

HP Assembly Winter Session: 316 questions received for Himachal Assembly Winter Session, Tapovan will heat up on the very first day



Diary Times Desk : The winter session of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly is starting from Wednesday at Tapovan campus in Dharamshala. The four-day session will continue till December 21. There are chances of uproar on the first day of the session. BJP has indicated this by staying away from the all-party meeting on Tuesday. On the other hand, the ruling party is also ready to give a strong reply to the opposition. The opposition will corner the government on the allegations of not implementing the guarantees, while the ruling party will make the Centre's neglect of Himachal its shield. BJP will adopt an aggressive stance before the first day's proceedings begin. While BJP will hold a public outrage rally against the government at Zorawar Stadium outside the House, it can also create a deadlock in the proceedings of the Question Hour starting at 11 o'clock. The opposition will target the government by calling its two-year tenure bad, while the Congress will reiterate the talk of system change by accounting for its achievements.

Himachal News: After a long leave, SP Ilma Afroz joined the police headquarters

Diary Times Desk : Baddi Superintendent of Police Ilma Afroz has joined the Police Headquarters. This makes it clear that she will not serve in Baddi for the time being. Afroz had reported to the Police Headquarters in Shimla only the previous day. After she went on leave, the state government has appointed Vinod Dhiman as the acting Superintendent of Police in Baddi. According to the information, the Superintendent of Police had gone to Shimla on 6 November. From there, she returned to Baddi on the same day and went to her village Kurandki in Moradabad with her mother. She had also vacated her residence in Baddi. After that, her leave was extended by one week each four times.

"54-Year-Old 'Young' Leader...": Amit Shah's Constitution Dig At Rahul Gandhi

Agencies : Taking a swipe at Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Union Minister Amit Shah has said that a "54-year-old masquerading as a young leader" alleges that attempts are being made to alter the Constitution without realising that provisions to do so are built into the document. Mr Shah, who was speaking in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday during a debate to commemorate 75 years of the Constitution, was referring to Rahul Gandhi and the Congress' allegations that the BJP wants to amend the document and dilute its character - a move that paid dividends for the party and the opposition INDIA bloc during the Lok Sabha elections. Our Constitution has never been considered immutable. Article 368 has a provision to amend the Constitution. A 54-year-old leader, who calls himself 'yuva' (youth), keeps roaming around with the Constitution, claiming that we would change it. I want to say that the provision to amend the Constitution is built in," Mr Shah said.



"Most Befitting Place": Army Amid Row Over 1971 Pakistan Surrender Painting



Agencies : Responding to the row over the removal of the iconic picture depicting Pakistan's surrender after the 1971 war, the Indian Army has said the painting has been installed at its "most befitting place" - the Manekshaw Centre named after 1971 war hero and Field Marshal SHFJ Manekshaw. This installation was done yesterday on the occasion of Vijay Diwas, which marked 43 years of India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war that led to the birth of Bangladesh. "On the occasion of #VijayDiwas, #GeneralUpendraDwivedi #COAS, along with the President #AWWA, Mrs Sunita Dwivedi, installed the iconic 1971 surrender painting to its most befitting place, The Manekshaw Centre, named after the Architect and the Hero of 1971 War, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. Senior hierarchy & serving officers of #IndianArmy and #Veterans were present on this occasion," the Army said in a post on X. Earlier, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra raised the issue in Lok Sabha. In her Zero Hour reference, Ms Gandhi Vadra remembered the role of the Indian Army in the 1971 war and noted that the iconic picture of Pakistan's surrender had been removed from the Army Headquarters. The picture, which captures the signing of the Instrument of Surrender.

Giving money to beggars? Police will file an FIR against you in this city from January 1

Agencies : The Indore district administration announced that starting January 1, 2025, individuals found giving alms to beggars in the city will face legal action, including the registration of a First Information Report (FIR). The decision aims to make Indore beggar-free as part of a broader initiative by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. District Collector Ashish Singh stated that an awareness campaign against begging is underway and will continue until the end of December 2024. Speaking to the media, Singh urged residents to refrain from giving alms, stating, "I appeal to all residents of Indore not to become partners in the sin by giving alms to people." An order banning begging has already been issued, and enforcement will begin in January. The administration has identified organised gangs exploiting vulnerable individuals.

'BJP topples govts', says AAP's Sanjay Singh. JP Nadda replies 'Time is not far...'

Agencies : A war of words erupted between Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh and Union minister Jagat Prakash Nadda in the Rajya Sabha, after the former accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of toppling governments in opposition-ruled states. During the discussion on "Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India" in the Upper House, Singh said, "They do not allow Dalits into temples. Their mentality is evident - when the foundation stone for the Ayodhya temple was laid, our PM, UP CM, and Governor were present, but then-President Ram Nath Kovind was not invited." "For the temple inauguration, President Droupadi Murmu was not invited because she is from the Dalit and Adivasi community. Why has no RSS chief ever come from the Dalit or Adivasi community? They must answer this... Across the country, they topple governments through horse-trading and manipulation. This country will run according to Babasaheb's Constitution, not the diktats of (PM) Modi.



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Dharamshala: Leader of Opposition Jairam and BJP MLA Sukhram stayed away from the all-party meeting

Diary Times Desk : Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur and BJP MLA Sukhram Chaudhary abstained from the all-party meeting. Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Harsh Vardhan Singh Chauhan expressed displeasure over their absence from the all-party meeting for the second consecutive time. Pathania had called an all-party meeting in his office room of Tapovan Assembly Secretariat on Tuesday before the winter session starting from Wednesday. He said that it has been the tradition of the Assembly that the Speaker has been calling an all-party meeting before the start of the session. He had also called the leaders of the ruling party and the opposition to the meeting. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Harsh Vardhan Chauhan and Deputy Chief Whip Kewal Singh Pathania were present in the meeting from the ruling party. While Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur and member Sukhram Chaudhary did not attend the meeting.



