept, from China we accept," he said. The upcoming summit is expected to open new avenues for strategic cooperation in trade, energy, investment, and technology between Southeast Asia and the Gulf, while also expanding Malaysia's role as a diplomatic and economic bridge between Asia and the Middle East.

Sri Lanka, IMF agree to continue deal talks amid uncertainty

Colombo, April 12 (UNI) : Sri Lanka and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have agreed to continue discussions to conclude a staff level agreement later, following the uncertain trajectory of the international economy triggered by the US trade tariffs. "The recent external shock and evolving developments are creating uncertainty for the Sri Lankan economy, which is still recovering from its own economic crisis," an IMF visiting team said in an end of mission statement, as per Economy Next.

An IMF team led by Evan Papageorgiou visited Colombo from April 3 to 11.

"More time is needed to assess the impact of the global shock and how its implications for Sri Lanka can be addressed within the contours of its IMF-supported program." Sri Lanka, which had almost gone completely bankrupt in 2022 had bounced back since 2023 after India extended it a \$4 billion Line of Credit, making Colombo eligible for securing a \$2.9 billion bailout package from the global money lender in the form of a four-year Extended Fund Facility in March 2023. Colombo currently needs to complete an IMF executive board approval to receive about \$334 million as the next tranche of its facility. However, the new 44% tariff duty imposed on the country by US President Donald Trump as part of his global trade tariffs has made the economic situation uncertain. In its statement, the IMF said: "Sri Lanka's ambitious reform agenda supported by the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF) continues to deliver commendable outcomes.

Afghan authorities build shelters for returned refugees in E. Afghanistan

Kabul, April 12 (UNI) :

The Afghan authorities have started building shelters for refugee families returning from neighboring Pakistan in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, the state-run Bakhtar news agency reported on Saturday. According to the report, work on building residential towns is underway for 374 families in this province's Khas Kunar district. More than 8,025 Afghan refugees, with the majority of them via Torkham border town and some via Spin Boldak and other crossing points, have reportedly returned to their homeland over the past week.

Pakistan reportedly established a deadline last month for over 800,000 undocumented Afghan refugees to return to their homeland after decades of stay in the host country.

Britain bans personal imports of meat, dairy products from all EU countries

London, April 12 (UNI) : The British government announced Friday that it has expanded its ban on personal imports of meat and dairy products to include all EU countries as foot-and-mouth disease spreads across the continent.

Starting Saturday, travellers entering Britain will no longer be allowed to bring cattle, sheep, goats, pig meat and dairy products from all EU countries for personal use.

Items such as sandwiches, cheese, cured meats, raw meats and milk are prohibited regardless of their packaging or whether they were purchased at duty-free shops.

This measure aims to protect the health of British livestock, the security of farmers and Britain's food security, according to the government.

Travellers found carrying these items will be required to surrender them at the border or face confiscation and destruction. In severe cases, violators could incur

Customs officials from India, Nepal hold talks to streamline procedures



Kathmandu/New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : Customs officials from India and Nepal concluded talks in Kathmandu aimed at streamlining trade procedures.

The Indian delegation visited Nepal on April 10 to strengthen the bilateral trade and commercial ties, as well as smoothen issues such as addressing illegal

trade and revenue leakage.

The key areas of discussion in the meeting on Friday included streamlining trade procedures, sharing data on exports, implementing electronic cargo tracking, recognising electronic certificates of origin, border security, and simplifying India's quality certification process for Nepali exports,

Two Pohela Boishakh motifs at Dhaka University set on fire, Cultural Advisor blames 'Hasina's cohorts'

Dhaka, April 12 (UNI) : Two motifs for Bangladesh's upcoming 'Pohela Boishakh' or Bengali New Year celebrations prepared by Dhaka University's Fine Arts faculty were set on fire. The country's Cultural Affairs Advisor Mostofa Sarwar Farooki has blamed ex-PM Sheikh Hasina's "cohorts" for the incident.

Calling the incident an attack on unity and expression, he wrote on his Facebook page: "Hasina's cohorts burned the motifs of fascism at Charukala in the early hours of yesterday. Those who showed this audacity – be it soft Awami League or Awami B team – each of them must be brought under the law, quickly," as per Business Standard BD.

Among the burnt motifs was a humanoid shape depicting fascism's face which was completely burnt, and another was a pigeon - symbolic of peace – that was partially burnt.

Maldives Presidential Palace denies allegations of lavish spending by President Muizzu

Malé, April 12 (UNI) : With the Maldives going through an economic crisis, officials at the Maldivian Presidential Palace were quick to deny allegations of extravagant spending by President Mohammad Muizzu and the First Family, calling them "baseless".

The officials claimed that in Muizzu's tenure, expenses have actually decreased. The claims of extravagant spending were made by opposition-aligned Channel 13, which accused the First Family of indulging in excessive spending during a weekend visit to the Presidential Retreat in Aarah. Minister at

the Presidential Palace (Muliaage), Iqbal Adam, dismissed the accusations as "completely baseless", stating that the administration has taken a firm stance on cost-cutting, particularly in light of the country's current economic situation, psmnews reported. Minister Iqbal said: "Spreading false claims at a time when we are actively working to reduce costs will only sow confusion and discord among the public." He condemned the allegations as deliberate attempts to tarnish the President's reputation.

