

TN fed up with corruption, wants NDA in power: Modi

CHENNAI, MARCH 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday mounted a strong political attack against the ruling DMK during his visit to Madurai, alleging unfulfilled promises, corruption and governance failures in Tamil Nadu. Addressing a public gathering here, the Prime Minister claimed that the people of the state were disillusioned and were looking towards the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) as an alternative. "Tamil Nadu is signalling a clear desire for change. Unfulfilled promises and corruption have disappointed the people," he said. Mr Modi accused the DMK and the Congress of failing to harness Tamil Nadu's coastal potential when they were previously in power together. Referring to projects such as the Maduravoyal elevated corridor and the



Thoothukudi transshipment hub, he said key initiatives had stalled before 2014 and were revived only after the BJP-led government assumed office at the centre. The Prime Minister also alleged delays in implementing welfare schemes. Citing the PM Awas Yojana (Rural), he said over six lakh houses had been completed in Tamil Nadu, but nearly three lakh remained pending due to inaction by the state government. Targeting the DMK

leadership, he accused the party of promoting dynastic politics and neglecting civic infrastructure in Madurai, alleging corruption and ration shops had no rice, salaries were delayed, goons and drug mafias ruled the streets, he alleged. "The Congress had made Puducherry an ATM for one family that sits in Delhi," he said at an event here to mark the launch of new projects and foundation stone laying for new initiatives. The Congress and the DMK had become a "speed breaker" in

Puducherry's development journey, he said. The Prime Minister dedicated several projects to the nation and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth over Rs 2,700 crore in Puducherry. The Prime Minister said investments in spiritual, eco and health tourism would take Puducherry to greater heights. He highlighted the region's rising per capita income and top social index ranking, asserting that the "double engine government" would accelerate growth. The projects inaugurated, valued at Rs 1,142 crore, include the Integrated Command and Control Centre under the Smart City Mission, housing for economically weaker sections, and key sewerage and water supply works. He also announced the development of the 750-acre Karasur-Sedarapet Industrial Estate and launched facilities at

Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research, NIT Karaikal and Pondicherry University. Emphasising healthcare access, he noted the presence of nine medical colleges and new critical care blocks in Puducherry and Karaikal. He said Rs 12 lakh crore has been allocated for infrastructure nationwide in the Union Budget, adding that improved roads, drinking water supply and coastal infrastructure would enhance ease of living. He also highlighted connectivity projects such as the East Coast Industrial Corridor linking Puducherry with Chennai, Bengaluru and Coimbatore. He laid foundation stones for 74 additional projects worth Rs 1,571 crore, including rural roads under PMGSY and heritage development works. He also inaugurated the Global Spirituality Mahotsav 2026 at Auroville



► Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits Arulmigu Subrahmanya Swamy temple at Thiruparakundram, Madurai on

PM Modi's Thiruparakundram temple visit sparks speculation

MADURAI, MARCH 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering prayers at Thiruparakundram Subrahmanya Swamy temple during his visit to Madurai on Sunday for an NDA rally has triggered political speculation within the alliance. Departing from his usual practice of worshipping at the Meenakshi Amman temple whenever he visited the city, the Prime Minister's choice of temple this time has been viewed by sections of the AIADMK as a politically loaded gesture by the BJP amid ongoing seat-sharing discussions within the NDA. Nallendran, a local functionary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) nominee Ponnuthai by a margin of 29,500 votes. Thiruparakundram AIADMK union secretary Ramesh, however, dismissed

temple by invoking Murugan through chants such as "Vetrivel Muruganukku Arogara". The AIADMK cadres, however, described Thiruparakundram as a traditional stronghold, noting that the party has won the seat nine times in 16 assembly elections, including in 2021. They pointed out that the BJP's highest vote share in the constituency when it contested independently in 2016 was 3.9 per cent and that the seat has not favoured national parties since 1962. In the previous Assembly election, the AIADMK's Rajan Chellappa defeated Communist Party of India (Marxist) nominee Ponnuthai by a margin of 29,500 votes. Thiruparakundram AIADMK union secretary Ramesh, however, dismissed

suggestions that the BJP was exerting pressure on the AIADMK over seat allocation, asserting that Rajan Chellappa would once again be the party's candidate here. However, BJP leaders are said to be keen on fielding state general secretary Rama Sreenivasan from the constituency, viewing a potential victory there as a significant step in advancing the party's agenda in Tamil Nadu. Political observers link the Prime Minister's temple visit as the continuation of the earlier initiatives such as the 2020 'Vel Yatra', the 'Murugan Maanaad' held in the constituency last June and sustained interventions over the Thiruparakundram deepaathoon issue, describing the visit as part of a longer term political strategy centred on the seat.

44 govt polytechnic colleges to be upgraded by end of April

Chennai: THE Directorate of Technical Education (DoTE) is planning to complete the ambitious project of equipping government polytechnic colleges with high-end Centres of Excellence (CoEs) by the end of April, marking a major step toward aligning technical education with Industry 4.0 standards. The initiative follows a landmark MoU signed between the state government and Tata Technologies to upgrade 44 government polytechnic

colleges at a cost of ₹2,590 crore. The project aims to modernise laboratories, revamp curricula to match industry needs, and train faculty members in emerging technologies to enhance students' employability. According to DoTE officials, work has already been completed in five colleges, where state-of-the-art labs and training facilities have been installed. In the remaining institutions, infrastructure upgrades are progressing at a fast pace. DoTE

Commissioner S Visakan said the department is confident of meeting the deadline. "The project is progressing on schedule, and we expect the CoEs to be operational by April end," he said. The Product Design and Development Centre will feature high-end industrial workstations and physical-digital labs equipped with latest design software. Faculty are undergoing industry-led training to ensure effective curriculum delivery via classroom-online modes.

Govt schools to launch enrolment drive, target over 4 lakh admissions

Chennai: GOVERNMENT schools across the state will begin their enrolment drive on Monday for the academic year 2026-27. The school education department has set a target of enrolling more than four lakh students in government schools this year. The department had advanced the enrolment schedule in 2024-25 to attract more students, as private schools usually begin admissions much earlier. The move is being continued this year as well. Teachers and headmasters have been instructed to ensure that children who have completed five years of age in anganwadis are enrolled in schools within their habitation or nearby areas. Education officials have been directed to create awareness among parents about government initiatives, including smart classrooms, hi-tech laboratories and other digital facilities, to boost enrolment. Schools that enrol

at least 50 more students compared to last year will be awarded certificates of appreciation. A senior official said around 4.3 lakh students were enrolled in government schools last year. "Generally, about 50% of students join government and government-aided schools, while the remaining 50% opt for private schools. As per data from health department, there are over eight lakh children in the five-year age group who should be newly enrolled in schools and this data will be used for the drive," he said. The official added that the department's primary objective is to ensure that all eligible children are enrolled in schools, while simultaneously increasing enrolment in government schools. He also added that school education minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi will inaugurate the enrolment drive in the state on Monday

CM opens control room to help Tamils

CHENNAI, MARCH 1: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Sunday said the Tamil Nadu government had set up a round-the-clock control room at the Tamil Nadu House in Delhi for the Tamils living in the Gulf region and announced a toll-free contact number in the wake of the escalating war in the Middle East. He said the State government is ready and fully geared up to extend all possible assistance to the Tamils and ensure their safety. The Chief Minister appealed to the Tamils living in the Gulf countries to avoid

unnecessary travel and follow the advisories issued by the Indian High Commission. Stalin said he had directed the Commissionerate of Rehabilitation and Welfare of Non-Resident Tamils to extend help to the Tamils living in the affected nation. He appealed to the Tamils living in the Gulf countries to take all safety measures, remain indoors and avoid unnecessary travel. The Tamil Nadu government is continuously monitoring

the situation and staying in touch with the Tamils living in the region. He said Tamils and their family members could contact the 24x7 control room in case of any emergency and for assistance. In the wake of US-Israel air strikes on Iran, a tense situation had been prevailing in countries like the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the Gulf region, he noted.