Himachal: CM Sukhu said- Constitutional values will be included in school curriculum

Diary Times Desk : Amidst the heated politics over the Constitution in the country, the Congress government of Himachal has decided to impart education based on constitutional values to the students in government schools. While reviewing the functioning of the education department in the state secretariat, the Chief Minister directed the officials to include constitutional values in the school curriculum. The Chief Minister said that 6 schools each in each assembly constituency of the state will be equipped with all the necessary facilities. These will have adequate staff, library, laboratory and other facilities. A calendar of year-round activities will be prepared for the schools. The CM said that with the aim of system transformation, work is being done on a comprehensive rationalization process in the education department. Along with the inclusion of new subjects in colleges.

Q2 GDP slowdown was temporary blip, more growth coming: FM Sitharaman

Agencies : Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Lok Sabha on December 17 that the government believes the GDP growth slowdown in Q2FY25 "is a temporary blip" and that an improvement will be seen in coming quarters. "Government believes that the Q2 GDP growth slowdown is a temporary blip, and we will see an improvement in the coming quarters," said Sitharaman while replying to the discussion on Supplementary Demands for Grants - First Batch 2024-25 in Lok Sabha. Sitharaman acknowledged that the second quarter of the current fiscal has been challenging for India as well as most of the economies of the world. However, India's GDP growth rate averaged 8.3 percent in last three years, there has been a steady, sustained growth, an exceptional achievement by global standards. This reinforces India's position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world, she said. "I am optimistic about an improvement in economic performance going ahead," she added. The finance minister's comments come at a time when India's GDP growth slumped more than expected to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 percent for the second quarter of FY25 compared with 6.7 percent in the first quarter. While, mining contracted by 0.1 percent in the second quarter, marking the first deceleration in two years.

"Not Your Toy": NCP's Chhagan Bhujbal To Ajit Pawar On Exclusion From Cabinet

Agencies : The row over denial of ministerial berth to Chhagan Bhujbal is escalating, with the Nationalist Congress leader leaning away from Ajit Pawar and towards the BJP. Chhagan Bhujbal is making it clear that he intends to take action, but keeps everyone guessing about what that action will be - walking over to the BJP or forming a new party. That is, unless he is suitably compensated for the loss of the ministerial berth. Ajit Pawar, meanwhile, is maintaining a stony silence - not unlike the time he shifted from the Maha Viaks Aghadi to the ruling alliance. He even skipped the Day One of the Assembly session yesterday - which is usually devoted to formalities including homage to MLAs who died. He maintained silence even when Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis clarified the reason why some of their ministers were not given a chance this time. He did not attend the session today either and has been incommunicado. It is believed that he is still in his Nagpur residence. Mr Bhujbal took the opportunity to go public with his grievances, declaring that he would find out who had denied him the ministerial berth despite Mr Fadnavis being in favour.

Agniveer Bharti: If you want to become an Agniveer then get ready, recruitment will start in Hamirpur from 17th January

Diary Times Desk : There is an opportunity for the youth of three districts of Himachal Pradesh to join the army. Agniveer recruitment for the youth of Hamirpur, Una and Bilaspur will be held from 17 to 24 January. This recruitment will be held at the synthetic track of Anu and the grounds of Degree College. Colonel BS Bhandari, Director of Army Recruitment Office Hamirpur, has appealed to the eligible candidates to bring all the necessary documents with them. He informed that admit cards have been issued to the eligible candidates for physical test and medical examination on the Join Indian Army web portal. All the candidates should bring the highest quality colour print of their admit card. Colonel BS Bhandari urged the candidates to read all the instructions given on the website carefully and bring the original copies of all the necessary documents and certificates accordingly. These documents include Aadhar card, all documents related to educational qualification, Bonafide Himachali certificate, Dogra community and caste certificate, religion certificate, minority class certificate, school character certificate, photo character certificate issued by the Pradhan and unmarried certificate, child certificate of serving soldier or ex-soldier, certificate of NCC and sports activities, affidavit on the format given in the website, bank account, PAN card, character certificate issued by the police, proof of residence and 20 passport size photographs. Candidates who have studied from open school will have to submit the leaving certificate issued by their last educational institution, signed by the head of the institution and countersigned by the Block Education Officer or the competent officer of the district level of the Education Department.

High Court Judge Appears Before Top Court Collegium Over "Majority" Remarks

Agencies : Allahabad High Court judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav, who purportedly gave controversial statements at a Vishwa Hindu Parishad function, appeared before the Supreme Court collegium on Tuesday, sources said. According to the sources, Yadav appeared before the collegium headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and was asked to put forth his version on the statements made. The top court on December 10 took note of news reports over the statements and sought a report from the Allahabad High Court on the issue. "The Supreme Court has taken note of newspaper reports of a speech given by Mr Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad. The details and particulars have been called from the high court and the matter is under consideration," an official statement had said. According to the established norm, a judge, against whom a report is sought by the apex court collegium on any controversial issue from the high court concerned, is given opportunity to put forth his or her version before the top court collegium headed by the CJI.



Jairam Thakur said- Government is scared of accountability, winter session of Vidhan Sabha shortened



Diary Times Desk : There is a lot to say and do in the winter session of Himachal Pradesh Assembly regarding the wide-ranging issues of the state. Despite this, the winter session has been made a mere 4 days long. Saturday has also been kept as a working day. What is surprising is that in this session, the Chief Minister will be here for two days and not for two days. It is clear that the government is running away from accountability for what it has done in two years. This was said by former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur. He said that the state government will be cornered regarding the celebration ceremony organized recently in Bilaspur. Because in a state where thousands of houses have been washed away in a natural tragedy, there has been a loss of crores and the government has promised to give Rs 7 lakh each to the disaster-affected, despite this, even the Patwari has not reached many houses yet, then how can anyone celebrate in such a situation. Jairam said that the state government has closed 1500 institutions in two years. More than 10 thousand outsourced employees have been sent home and those who are working have not received salary for four to five months.