According to reports, the Maldives has

witnessed further deterioration in economic conditions under President Muizzu, marked by high inflation, increasing imports, and a reduction in fish exports and tourism revenues. The government has reportedly appointed over 300 ministers and 2,000 political appointments, leading to a recurring expenditure of over US\$65 million every month.

As of March last year, the Maldives had a high debt-to-GDP ratio of 110 percent, accounting for an overall debt of US\$ 8.2 billion. Over \$4.8 billion of the loans are domestic, and \$3.4 billion external.

to curb illegal trade, according to Nepal's Director General at Customs Department, Mahesh Bhattarai.

Apart from that, India and Nepal will share import-export data, address revenue leakages, and construct necessary border infrastructure to prevent illegal entry of individuals.

Under terms of the agreement, the electronic cargo tracking system enforced in railways for trade from third countries to Nepal via India would be expanded to roadway (truck consignment) and quarantine facility on the Nepal-India border would also be increased.

The Integrated Check Post (ICP) being constructed in Bhairahawa and Chandani Dodhara would be completed soon. It was also agreed in the meeting that rail cargo would be operated up to Biratnagar, Nepal.

Nepal News reported.

As per an agreement arrived at in the two-day meeting, New Delhi will recognise the certificate of origin issued by Kathmandu, with the two sides jointly agreeing on making the customs process paperless and reducing logistics costs. The two countries will cooperate with each other

Indian ship carrying over 36,000 tonnes rice arrives in Bangladesh's Chattogram Port

Dhaka/New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : A ship carrying 36,100 tonnes of parboiled rice from India arrived at Chattogram port under an open tender agreement, according to Bangladesh's Ministry of Food.

The ship, MV Frosso K, reached the outer anchorage on April 10 and was berthed at the GCB terminal of the port today, said the office of the Controller of Movement and Storage, Chattogram, under the Directorate of Food, according to The Daily Star.

The consignment is part of a government deal to import a total of 4.5 lakh tonnes of rice from India in nine packages, according to the press release signed by Imdad Islam, senior

information officer and public relations officer of the ministry. So far, 3.17 lakh tonnes of rice have reached Bangladesh under this agreement, it added.

Unloading of the cargo began in the afternoon after the rice samples were tested, said an official of the Controller of Movement and Storage office.

India is one of Bangladesh's largest rice suppliers, exporting according to Dhaka's domestic demand.

Under the recent agreements with the Interim Government, New Delhi exported over 200,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh with an additional 100,000 tonnes under a tender process.

Bangladesh has been

US, Iran hold indirect talks in Muscat, agree to continue discussions next week

Tehran/Washington, April 12 (UNI) : The Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that the indirect talks with the United States ended in Oman with the parties agreeing to continue the talks next week.

The Iranian and US delegations are holding talks in Oman's capital, Muscat, to discuss the Iranian nuclear programme.

Ahead of the talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that Iran is seeking a "fair agreement" with Washington, Mehr News reported.

"Our intention is to reach a fair and honorable agreement on an equal footing," Araghchi said on Iranian state television on Saturday, ahead of his high-level meeting with US President Donald Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff.

Araghchi said there was "a chance" of reaching a compromise "if the other side" adopts the same position. On Saturday

morning, Araghchi and his Omani counterpart, Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi, conferred on the arrangement for the indirect talks.

The indirect talks are being mediated by al-Busaidi.

Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi said that Saturday's nuclear talks between Iran and the United States took place in a friendly atmosphere.

"I am proud to announce that today in Muscat we hosted Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Seyed Abbas Araghchi and US Presidential Envoy Steve Witkoff and mediated to begin a process of dialogue and negotiations with the shared aim of concluding a fair and binding agreement," the top Omani diplomat said in a post on X after hosting the indirect talks.

"I would like to thank my two colleagues for this engagement which took place in a friendly atmosphere conducive to bridging viewpoints and

Kiev violated moratorium on strikes against energy facilities over 60 times: Moscow

Moscow, April 12 (UNI)

: Since the agreement on a 30-day moratorium on strikes against energy facilities was reached, Kiev has violated it more than 60 times, Alexey Polishchuk, Director of the Second CIS Department at the Russian Foreign Ministry, told Sputnik.

"The Kiev regime is indeed maliciously violating the 30-day moratorium on strikes on energy facilities, which was agreed upon on March 18 by the presidents of Russia and the United States [Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump] and then supported by [Volodymyr] Zelenskyy," Polishchuk said. "Since this agreement was reached, the Ukrainian side has violated it more than 60 times," he said.

facing issues related to food security following severe floods, and to cool inflationary pressures on rice prices. The Indian exports of rice come even as New Delhi has withdrawn transshipment facility to Bangladesh.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said earlier this week that the withdrawal of transshipment facility would not affect Bangladesh's exports to Nepal and Bhutan.

India's Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) issued a circular on April 8, announcing that New Delhi is rescinding the use of the transshipment facility to Bangladesh for export via its land routes.

ultimately achieving regional and global peace, security and stability."