83 girls shifted after abuse complaints at care home

Govt-aided facility in Tiruchy temporarily closed after inquiry confirms physical threats to inmates, FIR to be filed

Tiruchy: EIGHTY-THREE girls were shifted from a private children's care home, receiving government aid, near Tiruchy airport on Saturday, while the institution's children's home wing has been temporarily closed following a preliminary inquiry that confirmed allegations of verbal abuse and physical threats to inmates, officials said. The home, Annai Ashramam on Wireless Road, is run by TN Pengal Nala Sangam and supported through government grant and aid. It housed girls from classes 1 to 12 who had been placed there by the Child Welfare Committee as Children in Need of Care and Protection under the Juvenile Justice Act. Complaints had surfaced in recent months that children were not given food on time, faced safety concerns and were subjected to verbal abuse and physical threats by some staff members, said sources. Sources revealed to TNIE that the physical abuse included beatings and undergoing

strict punishments by the caretaker. On Wednesday, acting on a tip-off, officials visited the home under the guise of a routine inspection. They enquired into the treatment provided to the children, how illnesses were being managed and whether proper food was being served. Based on the initial findings, Collector V Saravanan ordered a detailed inquiry later in the week. District Child Protection Officer (in-charge) Sandhiya and a team subsequently interacted with the inmates. According to officials, several children reiterated the allegations during the inquiry. "We received complaints that the children were not properly cared for and were subjected to verbal abuse and threats. When we revisited the home, the complaints were repeated. Based on the statements of the children, we found sufficient grounds to take action," Sandhiya said. Following the preliminary findings, the collec-

tor on Saturday directed immediate relocation of all 83 girls as a precautionary measure. Of them, 36 were shifted to the Nagammai Home in KK Nagar and 47 to the government-run Annai Sathya Home in Mathur, considering both their safety and the fact that many students are preparing for public exams. Officials from the Social Welfare Department said the arrangements have been made to provide food and accommodation and to ensure that the children's education continues without disruption. Parents and guardians have been informed. The home, which receives about ₹3,000 per child per month as government grant, has been temporarily closed pending further investigation. Departmental proceedings have been initiated and a police complaint is being filed with Airport police station with directions to register an FIR. Probe into the role of the management and staff is on. The home also runs two schools on the same campus where the 83 girls are enrolled.

Deputy CM unveils six completed Warm welcome in Thanjai transit civic infrastructure projects in city

CHENNAI, MARCH 1: Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin has inaugurated six completed civic infrastructure projects across Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) limits, executed at a total cost of Rs 20.93 crore. The projects span educational infrastructure, community facilities and public amenities in Teynampet and Anna Nagar zones. Among them is the newly built Experiential Learning Center for Policy and Governance on Valluvar Kottam High Road in ward 113 of the Teynampet zone. Constructed at a cost of Rs 4.10 crore under the Singara Chennai 2.0 scheme, the 12,000 sqft ground-plus-two-floor facility is equipped with modern infrastructure



aimed at promoting policy education and governance studies. In the same ward, the Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated a new building for the Chennai Middle School on Rama Street, developed at Rs 3.22 crore under Singara Chennai 2.0 and Corporation Capital Funds. The 3,025 sqft structure, comprising a ground and first floor, houses six classrooms with essential facilities to enhance the learning environment for students. A women's hygiene center on

Noor Veerasamy Street was also opened. Built at a cost of Rs 1.50 crore under the MP Local Area Development Scheme of Dayanidhi Maran, the 2,957 sqft ground-plus-two-floor facility is expected to serve residents of the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board tenements in the surrounding locality, improving access to hygiene and sanitation infrastructure. The Perarignar Anna marriage hall on Vellalar Street in ward 112 was inaugurated as a community welfare initiative. Constructed at Rs 4.50 crore, also under the MP Local Area Development Scheme, the 3,700 sqft building includes parking space on

the ground floor, kitchen and storage facilities on the first floor, and a fully equipped marriage hall with dedicated rooms for the bride and groom on the second floor. In Anna Nagar zone, a major new block for the Chennai Middle School in Aminjikarai was opened at a cost of Rs 4.15 crore under the 'Namakku Naame Thittam'. The expansive 16,000 sqft ground-plus-two-floor campus includes laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology, a library, nine classrooms, a kitchen and dining hall, along with sports and recreational facilities such as a children's play area, basketball court, cricket net practice area and a multipurpose hall. The

deputy chief minister also inaugurated the Kalaigarr Centenary Social Justice Park on Anna Salai near Hotel Hyatt in Ward 118. Developed at Rs 3.46 crore with funding support from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and the MLA Development Fund, the 20,766 sq ft park features a 370-metre walkway, 30 lamp posts, 200 decorative lights, eight CCTV cameras and ample seating arrangements for visitors. Mayor R. Priya, Central Chennai MP Dayanidhi Maran, MLAs M.K. Mohan and N. Ezhilan, GCC Commissioner J. Kumaragurubaran, Deputy Mayor M. Magesh Kumar and senior officials from various departments attended the event.

Today horoscope



First stop doubting because Moon is in Rasi. Ego problems with family will come and go. Cross the roads carefully. You will have to work extra hard at work. Do not disclose business secrets. A day to let go.

Anxiety will increase before completing the work. Talk to children gently. Do not over speed the vehicle. Handle expensive items with care. Problems will arise due to employees in business. Implicit objections will come and go at work. A profitable day with flurries.



Due to the presence of Chandrashtama, insatiable fear will come in the mind. It is better to avoid major conclusions. You will feel sorry for some people who forgot to thank you. Be kind to customers in business. It is good to be flexible with the authorities at work. A day that calls for awareness.



You will complete challenging tasks with ease. Fraternal assistance is available. You will buy expensive jewelry. There is good news on the way of the wife. Officer will respect you in office. Unexpected profits will come in business. A day where talent emerges.



Conflicts between husband and wife will be removed and happiness will increase. Relatives will come looking for the house. Solve old problems. You will visit holy places. There is sudden profit in business. You will finish work quickly at work. A day of renewal.



You will attend auspicious events with family. The government has an advantage. A favorable verdict will be obtained in the case. You will get the friendship of those in positions of authority. You will adopt new strategies in business. At work, you will behave like a superior. A day of progress through effort.



You will take some important decisions boldly. Siblings are compatible. You will participate in auspicious events. The government has an advantage. You will profit by taking a different approach to business. Support for your opinion at work will increase. Discussions will be successful.



You will meet a childhood friend. You will complete some important tasks with the help of government officials. Vain arguments with mother will come and go. Don't tarnish your reputation by seeking justice for others. Partners will cooperate in business. There will be job satisfaction. A day where expectations are fulfilled.



Since the Moon is in the sign, four or five jobs will have to be done in one day. Expenses will be borne by friends and relatives. By pointing out the mistakes of others, you will get into arguments. Be moderate with officials at work. A deal in business will be delayed. A day that requires patience.