Chief Minister Sukhu said- Opposition should raise public issues in the assembly session instead of creating ruckus

Diary Times Desk : People gave a warm welcome to CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu who reached Dharamshala on Tuesday to participate in the winter session of Himachal Pradesh Assembly. Talking to journalists, the CM said that the state government is fully prepared for the assembly session. He said that the opposition should raise issues related to the public during the session. The opposition should raise people's issues instead of walkout and participate in the assembly discussions. CM said that for some time now it has been seen that the opposition puts forth its point in the House and when the minister starts answering it, it walks out and leaves the House. The opposition should play a positive role. He said that there is a lack of coordination in the opposition within the House and the opposition is divided into many factions.

Lahaul's tourist places are bustling with tourists, additional soldiers will be deployed in Manali on Christmas-New Year

Diary Times Desk : The tourist places of Lahaul-Spiti, the tribal district of Himachal Pradesh, have started buzzing with tourists. A large number of tourists are arriving in Koksar and Gramphoo of Lahaul. While thousands of tourists had arrived in Sissu, Koksar and Gramphoo of Lahaul on the weekend, tourists are continuing to arrive even after the weekend. Tourists are enjoying adventure activities here. Apart from skiing, tourists are enjoying ETV a lot. At the same time, tourists are also excited to see the snow on the Rohtang hill. However, they are facing disappointment due to lack of fresh snowfall. Tourism businessmen are also delighted to see the sudden number of tourists from the month of December. In the tourist city of Manali, the movement of tourists has increased as Christmas and New Year approach.

Vijay Hazare Trophy: Himachal cricket team will play seven league matches, first match will be with Meghalaya

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh senior cricket team will play seven league matches in its pool in BCCI's Vijay Hazare Cricket Trophy. The first match will be played with Meghalaya on 21st December in Mumbai. The team has not been announced yet. This time Himachal's team will enter the tournament with the intention of giving a good performance. For this the team has also played four one day practice matches with Punjab team in Amtar Cricket Stadium. Himachal's team will play matches with Meghalaya on 21st December, Sikkim on 23rd December, Rajasthan on 25th December, Maharashtra on 27th December, Railways on 31st December, Services on 3rd January and Andhra Pradesh on 5th January. HPCA secretary Avnish Parmar said that the team will be announced soon by HPCA for Vijay Hazare Trophy. Himachal's first league match will be with Meghalaya on 21st December. Himachal Pradesh Korfball Association has decided to hold state level competition on 24th and 25th December at Government Senior Secondary School Dumahar, Solan.

HP Bulk Drug Park: Now 100 industrial units will be set up in the bulk drug park to be built in Haroli, Himachal

Diary Times Desk : Now 100 industrial units will be built in the Bulk Drug Park to be built in Haroli of Una district of Himachal Pradesh. Earlier 80 units were proposed to be built. The state government has sought Rs 500 crore from the Center to increase the units and level the land. At the same time, the state government has also approved an additional budget of Rs 50 crore to the Industry Department. The central government has set a target of building the Bulk Drug Park in March 2026. In such a situation, it is being expedited by the state government. The central government itself is monitoring this project. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu has written a DO note to Union Health Minister JP Nadda to release Rs 500 crore. It has been said that due to being a hilly area, more expenditure is being incurred in leveling the land. In such a situation, an additional Rs 500 crore has been demanded for the project in addition to the amount received from the Center. Draft tenders for the Bulk Drug Park are in the final stage. They are to be sent to the committee for approval this week.

Himachal: In the name of investment, a finance company duped 50 people of Rs 1 crore

Diary Times Desk : A private finance company in Churah of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh duped more than 50 people of Rs one crore in the name of investment. The victims reached Teesa police station and lodged a complaint against three employees of the company. The police have registered a case against the accused and started investigation. Local people told the police that the accused started a finance company in Churah a few years ago. The accused lured them with higher interest rates than the bank. Due to this greed, many people invested money in the finance company, but now all three have absconded after closing their offices. The accused include Ranjan Mahajan, Brijendra Singh and Yusuf Mohammad. Last year also people had lodged a complaint of fraud against the three accused. Complainants Shabbir Mohammad, Siddharth Malhotra, Vinod Kumar, Reena Kumari, Devi Singh, Nanak Chand and Rahul Kumar have appealed to the police to take strict action against the three and get the money back from them. Superintendent of Police Abhishek Yadav said that people have lodged a complaint against three people of the finance company. The police have registered a case. All three will be summoned to the Teesa police station for questioning, only after that it will be known how much money has actually been defrauded from the people.

Himachal: Electricity subsidy of grade one and two officers stopped in Himachal from January 1, decision taken in the meeting of Energy Department

Diary Times Desk : Grade one and two officers in Himachal will not get electricity subsidy from January 1. These consumers will have to pay the bill according to the full rates. This decision was taken in the review meeting of the Energy Department held in the State Secretariat on Monday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu. The Chief Minister directed the officials to incorporate innovative measures in the functioning of the board. It was also decided to provide an additional corpus fund of Rs 100 crore to strengthen the board. The CM said that the government is continuously reviewing to strengthen the financial position of the board.

Bomb threats trigger evacuations in Delhi schools, no explosives found

Agencies : Several schools in Delhi were evacuated on Tuesday morning following bomb threats, marking another alarming development in a series of similar incidents. The Delhi Police confirmed that schools in both South Delhi and North West Delhi were targeted. The Indian Public School in South Delhi and a school in Saraswati Vihar, North West Delhi, were among the institutions affected. Following the threats, police, fire brigade personnel, and bomb squads quickly reached the locations, and all premises were evacuated for safety checks. This recent wave of bomb threats follows a troubling pattern, with similar incidents occurring over the past few weeks. On December 14, at least six schools in Delhi received bomb threats, the third such occurrence in a matter of days. According to a Delhi Fire Services official, a bomb threat was reported at 6:09 am at Delhi Public School in RK Puram.