"We will continue to work together and put further efforts to assist in arriving at this goal," al-Busaidi said.

On Friday, President Donald Trump told reporters, "I want Iran to be a wonderful, great, happy country. But they can't have a nuclear weapon."

The statement came days after Trump warned that the US would resort to military force if the talks fail, saying that Iran "would face great danger" in such a scenario.

Amid the Muscat talks, in a show of force, the Trump administration has stationed B-2 stealth bombers at Diego Garcia, a remote US base in the Indian Ocean far beyond the range of most Iranian missiles.

The move underscores Washington's readiness to strike if the talks collapse and signals to Tehran that military options remain firmly on the table.

Health



15 best Summer health care tips

Summer brings with it a plethora of problems - skin, hair and health problems like sunstroke, and heat boils. Summer also calls for a change in diet and other healthy living tips. We chalk out the 15 best summer health care tips to practice this summer season.

Heat stroke

Heat stroke, a severe form of hyperthermia, occurs when the human body absorbs more heat than it can dissipate. This is a serious condition and needs immediate medical attention. It is important to lower the

Remedy:

mperature of the body, hence immerse yourself in ice if you have too or take a cold shower. You can prevent heat stroke by wearing loose and light clothes, drink water and do not exert yourself during summer.

Heat cramps symptoms

Muscle pains or spasms usually occur in the abdomen, arms or legs. Spasms usually occur in coordination with strenuous physical activity.

Home remedies:

Rest in a cool place. Drink clear juice or electrolyte-enriched drinks. Do not go back to strenuous activity even after cramps subside

since it may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion symptoms

Heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, fainting, muscle cramps, fainting.

Home remedies:

Rest. Have cool non-alcoholic beverages, a cool shower, bath or sponge bath. Use light clothing. Dehydration symptoms Dry mouth and eyes, dry skin, a condition where sweating nearly stops, muscle cramps, nausea, heart palpitations and light headedness.

Prevention:

Re-hydration with water, clear broths, and any other water replacements that contain electrolytes, like Gatorade.

Home remedies:

Fluid replacement and control through diet and medication. Fever medication.

Skin care: Rosacea

Rosacea symptom is your skin will turn red due to over exposure to the sun and the heat. The redness appears as the excess heat causes the blood vessels to dilate.

Remedy:

Avoid direct sunlight. Always use a good sunscreen with SPF 30+

Skin care: Sunburn

The ultra violent radiation burns the skin when you spend long hours under direct sun. Sunburn symptoms are patches of darkened skin peeling away.

Remedy:

For Indians it is recommended to stay indoors during 10am to 4pm when the sun light is at it peak.

Home remedies:

Mix together the juice of six peeled cucumbers, two cups powdered milk and two teaspoons

dried lavender flowers.

- Apply the above paste directly on the affected areas of the skin.
- One cup of the mixture added to lukewarm water can be used as a skin smoothening balm

Skin care: Sun tan

Sun tan makes your skin darker which is a taboo for Indians.

Remedy:

Avoid sun block to be repeated every two to three hours. Skin lightening treatment and therapies like rehydration helps.

Skin care: Prickly heat

Prickly heat affects everyone; it is a result of sweat and humidity that causes bacterial infection on the skin.

Remedy:

- Having cold showers, wearing loose clothes, putting talcum powder after a bath, applying calamine lotion on the rashes.
- Apply medicated talcum powder.
- Keep the area dry and clean.

Skin care: Foot infection

Sweating and humidity can increase your chances of foot infection during summer.

Remedy:

There are several anti-bacterial powders available in medical stores. And scrub your feet and the toes thoroughly to wash off the bacteria. But for dire skin ailment consult a dermatologist.

Skin care:

Dandruff Dandruff is aggravated during summer heat and sweat. Dandruff causes hair loss and is an unhygienic skin condition.

Summer diet

One must eat cold foods such as watermelon, yogurt, berries and the likes. Such foods are low in calories and additionally require very little energy for digestion. Usually such foods taste better when chilled and are therefore traditionally eaten that way. Naturally, eating such chilled low calorie foods feels good in the summer months.

Summer diet

Importance of including a variety of foods in your diet. All essential nutrients are required in the summer months, particularly the minerals that are lost in the sweat. It is possible to replenish these micro- nutrients only if the diet includes varied food groups such as fruits, vegetables, milk, cereals, meat, pulse and fats.