Love support will increase between husband and wife. There will be a happy atmosphere in the family. Half-finished works will be completed. Expected money will come in hand. New ventures in business will be strengthened. You will finish work quickly at work. Good day.



Self-confidence to achieve anything is born. Parental support will increase. You will consult a trusted person and take some decisions. You will lead the specials. Customers will come and go in business. You will take on new responsibilities at work. A great day.



The government has an advantage. You will benefit from others. There is an unexpected cash flow. Old relatives will visit and talk to friends. Debts in business will increase. You will behave in a manner that will impress the superiors at work. A day of sudden yoga.



Srivilliputhur railway station renovated at '8.84 cr inaugurated

Virudhunagar: SRIVILLIPUTHUR Railway Station, renovated under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme at a cost of '8.84 crore, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi via video conference on Sunday. According to railway officials, Srivilliputhur is an NSG-5 (Non-Suburban) category railway station and, owing to the spiritual prominence, the station witnesses a steady influx of pilgrims and tourists throughout the year. Recognising its heritage significance, the redevelopment works were undertaken. "Two lifts have been installed, ensuring access for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. An entrance arch spanning 8.7 metres has been constructed, a two-storey waiting hall/resting room measuring 17.27 m x 6.27 m has been developed, offering comfortable waiting facilities

along with short-stay accommodation for pilgrims and outstation travellers," the officials said. Further amenities include a canopy, a platform shelter, and a restroom for operation staff. The road and circulating area, covering 2,295 square metres, has been comprehensively developed to facilitate smooth vehicular movement and passenger access. Parking infrastructure has been augmented with a covered car parking facility accommodating 8 cars and 40 two-wheelers. An Integrated Passenger Information System (IPIS) has been installed, comprising 48 Coach Indication Boards, 7 display TVs, 1 GPS clock, 2 Public Address channels, and 26 speakers to ensure real-time and effective communication of train information, the officials added.

TN's green buildings centred around Chennai, tier-2 cities trail behind

According to green council, Chennai houses 351 green projects compared to 23 in Madurai

Tiruchy: TAMIL Nadu has over 640 buildings certified by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), spanning a cumulative green footprint of 177.5 million sq ft. But a majority of these is concentrated in Chennai, and tier-2 cities trail far behind, data from IGBC for 2023-25 shows. According to IGBC, Chennai houses 351 green projects covering 129.5 million sq ft, followed by Coimbatore with 54 projects (6.96 million sq ft), Madurai 23 projects (0.85 million sq ft), and Tiruchy just five projects with a negligible 0.03 million sq ft. Highlighting the widening gap between Tamil Nadu's metropolitan centre and its tier-2 cities, developers said stronger and sustained incentives were crucial to scaling up adoption. Yogesh Thirukonda, green building developer and secretary of the CREDAI Madurai chapter, said the green concept is largely confined to public and

commercial buildings. "Green certification is often driven by export-linked compliance or global business requirements, particularly in the US and Europe. Individual home buyers still do not actively demand green homes," he said. D Abhishek, green building developer and former vicepresident of the CREDAI Coimbatore chapter, said green material costs had declined significantly over the past decade, but land selection was a major hurdle. "Land parcels that meet green criteria have become expensive. Excluding land cost, meeting green building parameters adds only about 10%-15% to the cost of a conventional building," he said. R Manoharan, president of the CREDAI Tiruchy chapter, said awareness remains low. "Most green buildings in Tiruchy are government institutions and colleges. The concept of a green

home has not yet entered the public imagination," he said. Developers said despite government push in the form of fast-track approvals, additional FAR in select local bodies and property tax rebates, these were often short-term or inconsistently implemented. Long-term incentives such as sustained property tax concessions, stamp duty rebates and utility-linked benefits are needed, particularly in tier-2 cities. According to M Anand Muthukrishnan, deputy executive director, IGBC, commercial developments dominate Tamil Nadu's green building landscape. "With growing awareness, reduced material costs and policy nudges, tier-2 cities can gradually catch up. The challenge is to take green buildings beyond compliance and make them aspirational for home buyers," he added. **WHAT IS A GREEN BUILDING? KEY CRITERIA** According

to Indian Green Building Council, a green building is one that is designed and constructed to minimise environmental impact while improving resource efficiency and occupant health across its life cycle. **Energy efficiency:** Efficient lighting, HVAC systems and renewable energy integration. **Water efficiency:** Rainwater harvesting, water-efficient fixtures and wastewater recycling. **Indoor environmental quality:** Better air quality, natural daylight and thermal comfort. **Sustainable materials:** Low-emission, recycled, regional and eco-friendly materials. **Waste management:** Segregation, recycling and reduced construction and operational waste. Chennai added 137 projects during 2023-2025, while Coimbatore added 24, Madurai 13. Tiruchy added just two. **SOURCE:** IGBC NUMBERS SPEAK City No of Projects Land area C

Land allotted, but SC people allege crematorium lacks basic facilities

Virudhunagar: DESPITE land being allotted over a year ago for a crematorium for the Scheduled Caste residents in Ammankovilpatti village near Sivakasi, villagers allege that authorities are yet to provide basic facilities. The village is home to as many as 200 SC families, and they have been demanding a dedicated crematorium for a long time, as the land where they cremate currently is located on watercourse poramboke land. During the rainy season, the soil becomes waterlogged,

often forcing the families to hire a JCB to dig burial pits. Owing to the lack of proper facilities, residents are frequently forced to wait for hours to cremate the bodies. Speaking to TNIE, an activist, M Velmurugan said that, a year ago, Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department had recommended to Revenue Department officials to allot 0.45.5 hectares of government land for a crematorium and provide necessary facilities. While lands were allocated, basic facilities including,

compound wall, water connection, cremation platforms are yet to be provided. Officials said that the facilities would be provided once residents begin using the allotted land for cremation. "There has been an ongoing dispute among residents as some refuse to use the allotted land. Instead, they demand facilities be provided on the watercourse poramboke land," the official said, adding that the facilities would be given once the dispute is resolved and the crematorium is put to use.

Billoth Hospitals launches cardiac & pulmonary specialty services

CHENNAI, MARCH 1: Billoth Hospitals launched a comprehensive Cardiac & Pulmonary Specialty Services, marking a major milestone in integrated heartlung care. The new programmes include a Cardiac Transplant Programme, Heart Dysfunction Clinic, Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre, Pulmonary Hypertension Clinic, and a Pulmonary Embolism Referral Centre. The initiative aims to deliver seamless, high-precision and patient-centric treatment under one roof through advanced technology and multidisciplinary expertise. A highlight of the event was a heartfelt gesture by Dr. Rajesh Jegannathan, Chairman of Billoth Hospitals, who presented a cheque of ₹20 lakh to a successful heart transplant patient, symbolising continued support beyond surgery. The hospital's cardiac department, operational since 2003, has performed over 50,000 Cath Lab procedures and 10,000 CTVS surgeries. Equipped with three advanced Cath Labs and offering 24x7 emergency cardiac care at Shenoy Nagar and R.A. Puram units, the institution continues to strengthen its position as a centre of excellence in cardiac care.