Ajit Doval, Wang Yi resume border talks after 5 years

Agencies : All the meetings between Ajit Doval and Wang Yi after December 2019 have taken place to discuss multilateral issues and not boundary resolution. After a hiatus of five years, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will be meeting his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, for the institutionalised Special Representative Dialogue in Beijing to move towards enhancing peace and tranquillity all along the 3,488 km Line of Actual Control. All the meetings between Doval and Wang after December 2019 have taken place to discuss multilateral issues and not boundary resolution. Taking guidance from the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping, Doval arrived in Beijing today for the scheduled SR talks on Wednesday. It was during the Kazan BRICS meeting on October 24, that both the top leaders achieved a breakthrough by resolving the disengagement issue at Demchok and Depsang Bulge in East Ladakh, allowing both armies to fulfill their mandatory border patrolling activity in these areas. Both the Indian Army and the Chinese PLA could not patrol these areas after forces amassed on both sides post-May 2020 transgressions. It is understood that Doval and Wang will consider new steps to strengthen peace and tranquillity all along the border while moving towards the next step of de-escalation and relocation in the contested East Ladakh LAC.

BJP to send notice to 20 Lok Sabha MPs for not being present for voting on 'One Nation, One Election' bill



Agencies : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will send notice to 20 MPs who were absent during voting on 'One Nation, One Election' bill, which was tabled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. The BJP had issued a three-line whip to all its Lok Sabha MPs to be present in the House today. Two bills that pave way for simultaneous Lok Sabha and state assembly elections were introduced in the Lower House. The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Meghwal after a nearly 90-minute debate, followed by a division of votes. As many as 269 members voted in favour of the Bill and 198 against it. Meghwal also introduced The Union Territories Amendment Bill, which seeks to align elections in the Union territories of Puducherry, Delhi, and Jammu and Kashmir with the Lok Sabha polls. The bill has been sent to the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for detailed discussions.

"Curtailed Freedom Of Expression": Amit Shah Attacks Congress Over Constitution

Agencies : Union home minister Amit Shah today argued that if the Congress could change the constitution 77 times and even introduce a clause that curtails freedom of expression, they cannot object to the "One Nation One Election" Bill on the ground that it would require constitutional amendment. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha after the bill for the flagship project was introduced in the lower house, Mr Shah said, "Another amendment was brought by Indira Gandhi which gave Parliament the power to curtail the fundamental rights of the citizens".

Fan Murder Case: Karnataka Police To Move Top Court Against Bail To Actor Darshan

Agencies : The Karnataka Police Department has announced that it will file an appeal petition in the Supreme Court challenging the bail granted to Kannada actor Darshan in the fan murder case. Addressing a press conference in Bengaluru on Tuesday, Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayanand stated, "In connection with the Renukaswamy murder case, the police department is preparing to approach the Supreme Court to challenge the bail granted to the accused by the High Court."

Lankan Prez visits Bihar's Mahabodhi Temple



Agencies : Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayaka on last day of his three-day official visit to India on Tuesday, arrived at Bodh Gaya and paid a visit to the revered Mahabodhi Temple, a world heritage site, under high security arrangements. The temple is presently organising grand prayers for world peace and welfare. Dissanayaka began his three-day visit to India on Sunday, his maiden foreign trip after assuming the charge as the President. Bodh Gaya is considered one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites. He visited Bodh Gaya a day after his wide-range talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

Priyanka Gandhi Doubles Down With 'Bangladesh' Bag, After 'Palestine' Row

Agencies : A day after her handbag featuring the word "Palestine" sparked a controversy in Parliament, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra appeared to double down, arriving with a new bag carrying a slogan on the plight of minorities in Bangladesh. "Stand with Bangladeshi Hindus and Christians," the quote on her bag read, in reference to the incidents of attacks on minorities in Bangladesh following the ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina earlier this year.

'Congress promoted river water disputes between states': PM Modi in Rajasthan

Agencies : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday alleged that the Congress neither promoted farmers welfare nor let anyone do the same. He was addressing an event named "Ek Varsh-Parinaam Utkarsh" in Jaipur to mark one year of the BJP forming the government in Rajasthan. PM Modi also alleged that the Congress promoted river water disputes between states and cited the alleged delay in completing the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) as the "direct proof" of the party's "intention". "The Congress never wants to reduce water problems...The water of our rivers used to flow across the borders, but our farmers did not get its benefits. Instead of finding a solution, the Congress continued to promote water disputes between states," PM Modi said while addressing a public meeting in Dadiya.



Setback For US President-Elect Donald Trump In Hush Money Case

Agencies : A New York judge ruled Monday against a bid by US President-elect Donald Trump to have his conviction for covering up hush money payments to a porn star thrown out on immunity grounds, local media reported. Judge Juan Merchan said in the ruling that a Supreme Court decision granting presidents sweeping immunity for official acts did not apply as testimony at the trial related "entirely to unofficial conduct entitled to no immunity protections," broadcaster CNN reported. The New York Times newspaper reported the same information. Monday's ruling raises the prospect that Trump could become the first president to enter the White House with a felony conviction, pending his appeal against the jury's verdict. Trump has long opposed the criminal process brought against him after he paid a porn star for her silence and then covered up the payments in an effort to boost his chances in 2016's election. The judge in the only criminal case against Trump that has gone to trial had indefinitely postponed Trump's sentencing at a hearing on November 22, given his win in the November 5 presidential election.