Summer diet

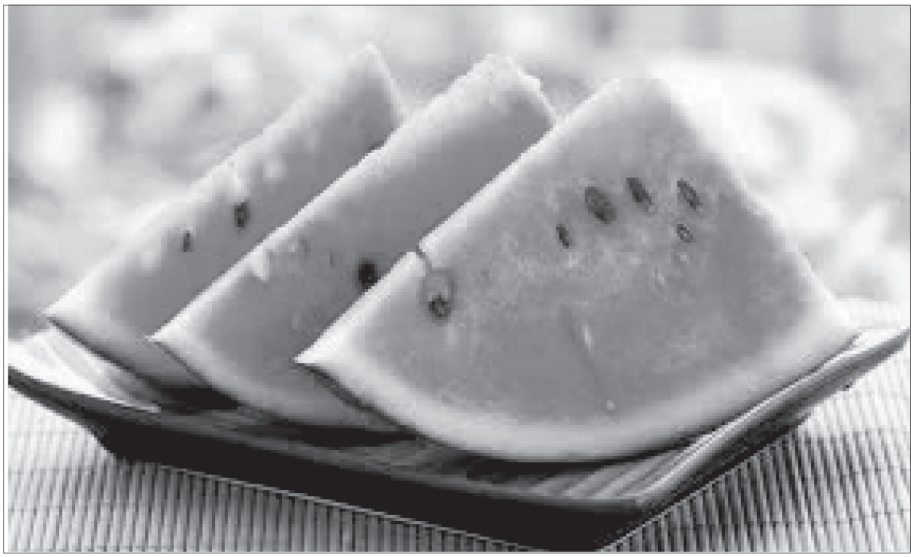
Importance of choosing fats carefully. In the summer months, a number of people who want to lose weight switch to a zero fat diet. This is not a healthy trend. The essential fats that the body needs are available through diet alone. It is therefore sensible to limit the fat intake to just the essential requirement but to avoid any extras.

Summer diet

Drinking very chilled liquids is not advisable. Food consumed at extreme temperatures, whether hot or cold, is not appropriate for the body. The body has to work extra in order to get the temperature close to the body temperature. Drinking warm or cool (as opposed to hot and cold) liquids are best suited for the body.

Summer diet

Maintain good food-hygiene levels. Many dangerous bacteria and viruses thrive in the summer months as the temperature is conducive for their growth. The bad bugs usually enter the body through food and water. This is why maintaining food hygiene is crucial in this season.



You're supposed to drink 8 glasses of water a day but how many of us actually do that? Here are some ways you can eat your water content and deliciously hydrate your body by eating certain foods When you exercise or workout, you usually tend to lose a lot of water through sweat leading to your electrolyte levels going below normal. A wise move for replenishing your hydration levels is to drink electrolyte-rich fresh juices and eat hydration-promoting foods, such as fruits and vegetables. Also, drinking too much water can actually cause a critical loss of vitamins and minerals as they get whooshed out of the body with every trip to the bathroom. When you start 'eating' water, you don't need to count your glasses. You can replace at least one glass of water a day with one serving of raw fruits or vegetables and you will be able to stay hydrated significantly longer. Moreover, you'll get the added boost of fiber, antioxidants and other health-promoting phytonutrients. In fact, by sticking to a healthy diet, you'll end up 'eating' most of the water needed each day to stay hydrated.

Hydrating foods to eat every day

Our body is constantly replacing damaged cells, so it is imperative that we eat and drink to promote our cellular health. The best way to do this is to keep the body flooded with cell-protecting antioxidants

and the building blocks of stronger cell membranes. Here are foods that contain high levels of nutrients and 'structured water'.

Mangoes

If your skin frequently feels parched, just eat a mango! Mangoes are bursting with vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin A. Vitamin A normalises the production and life cycle of skin cells. Mangoes also improve your skin if you suffer from acne. In skin with acne, there is an overproduction of cells in the stratum corneum, which is the outermost layer of the skin and is composed of biologically 'dead' cells. These excess dead cells combine with sebum (the skin's own natural oil) to form comedones - the pore plugs that are the defining element of acne. Taken as a dietary supplement, vitamin A helps to prevent overproduction of skin cells in the stratum corneum. You can add 3 to 4 slices of mango to every meal as a refreshing and hydrating naturally sweet treat.

Pomegranates

Pomegranates are a wonderfully hydrating source of antioxidants. They may be the world's most prolific source of polyphenols. The unique combination of elements in pomegranates increases the protective abilities of sunscreens, which can help prevent sun damage. Add pomegranates to your morning

Foods that keep you Hydrated



cereal or yogurt, fresh green or fruit salads for a refreshing snack or breakfast.

Avocado

The buttery-fleshed avocado may not seem like a hydrating food, but these healthy gems replenish potassium and contain healthy fats and fiber, which help your body hold on to water. As a bonus, the monosaturated fats in avocados contain oleic acid, which has been found to improve fat levels in the

body and help control diabetes and cholesterol. Layer your sandwiches with avocado slices, toss diced avocado into your salads or simply scoop avocado out of its peel as a snack.

Cucumber

Not only are cucumbers delightfully crunchy and low in calories, they are composed mostly of water, which will keep you feeling hydrated longer. In addition, cucumbers are an excellent source of silica, a trace mineral that contributes to the strength of connective tissue. Do not peel the cucumber skin! It is a good source of vitamins A, C and folic acid. You can add diced cucumber to green and grain salads or fan sliced cucumber on the side of your plate as a refreshing side dish. You can also cut cucumber into batons for an afternoon snack.

Broccoli

Your mom was right when she said to eat your greens. Broccoli and other green foods, such as spinach, are a great source of alpha lipoic acid which is a potent fat- and water-soluble antioxidant and an anti-inflammatory. Toss raw broccoli into your salads or simply snack on this hardy vegetable all by itself.