Mining dept to carry out drone survey at Katchaikatti stone quarry

Madurai: OFFICIALS from the Department of Geology and Mining decided to conduct a drone survey at a private stone quarry in the Katchaikatti area after allegations that the quarry operator was extracting minerals beyond the permitted limit. Speaking to TNIE, a senior official from the department said that recently, permission was given for stone quarry activities to private players in the Katchaikatti area

and in Vadipatti taluk. "District administration has received a petition from M Gnanasekaran from Katchaikatti, alleging that the private quarry operator extracted gravel sand beyond the permissible limit of 3.40 acres. It is difficult for us to survey physically. Hence, we sent a proposal for conducting a drone survey in the quarry. If the allegations are proved, action will be taken as per norms," he said. Speaking

to TNIE, M Gnanasekaran said that over ten quarries have been functioning in the Katchaikatti area for more than 20 years. "Villagers of Katchaikatti face constant air pollution, noise pollution, which also allegedly causes all types of respiratory problems, skin diseases and renal function issues. Collector K J Praveen Kumar needs to visit the village and organise a health camp here," he added.

PM lays foundation stone for Madurai projects

CHENNAI | MARCH 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Madurai on Sunday inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for projects and schemes being implemented by various ministries including the Ministries of Railways, Highways and Prasar Bharati. Under the Southern Railway, PM inaugurated eight redeveloped Amrit stations and dedicated Chennai Beach Chennai Egmore fourth Line project to the Nation (total cost: Rs. 378 crore). The main function was held at AAI Premises, Perungudi in Madurai in the presence of R.N. Ravi, Governor, Dr L. Murugan, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary

CM Rangasamy urges PM to grant statehood

PUDUCHERRY: MARCH 1: Chief Minister N. Rangasamy on Sunday renewed the long-standing demand for statehood for Puducherry, placing the request directly before Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public function in the Union Territory. While thanking the Prime Minister for his continued support and for launching several development projects, Rangasamy said the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in Puducherry had



implemented various welfare schemes effectively over the past five years. He noted that Puducherry's growth in infrastructure, education, women's safety and social

security had been made possible with the Centre's financial backing. "Although we are a small region, we are emerging as an exceptional one, admired by other

Assemblies and other dignitaries, senior officials of participating Ministries, and the general public. Elected representatives,

Dignitaries and officials from the participating ministries participated in the event. In addition, Local Ceremonial functions were also

March 2 Monday, 2026

Iran turmoil to fuel oil price rise

Disruption of oil supply chain globally is expected to be reflected in oil prices. India has crude inventories to meet at least 10 days of requirements and fuel stocks covering another upto seven days, said government official sources. "We are monitoring the situation that arose following tensions between Iran and Israel. We don't see any disruption on the oil supply chain. India has crude inventories to meet at least 10 days of requirements and fuel reserve covering another upto 7 days. There may be some oil price volatility and broader macroeconomic effects if the Iran crisis escalates further," said a government functionary. The tensions around the Strait of Hormuz has already pushed Brent crude prices toward a seven-month high of \$73 per barrel. Experts in the oil sector are of the view that India's oil supply chain does not yet face structural insecurity, though the country may face oil price volatility in the near term. "The initial impact is likely to be price-driven rather than volume-driven. A geopolitical risk premium would lift Brent prices, alongside increases in freight rates and war-risk insurance costs," said Sumit Ritolia, lead research analyst, refining and modelling, Kpler. Oil traders are bracing for heightened volatility next week, with some models pointing to prices moving towards \$80 a barrel if supply flows are disrupted or face credible threats. The Strait of Hormuz remains a critical global energy choke point, with nearly 20 percent of global petroleum liquids and 20 percent of global liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments transiting through the route. Kpler vessel tracking data showed that 2.5-2.7 million barrels per day, or about 50 per cent of India's crude imports, transit the Strait of Hormuz, largely sourced from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait. "Over the past two to three months, India's dependence on Middle Eastern barrels has increased as refiners have pivoted away from a portion of Russian volumes. As a result, the relative weight of Gulf-origin crude in India's import basket has risen, increasing short-term sensitivity to any disruption in Hormuz transit," Ritolia said. Meanwhile, the commerce ministry has convened a meeting of exporters, shipping lines, freight forwarders and officials on Monday to assess the impact. Exporters expressed concerns that the war will affect trade routes through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab elMandeb Strait. Both are key for movement of ships. It may take few days to get a clarity on the availability of shipping capacity, new routes, insurance and freight rates, they said. Import bill to jump \$14 bn if crude rises \$10 per barrel: A sustained rise in crude oil prices could sharply inflate India's import bill, with every \$10 per barrel increase adding an estimated \$1314 billion annually. It can also lead to a spike in inflation. The escalating tensions around the Strait of Hormuz and the wider Middle East conflict threaten a key global energy chokepoint and, by extension, India's energy security, said Prashant Vasisht, senior vice president and co-group head, corporate ratings, ICRA. About 2021 million barrels per day—nearly 20 per cent of global petroleum liquids consumption—pass through the Strait of Hormuz. For India, roughly 50 per cent of crude oil imports and 5455 per cent of LNG supplies transit this route. With both the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea corridor currently disrupted due to active hostilities, any prolonged closure could severely constrain supplies. Alternative routes offer limited relief. While a few pipelines exist, they can handle only a fraction of the volumes that typically pass through the strait. Supply shortages could emerge, pushing global crude prices higher. India could attempt to diversify sourcing to the US, South America or Africa. Freight rates from the Middle East are typically 4070 cents per barrel, owing to proximity. Shipments from the US can range from \$2.5 to \$4 per barrel, with freight rates themselves highly volatile. In a tight global market triggered by disruption, India would face higher transport costs and elevated benchmark crude prices as well, compounding the import burden. Since tensions escalated about two weeks ago, crude prices have already climbed from around \$65 per barrel to \$7273. The trajectory will depend on how long the disruption lasts.

was conducted in the presence of V. Somanna, Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti, along with senior railway officials, public representatives, and members of the local community, marking the occasion as a significant milestone. At Pollachi Railway Station, the function was held in the presence of Ravneet Singh, Union Minister of State for Railways and Food Processing Industries, senior Railway officials, public representatives, passenger associations, media, and the public reflecting the significance of the occasion and the collective commitment towards the advancement of railway infrastructure and public service.

Shia mourners take out rally from Kashmir to Karnataka Protests in several parts of nation after Khamenei killed in airstrikes

Lucknow, March 1: From Kashmir to Karnataka, Shia mourners took to the streets in various parts of India on Sunday to express outrage and grief over the death of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a US&Israel strike. Khamenei was killed in an airstrike in Tehran on Saturday during a joint Israel&US attack on Iran. Iranian state media confirmed the same on Su-

nday, triggering a wave of protests and mourning across the world, including India. Many Muslim bodies and organisations across the country announced a multiple-day mourning period and scheduled their protests on Monday as well in memory of the Iranian leader. Uttar Pradesh, which has a sizeable Muslim population, witnessed widespread anger and sorrow in several pl-

aces, including Lucknow. A large number of people gathered near the Bara Imambara mosque in the state capital and shouted slogans during the protest, with women mourners clinging to the Iranian leader's photo and weeping. Describing Khamenei's martyrdom as a huge loss to humanity and the silencing of a strong voice for their rights, the protesters held demonstrations at the Chhota Imambara in

Lucknow and condemned the "cowardly" act of the US and Israel. Similarly, Jaunpur, Muzzafarnagar, and even Aligarh, where students came out to protests, cried out in anger and condemned the "cowardly" act of the US and Israel. Punjab, which has a minuscule Muslim population, saw protests too with effigies being burnt in Ludhiana. Shahi Imam Maulana Mohammad Usman

Rahmani Ludhianvi, who led the protest, demanded that the central government declare a week-long national mourning. Rehmani urged Muslims worldwide to unite against such challenges, terming Khamenei a great martyr and condemning his killing in the strongest terms. The Shia community in Ajmer announced a three-day mourning over the killing of Khamenei

