

Protesters call for nationwide strike against Trump's immigration policies

■ By Kimberlee Kruesi and Holly Ramer

WASHINGTON, Jan 31 (AP)

PROTESTERS across the US are calling for “no work, no school, no shopping” as part of a nationwide strike on Friday to oppose the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown.

The demonstrations are taking place amid widespread outrage over the killing Alex Pretti, an intensive care nurse who was shot multiple times after he used his cellphone to record Border Patrol officers conducting an immigration enforcement operation in Minneapolis. The death heightened scrutiny over the administration’s tactics after the January 7 death of Renee Good, who was fatally shot behind the wheel of her vehicle by a US

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer. “The people of the Twin Cities have shown the way for the whole country -

to stop ICE’s reign of terror, we need to SHUT IT DOWN,” said one of the many websites and social media pages promoting

actions in communities around the United States.

Some schools in Arizona, Colorado and other states preemptively canceled classes in anticipation of mass absences. Many other demonstrations were planned for students and others to gather at city centers, statehouses and churches across the country. Protests continue in Minneapolis

Just outside Minneapolis, hundreds gathered in the frigid cold early Friday at the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, the site of regular protests in recent weeks.

After speeches from clergy members, demonstrators marched toward the facility’s restricted area, jeering at a line of DHS agents to “quit your jobs” and “get out of Minnesota.”



Protesters face off against police at the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles on Friday. (AP/PTI)

Kavach commissioned on 472.3-km route: Rlys



NEW DELHI, Jan 31 (PTI)

AUTOMATIC train protection system Kavach has been commissioned on 472.3 route kilometres across three sections of its network, marking another significant milestone in strengthening rail safety, the Railway Ministry said on Friday.

According to the Ministry, the newly-commissioned sections include Vadodara-Virar (344 km) on Western Railway, Tuglakabad Junction Cabin-Palwal (35 km) on Northern Railway and Manpur-Sarmatanr (93.3 km) on East Central Railway.

"With this commissioning, the Indian Railways continues to accelerate the deployment of the indigenous Kavach system to enhance train protection, operational safety and reliability across high-density routes," a press statement from the Railway Ministry said.

It added, "This commissioning marks the highest-ever route kilometres of Kavach commissioned on a single day as well as in a month, with 472.3 Route Kilometres brought under Kavach Version 4.0."

Officials said that the previous highest commissioning stood at 324 Rkm on the Kota-Mathura section of West Central Railway.

They added that with the latest addition, Kavach Version 4.0 has now been commissioned across five zones of the Indian Railways.

"After today's inclusion, Kavach Version 4.0 has been commissioned over a total of 1,306.3 Route Kilometres across Indian Railways," the statement said.

Before this, Kavach Version 4.0 had been commissioned on 834 Route Kilometres.

This included the Palwal-Mathura-Nagda section (633 Rkm) of the Delhi-Mumbai route and the Howrah-Bardhaman section (105 Rkm) of the Delhi-Howrah route.

In addition, 96 Route Kilometres were commissioned on Gujarat's first Bajwa (Vadodara)-Ahmedabad section.

Highlighting the progress of Kavach 4.0 implementation on the East Central Zone, the ministry maintained that train operations have also been commenced with Kavach 4.0 on the 93.3-km Manpur-Sarmatanr section of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya division. The first Kavach-enabled service, Train No. 13305 Sasaram Intercity Express, operated successfully on this section, departing Sone Nagar at 07:42 hours (7.42 am) and arriving at Manpur at 9:35 hrs (9.35 am).

Expect warmer February: IMD

NEW DELHI, Jan 31 (PTI)

INDIA is expected to witness a warmer February with below normal rains, particularly in the Himalayan region where a drier winter can be linked to climate change, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Saturday. Addressing a press conference here, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said monthly rainfall in February for the country as a whole is expected to be below normal and both the minimum and maximum temperatures are expected to remain above normal.

He said the above-normal temperatures may accelerate crop growth and shorten crop duration of rabi crops, particularly in northwest and central India.

“Crops like wheat and barley may experience forced maturity, leading to sterile spikelets and chaffy grains, resulting in yield reduction,” the top meteorolo-

gist said. He said that monthly rainfall in February over Northwest India -- comprising East Uttar Pradesh, West Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh -- is most likely to be below normal. The absence of western disturbances in December and most of January, he said, had resulted in drier winters in the western Himalayan region, which experienced snowfall only after January 20.

“Over the period of time, rainfall over western Himalayas has shown a decreasing trend, which has been attributed to climate change by studies carried out by the IMD and other institutes,” he said. However, he said, it was difficult to point out which particular aspect of climate change was the cause of the decline in rainfall in the western Himalayan region.

Farmers look to Budget 2026-27 for relief

NEW DELHI, Jan 31 (IANS)

WHEN Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman rises to present her ninth consecutive budget on Sunday, February 1, farmers across India look ahead for a mix of assurances that range from subsidies, a guarantee on a profitable Minimum Support Price (MSP), expanding credit access, investing in modern technology and infrastructure, to providing climate-resilient support.

She has repeatedly assured that Prime Minister Narendra Modi firmly believes to focus on four major castes 'Garib' (poor), 'Mahilayen' (women), 'Yuva' (youth), and 'Annadata' (farmer).

India protects its farmers through



A worker plants saplings in a paddy field in Nagaon, Assam. (PTI)

a mix of budgetary support, targeted schemes, and institutional reforms.

The agriculture budget has

steadily increased over the past decade, and most farmers benefit from direct income transfers, crop insurance, access to credit, and subsidised inputs.

Budgetary allocations to the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (DA&FW) have risen from Rs. 21,933 crores in 2013-14 to Rs. 1.27 lakh crore in the Budget Estimates (BE) for 2025-26.

Agricultural expenditure is also channelled through several ministries, which include irrigation, renewable energy, fertilisers, rural employment, and research.

This demonstrates consistent fiscal commitment and highlights an evolving whole-of-Government strategy.

ZERO-TOLERANCE for terrorism must be a universal norm: India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses for a group picture with the Foreign Ministers and delegations of the Arab League, in New Delhi on Saturday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and NSA Ajit Doval also present. (ANI)

NEW DELHI, Jan 31 (PTI)

INDIA on Saturday conveyed to Arab League member nations that “zero-tolerance” for terrorism must be an “uncompromising universal norm” as the two sides deliberated on the shared priority of advancing the Gaza peace plan and ways to navigate the current geopolitical environment.

The issues figured at the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers’ meeting in New Delhi that saw participation of 19 member nations of the Arab League, considered as an influential grouping.

The participants including several Foreign Ministers called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi before the start of the meeting.

“The Arab world is a part of India’s extended neighbourhood, linked by deep civilisational bonds, vibrant people-to-people connections and enduring brotherly ties, as well as a shared commitment to peace, progress

Taking forward peace plan to end the Gaza conflict is a widely shared priority, says EAM Jaishankar

and stability,” Modi said.

“Confident that enhanced cooperation in technology, energy, trade and innovation will unlock new opportunities and take the partnership to new heights,” he said on social media.

In his inaugural address at the foreign ministerial meeting, Jaishankar said that taking forward the comprehensive peace plan to end the Gaza conflict, based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2803, is a widely shared priority.

“Various countries have made policy declarations on the peace plan, individually or collectively. This is the larger context in which we deliberate on the region’s challenges and prospects,” he said.

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