LSG defeat Gujarat Titans by 6 wickets in an IPL clash

Lucknow, April 12 (UNI) : Nicholas Pooran and Aiden Markram led from the front as Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) overhauled Gujarat Titans' (GT) total of 180 to clinch a comprehensive six-wicket win in the 26th match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 at the Ekana Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing 181 for victory after electing to bowl first, LSG rode on Markram's blistering 58 off 31 balls and a power-packed 61 from Pooran off just 34 deliveries. The duo stitched a crucial 58-run partnership that steadied the chase after the early departure of captain Rishabh Pant (21). Ayush Badoni (28* off 20 balls) provided the finishing touches as the hosts

reached 186/4 in 19.3 overs. Earlier, GT's innings was anchored by a fluent 60 off 38 balls from skipper Shubman Gill and a steady 56 from Sai Sudharsan. The pair put up a solid 120-run stand for the first wicket, but GT's momentum dipped after their dismissals. LSG bowlers struck at regular intervals, with Ravi Bishnoi (2/36) and Shardul Thakur (2/34) halting GT's charge.

Despite a late cameo from Shahrukh Khan (11 not out) and Rashid Khan (4 not out), GT were restricted to 180/6 in their 20 overs. Prasidh Krishna impressed with figures of 2/26, while Bishnoi's twin strikes in the middle overs proved decisive.

In reply, LSG began aggressively, notching up

61 runs in the Powerplay. Markram's strokeplay set the tone before Pooran unleashed his fury, smashing seven sixes to keep the asking rate in check. Even as GT's bowlers, including Mohammed Siraj (0/50) and Rashid Khan (1/35), tried to apply pressure, LSG maintained their composure.

The match ended with Badoni hitting the winning runs in the penultimate over, helping LSG register their fourth win of the season.

Brief Scores:

GT 180/6 in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 60, Sai Sudharsan 56; Ravi Bishnoi 2/36, Shardul Thakur 2/34)

LSG 186/4 in 19.3 overs (Nicholas Pooran 61, Aiden Markram 58; Prasidh Krishna 2/26)

Abhishek shatters IPL records with 141-run blitz

Hyderabad, April 12 (UNI) : Abhishek Sharma of Sunrisers Hyderabad etched his name into the IPL record books with a scintillating 141-run knock against Punjab Kings at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Saturday.

The explosive innings, which is now the third-highest individual score in IPL history, saw Sharma reach his century in just 40 balls, making it the joint-sixth fastest in the tournament's storied history. This remarkable performance has firmly placed Abhishek in two of the IPL's most coveted batting milestones.

Sharma's unbeaten 141, featuring 10 massive sixes and 14 crisp boundaries, now sits behind only Chris Gayle's iconic 175* (RCB versus PWI, 2013) and Brendon McCullum's record-setting 158* (KKR vs RCB, 2008) for the highest individual scores in IPL history. Abhishek's rapid century, achieved in just 40 deliveries, places him alongside some of the IPL's most devastating hitters. Gayle still holds the record for the fastest century, a staggering 30-ball feat from his 175* in 2013. He is followed by Yusuf Pathan (37 balls, 2010), David Miller (38 balls, 2013), and Travis Head and Priyansh Arya, both of whom took 39 balls in the 2024 and 2025 seasons, respectively.

Mohun Bagan SG lifts ISL 2024-25 Cup defeating Bengaluru FC 2-1 in Final

Kolkata, April 12 (UNI) : Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) won the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 Cup after a 2-1 victory against Bengaluru FC at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here on Saturday night.

MBSG came from behind after trailing by a goal to successfully cap off the League Double, having already clinched the ISL Shield this season, and have concluded the current campaign unbeaten at their home. They are just the second team after Mumbai City FC (2020-21) to win the League Shield and the ISL Cup in the same season.

MBSG banked on the crowd support to make a defining start to the game, with Jamie Maclaren coming close with a right footed shot from the same side of the box, which was saved in the bottom left corner by Gurpreet Singh Sandhu in the ninth minute.

They kept functioning dynamically in tandem, as Anirudh Thapa, usually pulling the strings at the centre, made an inroad into the 18-yard area and hastened towards a right footed shot from the left side of the box that was blocked in time.

The Blues responded with a flurry of opportunities around the 20th minute mark, with Alberto Noguera stretching the MBSG defence wide and delivering a cross for