RAIPUR, MARCH 1: Fifteen senior cadres belonging to BalangirBargarh-Mahasamund (BBM) division of Maoists, operating along OdishaChhattisgarh border, on Sunday surrendered, leading to the collapse of the Eastern Red Corridor. The significant development comes ahead of the March 31 deadline to eradicate Naxalism. The 15 senior Maoists surrendered along with automatic weapons before the police at the district headquarters of Mahasamund in Chhattisgarh on Sunday morning. Chhattisgarh deputy chief minister Vijay Sharma, who holds home portfolio, said. The surrendered Maoists included secretary of West Sub-Zonal wing of Maoists Vikas, who was in the rank of special zonal committee member. The other

surrendered Maoists comprised two divisional committee members, five area committee members, and seven platoon members. The surrendered Maoists comprised nine women cadres. All the 15 surrendered Maoists belonged to the BBM division of Naxals, Mr. Sharma said. According to him, the cadres brought AK 47 rifles, two self-loading rifles (SLRs), three .303 rifles, three 12-bore guns, two INSAS rifles and one 14 muskets (a .303 rifle without a magazine) along with them to surrender. With the surrender of 15 Maoists, the BBM division ceased to exist. "Today's rehabilitation is very important. Fifteen from Balangir-BargarhMahasamund division have surrendered. Only 15 members were left in this division and all of

them have laid down arms", Mr. Sharma said. With this, the Eastern Red Corridor along Chhattisgarh-Odisha border has collapsed, a senior police officer said. "The BBM division of Maoists has historically formed a critical part of the corridor used by Maoists to move along the jungle between Odisha and Chhattisgarh. While they are part of the larger Red Corridor (which encompasses Central / East India), the BBM division specifically operates as a vital link between OdishaChhattisgarh border zones", the police said, unwilling to be quoted. The recovery was made from Sanpsati, a forested and hilly region, under Badegobra under Mainpur police station limits, police said. The two Maoist dumps yielded a cash of '46, 31,500 and ammunition and electronic gadgets.

Edu bodies to stay shut amid heightened tensions

Many parts of J&K, Ladakh erupt in mourning & protest

SRINAGAR, MARCH 1: Large swathes of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were swept by intense mourning and widespread protests early Sunday as tens of thousands of people poured onto the streets following killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Israel-American air strikes. From the Kashmir Valley to the mountainous districts of Kargil and Leh in Ladakh, crowds carried black and red flags symbolising grief and martyrdom, alongside banners and portraits of Ayatollah Khamenei and Iran's founding spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Demonstrators chanted slogans condemning the

United States, Israel, and their allies, expressing anger over what they called an assault on the Muslim world's leadership. Mourners recited elegies and beat their chests in traditional expressions of grief, describing Khamenei's death as a "sacrifice against tyranny and aggression." The administration has ordered a two-day shutdown of all educational institutions across the Valley starting Monday, following persistent tensions by the killing of Khamenei. The decision is intended as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of students and staff amid the volatile situation, the authorities said. Late

on Sunday night, official sources announced that security restrictions would be imposed across the Kashmir Valley from dawn on Monday as a precautionary measure. The decision came after a meeting of senior security and administrative officials in the winter capital, Jammu, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. His office posted on X: "Chaired a meeting to review the security situation across J&K UT. Called upon all communities to stay peaceful and calm. I salute the unwavering, coordinated resolve of our Police and security forces in upholding law and order."

Sarma starts yatra to showcase 5-yr work Gets massive response ahead of polls

GUWAHATI, MARCH 1: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's "Jan Arshibad Yatra" launched from Dhekiajuli in central Assam has received massive public response with a large number of people coming out on the street welcoming chief minister even late in the night on Saturday. The BJP, which is aiming for a third term in the state assembly polls, is showcasing the work done in the last five years through this pre-election massive mobilisation led by the chief minister. The outreach yatra of the chief minister, to build momentum ahead of state Assembly elections, aims to touch at least one lakh people everyday covering 70-80 km. Launching the Jan Arshibad Yatra at Dhekiajuli, the chief minister flanked by state BJP president Dilip Saikia and union minister Pabitra Margherita said, "I am seeking the blessings of the people of Assam." Despite the late hour, thousands of residents remained gathered along the route and at the venue, waiting patiently for hours to see the chief minister in central Assam's Sonitpur district. In a symbolic and emotional appeal the chief minister went down on his knees before the crowd and appealed for their blessings ahead of the Assembly polls.

Plus-2 public examination begins in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

The Plus-2 public examination began today in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. 8,27,475 students are writing this examination. 7,99,692 school students and 27,783 private students are writing this examination. Students from 7,545 schools are writing this examination at 3,412 examination centers. The public examination, which began today, will be held until the 26th. 4,540 flying squads are monitoring the Plus-2 public examination. 44,624 people are involved in the examination monitoring work. The examination department has warned that strict action will be taken if irregularities are involved at the examination center. It has been stated that those who engage in irregularities such as impersonation, changing answer sheets, and copying will be banned from writing the exam for a period of 3 years. Similarly, it has been informed that for doubts and complaints regarding the exam, you can contact the numbers 14417 and 94983 83075, 94983 83076.

Coast Guard escorts

Pilgrims to Katchatheevu fest

CHENNAI, MARCH 1 The Indian Coast Guard safely escorted 3,741 pilgrims from Tamil Nadu and other states to Katchatheevu Island for the annual St. Antony's Church festival held on February 27 and 28. The two-day festival at the historic St. Antony's Church holds deep religious significance for fisherfolk from both India and Sri Lanka. Several mechanized and non-mechanized boats departed from Rameshwaram on February 27 to participate in the celebrations. The Indian Coast Guard escorted the flotilla up to the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), where they were formally handed over to the Sri Lankan Navy to facilitate their onward journey. Following an overnight stay on the island, the pilgrims returned safely to Indian shores. To ensure security and safety throughout the voyage, Coast Guard surface vessels and aircraft maintained continuous escort and aerial surveillance during both the onward and return journeys, ensuring the smooth conduct of the annual cross-border religious event.

Israel-Iran War Echo: 36

Flights Cancelled in Chennai

"Middle Eastern countries have closed their airports due to the Israel-Iran war. Due to this, air services have been completely affected. 28 flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Muscat were cancelled from Chennai airport the day before yesterday. Flights departing from Chennai to Gulf countries and Middle East countries were cancelled for the second day yesterday. 17 departing flights from Chennai to Dubai, 3 to Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Bahrain, Kuwait and Muscat, and 16 arriving flights from there to Chennai, totaling 33 flights, were cancelled. In this situation, 36 flights have been cancelled in Chennai for the third day. 18 flights arriving in Chennai and 18 flights departing from Chennai have been cancelled. Flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Kuwait and Muscat have been cancelled. Passengers are facing great difficulties as flight services have been affected for the third day.

