



Gardeners work at an agricultural park in Chengdong Township of Nantong City, east China's Jiangsu Province, on Jan. 7, 2019. As the Chinese Lunar New Year is drawing near, the potted plants have entered its season of sales in Chengdong Township. UNI.

Malaysia's Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau Launching New Incentives and Support for the India Market

Ahmedabad, The Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) launched its first sales mission to Ahmedabad this morning at the Crown Plaza Hotel as part of the second edition of its Penang Sales Mission to India.

Led by Ashwin Gunasekaran, Chief Executive Officer of PCEB, the mission is supported by a Penang delegation of 12 partners, including hotels, destination management companies, attractions and theme park, professional conference organisers, event experts, and PCEB's strategic airline partner, Malaysia Airlines. Beginning the mission in Chennai on 7 Jan, the Penang delegation will continue on to Mumbai on 11 Jan and New Delhi on 14 Jan with the objective of promoting Penang as the preferred destination for corporate and association meetings, conferences, and incentives, and leisure travel.

Capitalising on Penang's rising popularity in India, the Penang Sales Mission to India will host, in each of the four cities it is visiting, a B2B engagement session with participating Business Events and leisure travel buyers from India as well as a media session with the local Indian and Business Events

Kerala hit badly on second day of trade strike

Thiruvananthapuram, Normal life across Kerala was badly hit on Wednesday as the two-day nationwide trade strike entered its second day.

However, more shops and establishments opened their shutters on Wednesday compared to Tuesday.

Barring the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-backed BMS trade union, all other unions supported the strike where the protesters have raised several demands including a raise in minimum wages to Rs 18,000.

State-owned private buses and contract vehicles remained off the roads but pilgrims to the Sabarimala shrine were allowed to proceed from all places on a limited scale. More private vehicles were seen plying across the state, but autorickshaws remained few in numbers.

While banks were shut, attendances in state and central government offices marginally improved since Tuesday.

All university examinations slated for Wednesday have been postponed and educational institutions were closed. Even though the tourism industry had sought exemption from shutdowns, popular tourist destination like Alappuzha and Wayanad were badly affected as travellers were unable to move from one place to another. There were also reports of rail and road blockades from several parts of the state.

Some more parties will be asked to join Mahagathbandhan: Pawar, Chandrababu

New Delhi, With the 'Mahagathbandhan' of Opposition parties taking shape ahead of Lok Sabha polls, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and TDP leader and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday said some more parties will be asked to join it.

Naidu, who was on one-day visit to the national capital, met Pawar, Congress President Rahul Gandhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, and discussed the issue in the wake of a rally in Kolkata being organised by Trinamool Congress on January 19, where Opposition parties will put up a show of unity.

"When we reach Kolkata, there could be leaders from some other parties. We have neither met them nor discussed (Mahagathbandhan) with them. But we are going to suggest them that after the rally, let sit together and discuss future course of action," Pawar told reporters.

"If there is a unanimity, then let us start exhibiting the programme which we finalise after the meeting," Echoing the view, Naidu said if the unanimity occurs, meetings would be held subsequently in Delhi to decide the future course of action.

In order "to save the nation", all parties are required to join the Mahagathbandhan out of "democratic compulsion", he added.

Sources said Naidu discussed with Gandhi the strategy to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the upcoming general elections. Naidu said he supported the 10 per cent quota for economically weaker sections in general category, but the BJP-led Central government should have brought it earlier by discussing it with states. — IANS

Cold wave continues unabated in Kashmir Valley

Srinagar, An unabated cold wave continued on Wednesday in the Kashmir Valley, dropping minimum temperatures below the freezing point, the Met office said.

The office also forecast a fresh spell of snow and rain across Jammu and Kashmir beginning from Friday.

The valley is going through the 40-day long period of harsh winter cold called the 'Chillai Kalan' which started on December 21 and is slated to end on January 30. Gulmarg minus 2.2, as the minimum temperatures on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the night temperature in Leh and Kargil dipped to minus 9.9 degrees Celsius and minus 15.3 degrees, respectively. Jammu recorded 4.9 degrees Celsius, Katra 5.1, Batote minus 0.1, Bannihal minus 0.4 and Bhandarwah minus 1.8 as their minimum temperatures on Wednesday.

CBI Director Alok Verma re-joins office

New Delhi, A day after the Supreme Court reinstated Alok Verma as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director with limited powers, he resumed office on Wednesday.

Verma, who was sent on forced leave on the intervening night of October 23-24, returned to work after almost two-and-a-half months.

He left from his residence in central Delhi's Janpath area at around 10.10 a.m. and reached the agency's headquarters in Lodhi Road area 25 minutes later. He was received by M. Nageswara Rao, who was appointed to look after Verma's duties and functions. Verma, a 1979-batch IPS officer of Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre, was Delhi's Police Commissioner before his appointment as CBI Director on February 1, 2017. His tenure ends on January 31. On Tuesday, the Supreme Court reinstated



Elon Musk has finally revealed more details of the mysterious silver Starship prototype being built by SpaceX in Florida (left and top right). Known as the 'hopper', it will take its first flight within weeks, Musk tweeted. The SpaceX founder revealed an image of what the finished 'hopper' prototype will look like (center). The craft, which many have compared to the rocket Tintin used in the 1954 adventure 'Explorers on the Moon', (inset) is a prototype of the Starship Musk hopes will take man to the moon and, eventually, Mars (bottom right).

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