Punjab Man Who Choked To Death In Georgia Shifted There 6 Months Ago

Agencies : Among the 11 Indian nationals who died of carbon monoxide poisoning at a restaurant in Georgia is a young man from Punjab's Ludhiana who had moved to the country just six months back. Samir Kumar, 26, was from Khanna town in Ludhiana. After moving to Georgia, he had been working at Haveli restaurant in Georgia, where the tragedy unfolded. Sameer's brother Gurdeep Kumar said they have not received any help despite reaching out to the Indian embassy in Georgia capital Tbilisi. "I appeal to the government for help in bringing Sameer's body back so that we can perform his last rites as per tradition." Gurdeep said Sameer's birthday was on Saturday. "He spoke to mother over the phone and then went to sleep. When we tried calling him again, the calls went unanswered.

PM Modi condoles Cyclone Chido devastation in Mayotte, offers relief assistance



Agencies : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he was "deeply saddened" by the devastation caused by Cyclone Chido in the French overseas island territory of Mayotte near Madagascar. He also said that India stands ready to extend all possible assistance. "Deeply saddened by the devastation caused by Cyclone Chido in Mayotte. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. I am confident that under President @EmmanuelMacron's leadership, France will overcome this tragedy with resilience and resolve. India stands in solidarity with France and is ready to extend all possible assistance," PM Modi said in a post on X.

India's Diplomatic Move In North Korea Marks Significant Shift In Policy

Agencies : While the world is focused on central and west Asia and the actions of the West vis-a-vis the wars in the Middle East and Europe, India has been looking and acting eastward with its Act East policy. Besides boosting its ties with Southeast Asian nations, New Delhi has been working silently and cautiously towards its policy in the Korean peninsula. North Korea functions with a great degree of opacity, which in turn, leads New Delhi to also maintain its diplomatic relations with Pyongyang in the shadows, unnoticed and silent from the rest of the world. In July 2021, India quietly shut its embassy in Pyongyang and Ambassador Atul Malhari Gotsurve along with the entire staff returned to New Delhi via Moscow. Though the Ministry of External Affairs never officially declared the embassy 'closed', when asked by journalists why the entire staff was called back, it said the step was taken due to COVID-19. Years went by with no update on the diplomatic mission in Pyongyang, and fourteen months ago.

"Our Military Knows And Our President Knows": Trump Reacts To Mystery Drones Over New Jersey

Agencies : President-elect Donald Trump has called out President Biden and the Pentagon, accusing them of withholding information about the mysterious drones that have been spotted hovering over New Jersey and New York. Trump's concerns come as the sightings have left many wondering about the origin and purpose of these drones. "The government knows what is happening. Look, our military knows where they took off from – if it's a garage, they can go right into that garage. They know where it came from and where it went, and for some reason, they don't want to comment," Trump said during a press conference in Palm Beach. And I think they'd be better off saying what it is. Our military knows and our president knows. And for some reason, they want to keep people in suspense," he added. However, Trump sidestepped a question about whether he'd personally received an intelligence briefing on the mysterious drones spotted over New Jersey and New York. When asked, he refused to comment, leaving many wondering if he's been privy to any classified information about the drones. The president-elect also said that he doubted that the drones were the work of a foreign enemy.

Answer to stopping tragedy is to reach ceasefire: US on Israel-Hamas

Agencies : The US reiterated its call for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas as a solution towards ending the conflict between the two warring parties. The remarks were delivered by Matthew Miller, Spokesperson of the US Department of State during the Daily Press Briefing. Answering the questions, Miller spoke about the hostage negotiations in Gaza, civilian casualties, need for a ceasefire and aid in Gaza amongst other significant issues in other countries of West Asia too such as Syria. On being asked about the latest update on the hostage negotiations in Gaza, Miller said that there is a "lot of optimism". "Negotiations have been productive in recent days. We have continued to try to work with the other mediators to narrow the differences. We have been down this road so many times before, though, it's hard to stand here and say we're optimistic about it, because we are very much realistic about how difficult it has been to reach a deal", he said. "There are a very small number of differences that remain between the parties.

"Preposterous": China On Spying Claims Involving UK's Prince Andrew

Agencies : China on Tuesday said claims that a businessman had used his links with Britain's Prince Andrew to spy for Beijing were "preposterous", after the UK government voiced mounting concerns over the allegations. Details emerged last week about Andrew's relationship with Yang Tengbo, a businessman and alleged spy, who had been banned from Britain. Asked about the case while on a visit to Norway, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain was "concerned about the challenge that China poses" but defended his approach of "engagement" with Beijing. A spokesman for Beijing's foreign ministry said on Tuesday that the "accusations of so-called Chinese espionage are preposterous". "The development of China-UK relations is in the common interests of both countries and is also conducive to promoting world economic growth and responding to global challenges," Lin Jian said. "It is hoped that the United Kingdom will work with China to accumulate more positive factors and demonstrate the two countries' innate character of cooperation, mutual benefits and common wins," he added.



Congress candidates being intimidated: Channi, Pargat



Agencies : Congress MP Charanjit Singh Channi and MLA Pargat Singh today alleged that the Jalandhar MC poll was being held in the most undemocratic manner. They alleged that their party candidates were being threatened so that they don't campaign or contest the election. Channi alleged that the claim of holding free and fair election was a farce. He said, "The AAP-led government is using all its departments, including labour, excise, police and the PSPCL, to intimidate Congress candidates. The candidates who have their businesses or showrooms in the city are being threatened through officials of various departments." Pargat Singh said, "Our ward No. 33 candidate Manmeet Kaur from the posh Model Town area was forced to withdraw her papers. The PSPCL staff went to the office of her husband, who runs a sports business in the city. He was threatened that his power connection would be snapped. He was forced to ask his wife to take back her papers." District Congress Committee chief Rajinder Beri said, "Four wards fall in the Rama Mandi area and police teams went to the houses of the Congress candidates to threaten them."