UK's Starmer dealt new setback as another minister resigns

London: Beleaguered British Prime Minister Keir Starmer suffered a fresh setback on Saturday after another minister in his struggling government resigned. It came hot on the heels of his centre-left Labour party finishing a humiliating third in a crunch by-election Thursday in a former heartland seat, ratcheting up the pressure on Starmer. The latest ministerial departure also follows the embattled UK leader defying calls within

his own party to resign earlier this month, in the wake of numerous policy U-turns and missteps. That included appointing Peter Mandelson, who had longstanding links to the late US sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, as Britain's ambassador in Washington. Starmer fired him months into the role after new details about the extent of Mandelson's friendship with Epstein emerged, creating a firestorm in the UK that threatened to topple the Labour leader. In the latest

controversy, Labour MP Josh Simons said he had resigned as a minister in the Cabinet Office, which helps deliver the government's agenda, because he had "become a distraction" from that work. The lawmaker had faced weeks of calls to quit over claims a Labour-supporting think tank he headed from 2022 to 2024 had paid a PR firm to investigate the background of at least two prominent journalists. In a letter to

Starmer, Simons insisted he had been unaware of those probes "until a few weeks ago" and said the prime minister's ethics czar had cleared him of breaching ministerial rules. In his reply, Starmer said he had accepted his resignation "with sadness". It is the latest exit from his government, which has trailed in the polls to Nigel Farage's hard-right Reform UK for over a year and appears increasingly threatened

by the rise of the left-wing Green Party. The Greens won Thursday's by-election for a Manchester parliamentary seat, beating out Reform and forcing Labour, which easily won the seat in 2024, into third place. Starmer earlier this month saw his influential ex-chief of staff Morgan McSweeney resign in the wake of the Mandelson scandal, while Labour figurehead Angela Rayner quit as deputy prime minister last year following a separate controversy

How to protect the liver?

Today, many special treatment units have been established for the liver. The reason is that liver damage is so widespread. It is not an exaggeration to say that the liver is the powerhouse of the human body. The liver is one of the important organs that digest food. It removes toxins. It balances hormones. More than 500 liver functions can be said to be performed. The liver performs its functions silently. The liver is a large organ located on the right side of the abdomen under the ribs. It can be called a big factory.* It produces bile. It removes toxins from the blood. It produces proteins for blood clotting. It regulates hormone levels. It stores nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and glucose. Kamali Sripal What happens to the body if the liver is affected like this? In general, alcohol, viral infections A. P. C, fatty liver disease, side effects of medications, genetic disorders, and poor eating habits are the main causes of the disease. Liver damage causes jaundice- the skin, nails, and eyes become yellow. Bilirubin is high in the blood.* Abdominal pain, swelling, pain in the upper right abdomen, swelling, liver swelling, or fluid accumulation.* Extreme fatigue, feeling weak all the time. Being weak all the time affects the liver's energy production.*



Itching- persistent itching in the body, itching occurs due to bile acid accumulating in the skin.* Frequent urination- the urine is brown. It is caused by bilirubin mixing with urine.* Mental confusion- lack of attention, forgetfulness, caused by toxins.* Loss of appetite, weight loss- impaired absorption of nutrients.* Easy bruising. Bleeding, bleeding may occur, and blood clotting disorders occur. Liver problem categories* There are categories A, B, and C in viral infections. Category A is contaminated food. It is spread by water. There are jaundice and stomach cramps.*

Virus B, C can be spread through blood and body fluids. At first, there may be no symptoms. But these can even cause liver cancer.* Fatty liver- This is divided into two types. Alcohol-related. The next one affects people who do not have alcohol habits. This is caused by diabetes, obesity, and fatty foods. There are manifestations such as stomach pain and fatigue.* Cirrhosis- This is scarring of the liver. Alcohol, viruses, and other diseases can cause this. Abdominal swelling, leg swelling, and confusion are seen.* Liver cancer- This is a serious and dangerous condition.

Virus B, C, and cirrhosis can be caused by these. People may lose weight and become thin, have jaundice, and stomach pain.* Autoimmune liver diseases- This is a disease caused by the body's immune system attacking the liver. It is better to detect and treat anything at an early stage.* Blood tests, liver function tests, virus tests, bilirubin tests are necessary.* Imaging scans, ultrasound tests help to determine the size, swelling, and damage of the liver.* Biopsy - A test method to confirm cancer. How can we protect the liver through prevention? * Avoiding alcohol

consumption will greatly reduce the risk of cirrhosis.* Nutritious food - Low-fat foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, etc. should be consumed. This will prevent the risk of fatty liver disease.* Maintaining cleanliness. Blood transfusions, quality injections, etc. are necessary.* Exercise is necessary. Obesity, sugar control, will be supportive of these.* Proper medical tests should be done.* Virus vaccines should be taken.* Green vegetables, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and fish, legumes, egg whites and drinking 2 to 3 liters of water daily and avoiding high sugar, fast food, and processed food will help protect the liver. (The role of the liver in digestion is very important. It produces bile. It is important for fat digestion.* Removes toxins from the blood.* Responsible for metabolism.* Poisons, drugs, and harmful substances that enter the body due to the environment. It removes these from the blood.* Liver cells produce many proteins needed by the body.* Helps control blood pressure. It releases a hormone called angiotensinogen. We have learned about many more functions earlier. Liver health is a basic requirement for a healthy life. A healthy liver is a peaceful angel that protects the body.".

OPS flays removal of Periyar statue from NDA meeting venue

CHENNAI, MARCH 1: Former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam on Sunday slammed the removal of the portrait of Dravidian movement's founder E.V.R. Periyar from the meeting venue of the National Democratic Alliance saying that Periyar dedicated himself to ensure that the poor and lower sections of the society live equally with others. Addressing the media in the city, he said the removal of the portrait is condemnable and asserted that the AIADMK-BJP alliance would meet a big defeat in the Assembly elections even if they held several meetings. The meeting venue featured three entrances and Periyar's portrait was placed at one of the entrances. Strongly defending the move, former Telangana Governor TAMILAISAI SOUNDARRAJAN said only those holding an event could decide the portraits to be displayed. If the DMK is asked to place a portrait of Lord Muruga, would the party follow it, she asked. "Will the DMK place the portrait

of Goddess Meenatchi when it holds meetings in Madurai. We will decide the portrait of the leaders to be placed in the venue of our meeting. We will respect all the leaders. We thought about how to keep a portrait of a leader opposed to our ideology," she said. TNCC president K. Selvaperunthagai criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his move to worship in the Thiruparankundram temple and said he is trying to incite religious sentiments in Tamil Nadu for political gains since there is a controversy. However, the BJP could not enter the State since it is acting against Tamil Nadu. While paying ₹2.02 for every one rupee received from Uttar Pradesh, ₹1.70 for every one rupee for Madhya Pradesh, it is providing only 26 paise for Tamil Nadu for every rupee collected as tax by the Centre. The BJP alliance would be taught a lesson even if the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited Tamil Nadu a thousand times.