Sunil Chhetri that the forward couldn't capitalise upon. A subsequent headed effort from Edgar Mendez was saved at the centre of the goal by Vishal Kaith to keep the scores level. Bengaluru FC bagged the breakthrough in the 49th minute, courtesy of an own goal by defender Alberto Rodriguez. Williams was afforded ample space on the right flank and he optimised it with a whipping cross directed for Mendez inside the box. Subhasish Bose, who was marking Williams, could not close down his target. Rodriguez attempted to clear the ball but ended up hammering it into the back of the net under pressure. Seven minutes later, Bose tried to make up for the previous endeavour by recovering possession near the halfway mark and hurling a delivery that met Jason Cummings just outside the penalty area. The striker did

well to control the ball and unleashed a left footed effort that required a fully stretched dive from Sandhu to stop the scores from equalising. However, MBSG earned a reprieve in the form of a penalty due to a handball by Chinglensana Singh. In the 72nd minute, Cummings stepped up for spot-kick duties and effortlessly converted the opportunity by caressing the ball into the bottom left corner with his left foot to bring the contest back on level terms. As the game entered the added time, Kaith sent in a long ball that Ashique Kuruniyan tried to hit home, albeit from a difficult angle on the left, but to no avail. Greg Stewart's lateral ball for Tom Aldred was headed from the left side of the six yard box by the defender, but it missed the target to the right. The match entered the extra time, and it did not take Maclaren too long to

finally carve an impact in the grand finale. With MBSG exerting numbers ahead, the Bengaluru FC defence consequently slipped into a spot of bother and Maclaren's incisive instinct tapped upon that with a fierce effort from inside the box as soon as he gained possession to unsettle Sandhu and hit the centre of the net in the 96th minute, sealing a memorable campaign for the Kolkata-based club.

ISL 2024-25 Awards:

Best Grassroots Program: Jamshedpur FC

Best Elite Youth Program: Punjab FC

Golden Glove Award: Vishal Kaith (MBSG)

Golden Boot Award: Alaaeddine Ajaraie (NEUFC)

Emerging Player of the League: Brison Fernandes (FCG)

Golden Ball: Alaaeddine Ajaraie (NEUFC).

World No 1 Shi dumped out of Asian badminton championships

Ningbo (China), April 12 (UNI) : World No. 1 Shi Yuqi was eliminated from the 2025 Badminton Asian Championships after a hard-fought quarterfinal defeat to Singapore's Loh Kean Yew.

The Chinese star, playing on home soil, narrowly lost the opening game 21-19 before bouncing back to take the second 21-13 on Friday.

However, Loh seized control in the decider, overpowering Shi 21-16 to secure the victory. Shi, who claimed his second All England title last month, admitted his physical condition hampered his performance.

"Today, my body wasn't at its best, and I couldn't play to my strengths," said Shi. Loh, thrilled with the upset, called the victory a "personal milestone."

"Winning against Shi is incredibly tough, so this means a lot to me," he said. The Singaporean will next face

Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn, who outlasted Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in a grueling 88-minute battle.

In the other half of the draw, China's Lu Guangzu and Li Shifeng secured semifinal spots after defeating Indonesia's Jonatan Christie and Japan's Kodai Naraoka, respectively. They will clash for a final berth on Saturday.

China's women's doubles duos continued their dominant run, with Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning, Zhang Shuxian and Zheng Yu, and Olympic gold medalists Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan all securing semifinal berths. Meanwhile, Chen Boyang and Liu Yi advanced to the last four by beating Malaysia's Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin in the men's doubles. However, Chinese mixed pair Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping were eliminated by Japan's Hiroki Midorikawa and Natsu Saito 21-16, 18-21, 13-21.

Liton's PSL mission over due to injury

Dhaka, April 12 (UNI) : Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batter Liton Das' first Pakistan Super League (PSL) stint ended even before the player could take the field for Karachi Kings.

Liton suffered a finger injury during a practice session and will be returning to the country on Saturday, The Daily Star reported.

"I was truly excited to play in the PSL for Karachi Kings, but the Almighty had other plans. During a practice session, I picked up a finger injury. Scans revealed a hairline fracture, and recovery will take at least 2 weeks," Liton wrote on his official Facebook page today. He suffered the injury in Karachi's practice session on Thursday.

"So sadly, my PSL mission is over before it even began. I'm flying back to Bangladesh and seeking your prayers & love for a quick recovery. Wishing the very best of luck to my team Karachi Kings," he added.

Liton also confirmed the news to The Daily Star over the phone today.

Liton and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain were granted No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for the entire season of PSL, which got underway on Friday and will run till May 18.

Rishad, however, did not start for Lahore Qalandars in their eight-wicket defeat to defending champions Islamabad United in Rawalpindi on Friday.

Sachin Baisoya trumps Udayan Mane in playoff to win Indorama Ventures Open Golf Championship

Ahmedabad, April 12 (UNI) : Delhi's Sachin Baisoya, who began the final day seven shots behind the lead in tied fifth place, registered a classic come-from-behind victory as he trumped Pune's Udayan Mane in a playoff after posting the day's best score of four-under 68 to lift the trophy at the Rs 2 crore Indorama Ventures Open Golf Championship played at the Kalhaar Blues & Greens Golf Club here on Saturday.

The 29-year-old Sachin Baisoya (68-71-70-68), who had decided not to play this week's event due to his father's ill health before being persuaded by the latter to tee it up in Ahmedabad, was tied at the top along with 34-year-old Udayan Mane (69-65-68-75) at a total of 11-under 277 at the end of the regulation 72 holes. Mane, the overnight leader by two shots, returned a last round of 75 after dropping five strokes on the last six holes that also saw Baisoya rise into contention.