BJP expels ex-minister Chhuni Lal, 12 others over anti-party activities

Agencies : Shortly after the BJP released its 11-point manifesto for the Jalandhar MC polls today, it expelled 13 of its leaders for anti-party activities. Prominent among those who have been expelled are senior BJP leader and former minister Chhuni Lal Bhagat, who is the father of AAP Jalandhar West MLA and Cabinet Minister Mohinder Bhagat. The party has also expelled Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader Arjun Trehan, who has been publicly criticising the BJP, blaming its senior leadership ever since he was denied a ticket for the MC polls. This is the BJP's second list of expulsions ahead of the polls. A few days ago, the party had expelled six leaders, several of whom later bagged the AAP ticket to contest the elections. With 13 more expelled, the number of leaders shown the door has reached 19. The decision was taken by party's Punjab affairs incharge Vijay Rupani and co-incharge Narinder Raina among other leaders after a meeting of the party's core committee.

'Blast' at Islamabad police station in Amritsar leads to panic

Agencies : Panic gripped Islamabad area here during the wee hours on Tuesday after a 'blast' at Islamabad police station. According to locals, the explosion was heard at the police station at around 3 am. However, police claimed that no blast occurred on the police station premises. They said a heavy object fell on the temporary police sentry post outside the police station. Only the iron sheet on the top of the sentry post was damaged, officials said. Pawan Kumar (55), who lives near the police station, said, "A loud sound was heard around 3.15 am which created panic in the area. Residents rushed outside to see what happened." Amritsar Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Bhullar denied claims of a blast and said all senior police officers visited the spot. He said a policeman posted on sentry duty heard the sound around 3:15 am. "He immediately went out but found nothing."

MPs of Punjab, Haryana should raise farmers' demands in Parliament: Giani Harpreet Singh

Agencies : Takht Damdama Sahib Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh on Tuesday urged MPs of Punjab and Haryana to raise farmers' demands in Parliament to press the Centre to accept the same. Singh visited the Khanauri border to enquire about the health of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal whose fast-unto-death entered the 22nd day on Tuesday. Dallewal (70), a cancer patient, has been on a fast-unto-death at the Khanauri border point between Punjab and Haryana to press the Centre to accept the agitating farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops. "The country is an agriculture based nation. If farming is alive, then the country is alive. If farming dies then the country will not remain alive," said Singh. "It has been 22 days since Dallewal began his fast-unto-death but the government is not listening," he said. Singh appealed to the MPs of Punjab and Haryana to raise the voice of farmers in Parliament. "MPs of Punjab and Haryana should raise the issue of farmers' demands to press the Centre to act on the same," he said. If they raise their voice then the government will be compelled to accept farmers' demands," Singh added.

Entire Dadu Majra waste to be cleared by July: Centre

Agencies : The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has stated that bio-remediation of the entire waste at the Dadu Majra dumping ground will be completed by July 2025. In response to questions raised by city MP Manish Tewari over the garbage mountain at Dadu Majra during the ongoing Parliament session, Kirti Vardhan Singh, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, stated that as per information provided by the Municipal Corporation (MC), 5 lakh metric tonne of legacy waste had been bio-remediated at the dump between 2019 and 2022. The work was executed by Chandigarh Smart City Limited. "The work for bio-remediation of 13.3 lakh cubic metre of waste is scheduled for completion by December 2024," he said, adding that the MC has also informed the government that a large number of machines along with transportation system have been deployed for the bio-remediation of the remaining waste by July 2025. Tewari had asked the minister whether the government was aware that a mega garbage dump was located in Dadu Majra, which was causing a severe air and water pollution in sectors and 22 adjoining villages.

Gunshots fired during road rage in Mohali, FIR registered

Agencies : Multiple gunshots were fired by an unidentified car driver in a case of road rage near Landran on Tuesday. Complainant Gurpreet Singh said the flare up took place on the Landran road when his vehicle touched another SUV. The accused came out of the vehicle and fired a gunshot at him, while a woman, who was sitting in the car, kept on hurling abuses at him. The duo fled the spot immediately. When the cops traced the vehicle in Kharar, the miscreant reportedly fired at the complainant Gurpreet and a police team. Both car driver and the woman fled the spot. The police have recovered two empty bullet shells from the spot and impounded the vehicle, and have constituted teams to arrest the duo. SP (City) Harbir Singh Atwal said, "The suspect fired gunshots twice, once at the complainant, then in the morning, when the police team had gone to arrest him. We will nab him soon."

'Bantoge to lutoge'; Tikait calls for unity among farm unions

Agencies : Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait gave a call for unity, and issued a warning to farmer unions, "bantoge to lutoge" (if you divide, you will lose). He emphasised that farmer unions must stand together to strengthen their protest against government policies and achieve their goals. "If we march separately, we will lose. Unity is essential. When the movement began 10 months ago, we called for everyone to join the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and act collectively. No separate calls to Delhi should be made. Until we unite, we should stay away from Delhi. This is like facing a 66,000-watt current. They will have to cross it together," said Tikait while interacting with mediapersons before going to Nanaksar Gurdwara at Singhra village to pay tribute to spiritual preacher Baba Ram Singh on his death anniversary. Baba Ram Singh had "committed suicide" over the farmers' plight at Singhu border where thousands of farmers were protesting against farm laws in December 2020. Tikait also expressed concern over the deteriorating health condition of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on indefinite fast at the Khanauri border since November 26, and urged the government to initiate talks with farmer organisations promptly. "The government must take the decisions that are in the best interest of everyone. To prepare for Delhi, all farmer groups must come together."

4-day winter session to have daily 30-minute Zero Hour

Diary Times Desk : It is for the first time that there will be a 30-minute Zero Hour every day during the four-day winter session of the Vidhan Sabha commencing at Dharamsala from December 18. The brief session is expected to be stormy with the BJP gearing up to corner the state government, both in the House and outside. State BJP leaders, including Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, BJP state president Rajeev Bindal, Himachal in-charge Shrikant Sharma, MLAs and all senior leaders, will stage a demonstration outside the Assembly on December 18. An all-party meeting will be held at Dharamsala tomorrow to seek the cooperation of both ruling and Opposition for the smooth conduct of the House. Also, both Congress and BJP will hold their legislature party meetings to chalk out strategies for the session. The BJP has already listed a number of issues like corruption, illegal mining, deteriorating law and order and the latest guest lecturer policy in the Education Department, which it will raise vociferously in the House.