Mamata to hold protest dharna against deletion of 63 lakh voters

KOLKATA/BERHAMPURE, MARCH 1: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will launch a dharna in the heart of Kolkata from 2 pm on March 6 in protest against the deletion of 63.66-lakh voters' names and another 60.06 lakhs kept "under adjudication" by the Election Commission (EC) over logical discrepancies in its special intensive revision (SIR) roll published on Saturday. To uphold her popular image as the "avatar of opposition" ahead of the Assembly polls in the state, Ms Banerjee has decided to launch her agitation against the "arbitrary deletions" of voters' names under the SIR from the same spot where she, as the Opposition leader, had mounted her protest against the Left Front government over the "forcible land acquisition" for the Tatas' car project at Singur in Hooghly in December of 2006. The Trinamul Congress supremo's MP nephew Abhishek Banerjee announced her plan before the media on Sunday. "She (Ms Banerjee) herself planned the sit-in demonstration at Metro Channel in Esplanade. She will declare her next programme from there. We have already submitted a letter from our party to the authorities in this regard," he said. The TMC national general secretary added: "I urge our party workers in adjoining districts and areas of Kolkata to attend the protest after taking due care of their local responsibilities. Those who are located far away are not required to come because the next 15 days are crucial for the SIR exercise." The TMC MP also accused the EC of trying to axe around 1.20-crore voters' names (63.66 lakhs already deleted plus 60.06 lakhs under adjudication) in the SIR to meet the target set by the BJP leaders, including West Bengal Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari, to help them in the impending polls. He threatened to move the Supreme Court soon against the latest voters' list. "I will submit the evidence before the SC. Preparations are underway," Mr Banerjee added. To justify his argument, he claimed that he has received calls through his outreach campaign since Saturday evening from 243 voters who complained to him about them being declared "dead" by the EC. "They are scared. Can those who are alive be certified as dead? This is a criminal offence. The figure, 243, is bound to increase in the future," the TMC scion pointed out before alleging that several prominent figures, from state chief secretary Nandini Chakravorty to Indian women's cricket team player Richa Ghosh to many TMC MLAs, have been put under adjudication due to logical discrepancies by the EC for not backing the BJP. The list of ruling party legislators under scrutiny has the names of state minister Tajmul Hossain, Rafiqur Rahaman of Amdanga in North 24 Parganas and Swati Khondokar of Chanditala in Hooghly. Among others are three MLAs and an MP of TMC from Murshidabad. They are Zakir Hossain of Jangipur, Bayron Biswas of Sagardighi and Abdur Razzaq of Jalangi and Khalilur Rahman, the Jangipur parliamentarian. The district apparently recorded.

India counters China in Sri Lanka with Naval visit

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 1 To counter Chinese influence in Sri Lanka, Indian Navy's ship INS Tarangini visited Trincomalee harbour in the island nation. Sri Lanka, which occupies a crucial place in the Indian Ocean, has attracted major powers, specifically China, which is expanding its presence in the island nation through infrastructure projects, port development, and security cooperation. This, on growing Chinese inroads have raised concerns in New Delhi on future challenges to India's maritime security and influence in its immediate neighbourhood. To counter these influences Indian military has increased its engagement with Sri Lanka armed forces. In September 2025, Indian Navy Chief Adm. Dinesh K. Tripathi, took a four-day official visit to Sri Lanka.

Countdown of NDA govt has begun, says Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1: Days after being discharged by a Delhi court in the liquor policy case, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah, claiming that the countdown of the BJP's removal from power has begun. Addressing a rally, attended by the AAP leaders and workers from several states, at Jantar Mantar, Mr Kejriwal accused Mr Modi and Mr Shah of conspiring to frame him in the excise policy case and said that the court in a recent "historic" judgement proved that he is "kattar imandar" (a hardcore honest person). A trial court on Friday granted the relief to Mr Kejriwal, former deputy DM of Delhi Manish Sisodia and 21 others in

the case and criticised the CBI, saying the chargesheet "suffers from internal contradictions, striking at the root of the conspiracy theory". Mr Kejriwal alleged that Mr Modi fears everyone and asserted that when a "tyrant" is scared, it signals the end of his reign. He said: "He (Mr Modi) sent Sonam Wangchuk to jail, who is a big scientist and worked for the education of children. Modi Ji did not go to Parliament one day, fearing women MPs would assault him. He is scared of (US President Donald) Trump, too." The former Delhi chief minister alleged that the BJP, during its 12 years of rule in the country, has ruined all the sectors. The condition of roads, healthcare, education and sanitation, among others, is in bad shape, he alleged.



Taking a dig at the Prime Minister's "Viksit Bharat" vision, Mr Kejriwal said people want a "rahne layak Bharat" (liveable India). He also took a swipe at Mr Modi's Pariksha Pe Charcha programme, saying the Prime Minister should stop the "drama" and focus on preventing paper leaks in exams. Slamming the BJP government in Delhi, Mr Kejriwal said the party ruined the city in its one year

rule, alleging that the roads are broken, the water supply is contaminated and people are facing difficulty in breathing due to air pollution. He said the Prime Minister has nothing to do with the country and he is after power only through "conspiracies" and manipulation of the voter lists. "Modi Ji, you can continue to work for power, and I will continue to work for the country," he

added. Mr Kejriwal said: "I passed from IIT with good numbers and could have gone to America. But I thought if everyone went abroad, who would take care of the country? When I served as an income tax commissioner, people used to swear by my honesty." The AAP chief said that on April 4, 2011, people gathered at Jantar Mantar had roared, and the Congress was swept from power. He said that the AAP rally marked a historic day, and the countdown of the BJP's removal from power has begun. Several senior party leaders, including Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann, Mr Sisodia, former Delhi CM Atishi, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and former city minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, also addressed the gathering at Jantar

Mantar. Over 10,000 bus marshals, along with nurses, doctors, and pharmacists allegedly removed from Mohalla Clinics, and DTC contractual drivers who lost their jobs, attended the rally. Mr Kejriwal also declared support for the DTC staff, doctors, and nurses who have lost jobs. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Sisodia alleged that the Centre harmed the interests of its farmers on tariffs by bowing to pressure from the US President. "We want a PM who speaks about schools, employment, traders, and health. Modi ko hatana hai, Kejriwal ko baithana hai (Modi must be removed, and Kejriwal must take his place)... Kejriwal tum sangharsh kro, hum tumhaare saath hai (Kejriwal you fight; we are with you)," he said.

President will launch women's welfare schemes in Delhi today

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1 In a major push towards women's mobility, welfare and financial security, the Delhi government will roll out a cluster of flagship schemes on Monday, with President Droupadi Murmu set to inaugurate them at a function titled Sashakt Nari, Samridh Delhi. Chief minister Rekha Gupta said the initiatives — the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) "pink card", pending Ladli payouts under Meri Punji Mera Adhikar, the Delhi Lakhpati Bیتی Yojana, and a free LPG cylinder benefit — collectively mark a shift towards integrated, digital and women-centric welfare delivery in the capital. The pink card is a smart mobility card that will replace the existing paper tickets for free bus travel by women on Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses. Integrated with the Automatic Fare Collection System, the card will also enable seamless paid travel on Metro and regional transit services under the Centre's "One Nation, One Card"

framework. Officials said three types of NCMC cards will be issued: Pink for eligible women residents, Blue for general commuters, and Orange for monthly pass users. In the first phase, pink and blue cards will be rolled out through about 50 issuance centres at district and sub-divisional magistrate offices and select DTC depots. Aadhaar-based authentication will verify eligibility and prevent duplication. Another key announcement is the Delhi Lakhpati Bیتی Yojana, an expanded version of the Ladli scheme aimed at supporting girls' education and long-term financial security. Under the new structure, the government will deposit ₹56,000 in stages for each eligible girl child, projected to grow to over ₹1 lakh by age 21, subject to completion of graduation or a recognised professional diploma. It indicates that enrolment will be linked to institutional records to ensure continuity of benefits. Birth registration data from municipal authorities and school enrolment records will be digitally integrated

so that eligible girls are automatically tracked at key milestones, reducing the risk of drop-out from the scheme. Officials said periodic verification will be conducted at Class X, XII and graduation stages before the next tranche is credited. The scheme, to be implemented digitally through SBI Life Insurance, will transfer maturity proceeds directly to beneficiaries' Aadhaar-linked accounts. It will cover families with an annual income of up to ₹1.2 lakh, limited to two girl children per household, and require Delhi residency of at least three years. The Delhi government also plans outreach through anganwadi centres and government schools to ensure awareness and timely registration among low-income families. Under the initiative Meri Punji Mera Adhikar, long-pending Ladli maturity payments will be cleared. A total of ₹100.25 crore will be transferred via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to 40,642 beneficiaries

who had been awaiting their maturity amounts under the Delhi Ladli Scheme, launched in 2008 to promote the birth and education of the girl child. Officials said the transfer to Aadhaar-linked bank accounts is intended to ensure transparency and direct access to funds. The payout exercise precedes the rollout of the revamped Lakhpati Bیتی scheme and is meant to restore confidence among beneficiaries whose dues had been pending. At the same programme, President Murmu will also launch a scheme providing two free LPG cylinders annually to rationcard-holding families, timed around Holi and Diwali. The subsidy equivalent to the prevailing cylinder price will be transferred directly to Aadhaar-linked bank accounts of ration card holders via DBT. The government estimates that around 15.5 lakh families will benefit. The scheme aims to ease household fuel expenses and enable low-income families to celebrate festivals with dignity. Ms Gupta said