Sachin fared better in negotiating the tricky pin position on the playoff hole (Par-4 18th) as he made par with a two-putt, even as Udayan conceded a fatal bogey on the same hole. Baisoya, who has so far won both playoffs he has

been a part of, thus recorded his fourth professional victory.

The winner's cheque worth Rs30 lakh catapulted Sachin, who hails from the Delhi Golf Club, from 11th place to second position in the PGTI Order of Merit. Baisoya's earnings for the season now read Rs 44,65,650. Khalin Joshi of Bengaluru carded a 74 on Saturday to finish third at 10-under 278.

Faridabad's Abhinav Lohan struck a fourth round of 72 to secure fourth place at nine-under 279. Abhinav was a prime contender for the title when he joined Udayan in the lead on the back nine in round four. However, a late bogey and double-bogey put him out of contention.

Local lad Varun Parikh (69) of Ahmedabad and Chandigarh's Ajeetesh Sandhu (71) finished tied fifth at eight-under 280.

Sachin Baisoya made steady progress through the day to climb up the leaderboard. Sachin garnered three birdies and a bogey on the front nine, two of his birdies coming as a result of long conversions. Baisoya then pushed ahead with an exceptional approach on the 10th and a massive 35-foot conversion on the 11th that earned him two more birdies.

Hosting Asia to be a big boost for Indian football: Sports Minister on AIFF's AFC Asian Cup 2031 bid

New Delhi, April 12 (UNI) : The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has formally submitted its bid to host the AFC Asian Cup 2031, a move that would bring the footballing royalty of the continent to India. India's bid to bring the AFC Asian Cup 2031 to the subcontinent was recognised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in its Annual General Body meeting at the 35th AFC Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Saturday. Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya showed his support for the enterprise on hearing of India's bid.

He said, "Hosting major sporting events has a profound and lasting impact on a nation's sports ecosystem and infrastructure. Sports can serve as a powerful testimony of India's rising

global stature. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leading India's visionary bid to host the 2036 Olympics. There is also growing momentum behind India's aspiration to host the Commonwealth Games once again."

Dr. Mandaviya further extended the support of the Government, and said, "Given football's immense popularity across the country, it is only natural that we are pursuing the opportunity to host the AFC Asian Cup. The government extends its strong support to the All India Football Federation's bid to bring Asia's biggest football event to India. Should we succeed, I am confident that football will get a big boost."

Speaking from Kuala Lumpur, where he attended the 35th AFC Congress, AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey said, "The AIFF

is happy to have the government's strong support in our bid to host the AFC Asian Cup 2031. The Asian Cup is the biggest football tournament in Asia and it is important for India as a nation to showcase what we have, not just to Asia but to the rest of the world."

"The 2027 tournament would have come too soon for us, so we didn't push for it. But with six years left to prepare for the 2031 Asian Cup, we have enough time on hand to measure up to the challenge of facing the best in Asia," he said. Moving forward, the AFC will now work with the Bidding MAs on the delivery of the necessary bidding documentation in accordance with the established timelines and processes, with a Bidding Workshop for the AFC Asian Cup 2031 scheduled to be held later this month.

Tamim at SBNCS to watch Mohammedan-Abahani match

Dhaka, April 13 (UNI) : For the first time since suffering a major heart attack, former Bangladesh skipper Tamim Iqbal set foot in a stadium as he came to the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Saturday to watch the high-voltage Dhaka Premier League (DPL) match between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Limited.

Tamim, who returned to Dhaka from Singapore on Friday night after getting a

second opinion on his heart condition, arrived in Mirpur on Saturday noon during the Abahani innings, the Daily Star reported.

He was also seen at the Mohammedan dressing room, the side he was captaining before he suffered a severe heart attack. The 36-year-old had a cardiac arrest during a DPL match against Shinepukur Cricket Club at BKSP in Savar on March 24. An angiogram later revealed a 100 percent

blockage in one of his arteries and a partial blockage in another, necessitating an immediate stenting procedure. Tamim was discharged from Evercare Hospital in Dhaka on March 28 after his treatment at KPJ Specialised Hospital in Savar and spent Eid with his family. He went to Singapore last week for an extensive check-up.

In Tamim's absence, Towhid Hridoy is leading Mohammedan in the ongoing tournament.

Iyer, Stoinis rip through SRH in record breaking run fest

Hyderabad, April 12 (UNI) : A breathtaking display of fearless power-hitting, led by skipper Shreyas Iyer's scintillating 82 off just 36 balls, saw Punjab Kings pile on a mammoth 245 for 6 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Match 27 of the IPL 2025 here on Saturday.

Iyer's assault included six fours and six sixes, coming at a strike rate of 227.78. He was ably supported by openers Priyansh Arya (36 off 13) and Prabhsimran Singh (42 off 23), who tore into the SRH pacers early on and laid the perfect foundation with a 66-run opening stand inside the powerplay. What followed was a sustained demolition of the SRH bowling attack. Mohammed Shami endured a nightmare, conceding 75 runs in his four overs, including four sixes in a row by Marcus Stoinis in the final over. Stoinis finished unbeaten on 34 off 11 balls, striking at an eye-watering 309.09. Punjab raced to 89/1 at the end of the powerplay, with Hyderabad bowlers struggling to find any rhythm or line of defence. Prabhsimran played a commanding hand, peppering the off-side with precision before holing out to Pat Cummins off Eshan Malinga. The young pacer Malinga, reminiscent of his legendary namesake, returned 2/45, including a sharp yorker to trap Nehal Wadhwa (27) plumb in front.