State govt mulling Rs 500 cr project to promote apple cultivation: Sukhu

Diary Times Desk : The state government is contemplating to formulate a Rs 500 crore dedicated project for the rejuvenation of apple cultivation. "This project will be implemented for five years and will focus on promoting high-density plantations to enhance farmers' income and strengthen the rural economy," said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu while chairing a meeting to evaluate the progress of various schemes implemented by the Horticulture Department here today. Sukhu stressed the importance of diversification in horticulture and said that there's need to develop improved storage and marketing systems to ensure fair prices for farmers and horticulturists. He added that his government was planning to establish modern cold storage facilities at the district level to provide much-needed support to horticulturists. He said that the government was also working to set up a potato processing unit in Una district.

Orange warning sounded in Himachal for severe cold wave in lower hills



Diary Times Desk : The local meteorological office on Tuesday issued an orange warning for severe cold wave conditions at isolated places in the lower hills and plain areas of four out of 12 districts in Himachal Pradesh for the next two days. Severe cold wave is likely to persist at isolated places in Una, Bilaspur, Hamirpur and Mandi districts, with cold wave in Kangra and ground frost in Kangra and Kullu districts till Saturday, the Met office said. Meanwhile, cold wave continued in Bilaspur while Una, Sundernagar and Hamirpur were under the grip of severe cold wave, while shallow fog was observed in parts of Mandi. Tabo in the tribal district of Lahaul and Spiti was coldest at night, recording a low of minus 6.5 degrees Celsius, while Kukumseri recorded minus 4.6 degrees, Manali minus 2.1 degrees, Hamirpur 1.3 degrees, Sundernagar 0.5 degrees, Una 0.4 degrees and Bilaspur 2.2 degrees Celsius, as per MeT office data. Shimla and its suburbs remained warmer with the state capital recording a low of 7.6 degrees Celsius, Jubberhatti 8.3 degrees Celsius, and Kufri 6.9 degree Celsius.

Himachal Vidhan Sabha complex at Dharamsala to be opened for tourists

Diary Times Desk : The Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha complex at Dharamsala would be opened for tourists. A proposal has also been mooted to construct a hostel-cum-hotel for MLAs along the Vidhan Sabha complex in Dharamsala. The Speaker of the Himachal Vidhan Sabha, Kuldeep Pathania, said this while addressing a press conference here on Tuesday. The Speaker said that the task regarding the upkeep of the Vidhan Sabha complex with just four days of functioning during the winter session was a difficult task. So, they had decided to open it for tourists coming to Dharamsala. The tourists coming here could pay a nominal ticket and visit the Vidhan Sabha complex during the days it was not functional, he said. It would also generate revenue for the maintenance of the complex, he added. He further said a land had been identified along the Vidhan Sabha complex to bring up hostel-cum-hotel for MLAs. When the Vidhan Sabha was in session, the hostel would be used only for MLAs while for the rest of year it could be used for tourists as well, he said. "I shall discuss the proposal of bringing up a hostel-cum-hotel for the MLAs in Dharamsala."

Kasauli Cantt Board serves eviction notices on villagers

Diary Times Desk : Decades after they constructed their houses, several residents of Chattiyani village, which falls on the periphery of Kasauli, have been served show-cause notices by the Cantonment Board, Kasauli, asking them to vacate their premises as parts of their houses fall on defence land. The eviction notices were issued on November 28. The villagers have been termed "unauthorised occupiers of public premises" and will be evicted from the defence land. The Cantonment Board has based its observations on the second phase of a peripheral survey carried out by it along with representatives of the Defence Estate Office, Ambala. The encroachment has been duly mapped in each case and each villager has been asked to explain his or her position by personally appearing before the board authorities. This has left the villagers in distress. Some of them contend that the mode of "drawing a straight line between Cantonment Board pillars 12 and 13", showing separation of defence and panchayat land, is incorrect and does not depict the factual position on the ground. They claim that their land is also reflected in the digital revenue record of the state.

On her birthday, Pratibha Ranta prays for 'Laapataa Ladies' to find a spot in Oscars' top 15 shortlist

Diary Times Desk : Actress Pratibha Ranta, who is known for her work in 'Laapataa Ladies', is celebrating her birthday on Tuesday. As the actress turned a year older, she said that she is praying for 'Laapataa Ladies' to find a place in the Oscars' top 15 shortlist which might be announced on Tuesday. 'Laapataa Ladies' is India's official entry for the upcoming edition of the Oscars. The actress expressed gratitude, and revealed how she'd like to spend the day, and her excitement for the Oscars shortlist. Pratibha told IANS, "This year has been the most thankful year of my life, and I'm really looking forward for the coming years ahead. I would like to start my 24th birthday by visiting the temple because I think that God has been really kind to me, and I just want to go and thank him for all the blessings that He's given me. I'm going to pray for everyone around me because the kind of support I've received from audiences around me has been magical and beautiful. So, I just want to go and thank God for what has happened in my life. I am very grateful!"