HC to hear on March 9 CBI plea against bail to Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1: The Delhi high court is scheduled to hear on March 9 the plea filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) challenging the trial court's order discharging all 23 accused in the Delhi excise policy case, including former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia. As per the high court's cause list, the matter will be taken up by the Bench of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma. The Central Bureau of Investigation has formally moved the high court seeking to set aside the discharge order passed by the trial court in connection with the now scrapped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22. On February 27, a special court discharged all the accused in the case registered by the CBI. The order was pronounced by special judge (PC Act) Jitender Singh of the Rouse Avenue Court. The special court held that there was no overarching conspiracy or criminal intent in the formulation of the excise policy and observed that the prosecution's case did not survive judicial scrutiny.

BJP hits back at Kejriwal, cites '1-yr report card' of Delhi govt

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1: The Delhi BJP on Saturday mounted a sharp rebuttal to AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal's recent speech, accusing him of delivering "zero development" during his 11-year tenure in Delhi and 3.5 years in Punjab, while unfairly targeting the one-year-old BJP government in the capital. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said Mr Kejriwal "begins blaming the BJP for issues from Delhi to Punjab, Gujarat, Goa and even abroad whenever he gets political space," instead of accounting for his own record in office. He added that AAP had also been "repeatedly rejected" by voters in Gujarat and Goa. Mr Sachdeva claimed chief minister Rekha Gupta had set a "unique national example" by presenting her government's report card in all seven parliamentary constituencies within seven days of completing one year in office. Highlighting the BJP government's performance, he said development works worth "thousands of crores" had been initiated through the Public Works Department, Delhi Jal Board.

Court orders immediate release of JNU students

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1 A Delhi court on Sunday ordered the immediate release of 14 students who were arrested in connection with a protest demonstration at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus recently. The court had granted bail to the 14 protesters on February 27, observing that while assaulting police personnel is a serious offence, the accused are students with their careers ahead of them. Duty magistrate Ravi was hearing the students' plea against a magisterial court order that had sent them to 14 days' judicial custody until the verification process of their documents and bail bonds was completed. The court said, "Although the said judgment pertained to verification of surety bonds by jail authorities

and police after the grant of interim bail, the underlying constitutional principle is clearly that procedural formalities cannot be so protracted as to render the judicial order of bail illusory." It added that the right to personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution does not countenance the avoidable and disproportionate detention of an undertrial who has been judicially found entitled to bail but "is nonetheless confined solely because the administrative process of verification is lagging". "The law has consistently recognised that the objective of bail is to secure the presence of the accused at trial, not to inflict pre-emptive punishment," the magistrate said. The

court also noted that if outstation verification is permitted to dictate continued incarceration, without outer limits or alternative safeguards, the grant of bail may effectively become illusory for all outstation students and undertrials. "This court is of the view that the ends of justice would be met by permitting the release of the accused persons from judicial custody pending verification of their bail/surety bonds, but subject to stringent and carefully crafted conditions to address the concerns raised by the prosecution," the court said. Opposing the release of the protesters, the investigating officer submitted in court that verification of permanent addresses and sureties is essential.

17 dead, 18 critical in blast at Nagpur explosives unit

MUMBAI, MARCH 1 At least 17 persons, including 14 women, were killed and 18 others critically injured in a blast at an explosives manufacturing factory at Katol in Nagpur district on Sunday morning. The blast took place at the SBL Energy Limited factory, a mining and industrial explosives manufacturer, at Raulgaon in Katol tehsil. Gunpowder manufacturing was underway at the factory when the explosion occurred, said police. According to the police, between 7 and 8.30 am, powerful explosions occurred one after the other in the company's non-ferrous crimping

units. There were 36 workers present in the unit at the time of the incident. The intensity of the explosions was so terrible that they were heard for several kilometres, triggering panic in the surrounding locality. A blaze erupted after the explosion, and by noon, the completely burnt bodies of 17 workers were pulled out from under the rubble. District and police officials rushed to the spot soon after the incident, and fire brigade teams were deployed to control the situation. Authorities have cordoned off the area as rescue operations continue. Teams of the National Disaster Response Force

(NDRF) have also been deployed at the site to assist local authorities in rescue and recovery operations. Officials said the exact cause of the explosion is yet to be determined. A detailed investigation has been launched to ascertain how the blast occurred and whether safety protocols were followed at the facility. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) expressed grief over the tragedy and announced financial assistance for the victims. Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced a financial assistance of ₹5 lakh for the families of those who lost their lives in the incident.

Shah flags religious conversions in Punjab, urges state govt to act

MUMBAI, MARCH 1 Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday raised concerns over alleged "religious conversions" in Punjab and urged both the state government and society to take steps to curb the practice. Speaking at a commemoration marking the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur in Navi Mumbai, Ms Shah said that conversions driven by "greed" run contrary to the ideals upheld by the ninth Sikh Guru. "While Guru Tegh Bahadur endured atrocities to defend others' dharma (religion), if we indulge in conversions for greed, we cannot be called followers of Dasam Pita (the 10th

Sikh Guru)," Mr Shah said. Addressing the "HindDi-Chadar" commemoration at Ove Maidan at Kharghar, Mr Shah hailed the sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur, stating that his martyrdom played a crucial role in protecting Hinduism. "If the ninth Guru had not laid down his life to protect Hindu dharma and Sanatan dharma, there would have been no Hindus left in the world today. Everyone should acknowledge this," he said. The Union home minister added that followers of Sanatan Dharma in India and abroad remain grateful to the Guru for enduring hardships and cruelty to defend religious freedom.

CEC in Kerala Mar 6, 7 to assess poll readiness

New Delhi, March 1: The Election Commission, led by chief election commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, will visit Kerala this week to assess poll preparedness in the state where assembly elections are likely to be held next month. The Commission is likely to reach Kerala on March 5 night and would commence its official tour on March 6 and 7, officials said on Sunday. Besides Kerala, Assembly polls are due in Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and West Bengal. The Election Commission (EC) has already visited Assam, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry to assess poll preparedness. Mr Kumar told reporters in Guwahati that the EC would finalise the poll

schedule for the northeastern state keeping in mind the festival of Bihu, which falls on April 14. It is usual for the EC to visit states where polls are due before announcing the election schedule. The terms of the five assemblies end on different dates in May and June. While the five-year term of the Puducherry Assembly ends on June 15, the terms of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal assemblies end on May 20, 23, 30 and 7, respectively. Last time, Assembly polls in West Bengal were held in eight phases by far the maximum. In Assam, elections were held in two phases, and in a single phase in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.