Iyer then took charge, launching Zeeshan Ansari, Malinga, and Cummins to all parts of the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium. His innings included a series of effortless lofts over extra cover and signature reverse sweeps, even as wickets fell at the other end. Glenn Maxwell's poor run continued as he fell for 3, attempting a scoop that deflected off his leg stump, giving Harshal Patel his third wicket.

Patel was the pick of the bowlers for SRH, claiming 4/42, including the key wickets of Iyer, Maxwell, and Arya. However, even he could not stem the flow of runs, as Punjab found boundaries almost every over.

The final over was the icing on Punjab's towering cake. Shami, returning to bowl the 20th, was clobbered for four consecutive sixes by Stoinis — a brutal exhibition of wrist strength and clean hitting. The veteran quick went wicketless in his spell, with an economy of 18.80.

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WHISPERS OF PROGRESS

(By Standard Post)

BENEATH THE MOUNTAINS

Amidst the towering heights of the Himalayas, where clouds kiss the earth and valleys whisper secrets, the dream of Indian Railways has taken full shape in the form of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project. The grandeur of this project is reflected in its tunnels hidden corridors that not only conquer geography but also pave the way for the speed of the future. Out of the 272-kilometre USBRL railway route, 36 major tunnels cover nearly 119 kilometres. Some of these tunnels are so long and complex that they have become milestones in engineering excellence.

T-50 – India’s Longest Transportation Tunnel



Length: 12.77 km | Location: Sumber–Khari

Tunnel T-50, India’s longest transportation tunnel, stands as a vital lifeline, seamlessly linking the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the nation. Constructed using the New Tunneling Method, it navigates through formidable rock formations such as quartzite, gneiss and phyllite. The tunnel features a main passage alongside a parallel escape tunnel, interconnected by cross-passages at every 375-metre interval. Its construction was fraught with challenges, including landslides, high water ingress, shear zones and jointed volcanic rock structures. To counter these obstacles, engineers strategically developed three adits (access tunnels), allowing simultaneous excavation from multiple points and significantly expediting progress.

Through resilience and innovation, India's longest transport tunnel emerged—a true marvel of engineering excellence.



T-23 A Testament to Technical Innovation

Length: 3.15 km
Location: Udhampur–Chak Rakhwal

Tunnel T-23 is the longest on this section, featuring a ballast-less track between Udhampur and Chak Rakhwal railway stations. In 2008, severe squeezing, swelling and bottom heaving caused major setbacks, requiring expert intervention. Overcoming these challenges, the tunnel was successfully completed, marking a significant milestone in the project.

T-80 The Backbone of Kashmir in the Pir Panjal Range

Length: 11.2 km
Location: Banihal–Qazigund

Built under the Pir Panjal range, T-80 tunnel ensures year-round connectivity between Jammu and Kashmir. Overcoming barriers of snowfall and altitude, it significantly enhances transportation and trade, and can be termed as ‘the backbone of USBRL’.



T-33 A Challenging Route Beneath Trikuta’s Shadow

Length: 3.2 km | Location: Katra–Banihal section

Tunnel T-33, the most challenging section of the Katra-Banihal stretch, spans 3.209 km at the base of the Trikuta Hills, forming a crucial link to the Kashmir Valley. Navigating highly fractured dolomite and the Main Boundary Thrust zone, it faced severe geological challenges, including a major collapse in October 2017 that halted progress for months. The project adopted the I-System of Tunneling in March 2022, incorporating deep drainage, umbrella pipe roofing, chemical grouting and reinforced supports to stabilise the structure. After years of perseverance, a breakthrough was achieved on 20 December 2023, marking a key milestone in this vital railway corridor.



T-1 Tunnel Built Using Cutting-Edge Techniques

Length: 3.209 km

T-1, unfortunately, also faced the relentless challenges posed by the Main Boundary Thrust, including severe mud and water ingress. To counter these issues, the advanced "I-System of Tunneling" was successfully deployed, integrating deep drainage pipes, umbrella pipe roofing and chemical grouting to ensure structural stability and safety.



T-34 – Dual-Passage Ingenuity



Length: 5.099 km
Location: Pai-Khad to Anji Khad

Tunnel T-34, a crucial link in the USBRL Project, stands as a testament to engineering ingenuity, seamlessly connecting Pai-Khad to Anji Khad. Spanning 5.099 km, it features a twin-tube design—a Main Tunnel for train operations and a parallel Escape Tunnel for safety, interconnected by cross-passages at 375-metre intervals.

This twin tunnel system, carved through the Sirban Dolomite rock formations, was constructed using the New Tunneling Method. It is connected to Anji Khad Bridge, India’s first cable-stayed railway bridge, with cross-passages every 375 metres, ensuring both safety and operational efficiency.