Australia ahead in the Test, but India win the contest within the contest

Diary Times Desk : For a period late on the fourth day at the Gabba, a Test match that has endured endless stoppages for rain came to life as one of the curiosities of the sport was on full show - a team miles behind in the contest, yet being cheered as though they were winning. A game within a game. When Ravindra Jadeja hooked Pat Cummins to deep square-leg, where he was brilliantly caught by Mitchell Marsh, India still needed 33 to avoid the follow-on as Akash Deep (Test average 6.42) walked out to join Jasprit Bumrah (Test average of 6.97). "At that stage, I was thinking more about going and padding up and trying to go back to bat, probably," KL Rahul said after play, with no disrespect meant to his two team-mates at the crease. For Australia, the follow-on was their most realistic route to victory given the amount of time lost already and more rain forecast on the final day. "There was a desperation to get that final wicket and we thought we had a really good chance when Jadeja was dismissed," assistant coach Daniel Vettori said. Bumrah hooked Cummins for six to take a useful chunk out of the runs needed, the day after he had referenced his batting ability when it was put to him that he may not be the ideal person to discuss the problems of India's top order.



Calf strain set to force Hazlewood out of the remainder of India series

Diary Times Desk : Josh Hazlewood is unlikely to feature in the remainder of the Test series against India after the paceman suffered a calf strain on the fourth day of the Brisbane Test. A Cricket Australia statement confirmed that the 33-year-old will also not take part in the remainder of the ongoing Gabba Test. Hazlewood bowled only six overs in Australia's first innings and only one on Tuesday (December 17), the fourth day of the Test. He hurt his calf during the warm-ups and only belatedly joined the play in the morning session. He appeared to move gingerly in the only over he bowled and was well down on his bowling speeds before walking off the field. Subsequent scans confirmed that he had strained his right calf. "He is likely to miss the remainder of the Test series. A squad replacement will be made in due course," a CA statement read. The development is the latest in a series of injury concerns for Hazlewood, who also missed the pink-ball Test in Adelaide last week following a recurrence of a side injury that has sidelined him over the last couple of years. Between December 2021 and June 2023, Hazlewood featured in just four Tests for Australia.

Prithvi Shaw Shocked After Getting Sacked From BCCI Event, Says: "Tell Me God..."

Diary Times Desk : Prithvi Shaw has been dealt yet another blow. The star batter, who was once considered the next big thing in Indian cricket, has not been included in Mumbai's team for the Vijay Hazare Trophy - the BCCI's premier domestic competition for one-dayers. Shaw recently made headlines after going unsold in the IPL 2025 auction despite a base price of Rs 75 lakh. He could not perform consistently in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy too. He scored only 10 in the final which Mumbai won. Now, the latest development has dealt another blow to Shaw's career. "Tell me God, what more do I have to see..if 65 innings, 3399 runs at an average of 55.7 with a strike rate of 126, I'm not good enough...but I will keep my faith in you and hopefully people believe in me still..cause I will come back for sure..OM SAI RAM," Shaw wrote on his Instagram story. Prithvi Shaw's fall from prodigy to prodigal has been swift and seemingly irreversible, but Shreyas Iyer feels the Mumbai batter can touch the deserved heights if he "gets his work ethics right." Shaw gave glimpses of his immense talent in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, which Mumbai bagged under Shreyas, while making 197 runs.

Rain likely to help India on final day in Brisbane

Diary Times Desk : India have given themselves a strong chance of emerging from the Gabba Test with a draw after the unbeaten last-wicket stand between Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep saved the follow-on with forecast for more showers on the final day. In a match that has had just 192 overs across four days, more interruptions appear likely on Wednesday with between 2mm and 25mm of rain forecast, which is similar to what was predicted for the fourth day when 58 overs were possible between the interruptions. "High chance of showers, most likely in the late morning and afternoon," said Australia's Bureau of Meteorology. "The chance of a thunderstorm, possibly severe." The final day will have 98 overs scheduled and Australia will need as many as possible if they are to force a result after seeing their chance of enforcing the follow-on taken away by Bumrah and Akash Deep. If an entire day's play was possible, which so far has only happened on the second day when Travis Head and Steven Smith dominated with centuries, Australia would need to quickly take India's final wicket then potentially bat for around 20 overs to set a target in the region of 300 with around 70 overs remaining, depending on how generous they wanted to be.



Short TAKES

Rohit Sharma's 'Gloves Act' At The Gabba Triggers Retirement Speculations

Diary Times Desk : Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul began India's charge with the bat on Day 4 of the third Test against Australia in Brisbane, hoping to get as close to the hosts' 445-run mark as possible. While Rahul regained his Day 3 form, after the first-ball reprieve, Rohit departed after only scoring 10 runs. As Rohit, who batted at the No. 6 spot in the team, continued his dry run of form, a 'frustrated act' from him left fans on social media puzzled. Rohit, who was understandably disappointed by his early dismissal, threw his gloves near the Indian dugout. Rohit's gloves-throwing act triggered wild speculations on social media, with a section of fans wondering if Rohit is on the cusp of retirement from this format of the game. Rohit became the victim of Pat Cummins' disciplined bowling, as he departed without a big score to his name yet again. For veteran Indian cricketer Cheteshwar Pujara, Rohit's poor form is down to the change in his batting position.

Southee signs off on a happy note with a "pretty special" win

Diary Times Desk : Tim Southee walked off Seddon Park in Hamilton to loud cheers on his home ground for the final time, after the hosts gave England a hammering in the third and final Test. The veteran fast-bowler, who had announced his retirement before the start of the series, ended with 776 international wickets (391 in Tests, 221 in ODIs and 164 in T20Is). Southee said that it was special to retire after a 423-run win against England, allowing himself to enjoy the occasion during the series and soak it all up in three grounds he considered to be really special. "Yeah, it was pretty special to win by 400-odd runs against a brilliant opposition," said Southee after the hosts completely outplayed England. "I guess it's a nice way to fade off after what's been an incredible journey so yeah, an enjoyable few days and I'll certainly miss these feelings," continued Southee. "I allowed myself a couple of times to enjoy it, soak it up and it's just been great, the three grounds, the fan following. To turn out one last time and three places which have been pretty special to me is a nice way to finish and to finish with an emphatic win was a nice way to fade-out." Southee had made his debut as a teenager for New Zealand back in 2008 and cricket is everything he's known since he was 19-years-old.