

HP Assembly Session: CM Sukhu said- We will change the one-time settlement policy of cooperative banks for the poor indebted people

Himachal government will send proposal to Centre for amendment in FCA, seeks cooperation from opposition too

Diary Times Desk : Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi brought a government resolution proposal to the Central Government to amend the Forest Conservation Act 1980 (FCA). The proposal was passed by the leaders of the ruling and opposition parties with a voice vote. The BJP MLAs said that a committee would be formed to prepare this recommendation. The Revenue Minister said that the purpose of bringing this proposal was to transfer government forest land and give up to 10 bighas of government forest land to small and marginal farmers for farming in case the cultivable land gets washed away during the disaster.

Diary Times Desk : The question hour began at 11:00 am without any deadlock in the proceedings of the last day of the winter session of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly. In the House, Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that the change in the one-time settlement policy of cooperative banks for the poor indebted people will be considered. Responding to the question of MLA Satpal Singh Satti, the Chief Minister said that the cases of one-time settlement will also be applicable for loans above Rs 10 lakh. When the previous government brought the policy, some took advantage and some did not. For such people whose loan was Rs 10 lakh or more. For the poor people who are indebted, we will consider how they can get relief. This policy will be applicable not only in cooperative banks but also in State Agricultural Cooperative Banks. The government will make changes after considering the rules of Reserve Bank of India and NABARD. On the other hand, during the question hour, BJP MLA Satpal Singh Satti raised the issue of one-time settlement of loans in Kangra Central Cooperative Bank. Satti asked whether any consideration would be given to providing relief to those who have lost their jobs and are in trouble and against whom attachment orders have been issued.



GST Council Exempts Gene Therapy, Cuts Tax Rate For Rice Kernels

India has 827,357 sq km of forests, 25.17% of country's area: Report

Agencies : Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced that the Goods and Services Tax Council has approved the reduction of GST on rice kernels to 5 per cent, exempted life-saving gene therapy from tax, and extended the GST exemption for parts used in manufacturing surface-to-air missiles (SAM). Addressing the media here after the 55th GST Council meeting, the Finance Minister said the decision to cut GST on rice kernels from 18 per cent to 5 per cent has been taken as the commodity is supplied to the weaker sections of society through the public distribution system. "Similarly, the concessional 5 per cent GST is applicable on inputs of food preparations that are supplied for free distribution to economically weaker sections under government programs subject to existing conditions; so this is also an extension of the 5 per cent rate that prevails," she said. Explaining the rationale for increasing the tax on caramelised popcorn to 18 per cent, the Finance Minister said that these included added sugar which constituted a separate category just like carbonated drinks.



Agencies : The total forest and tree cover in India is 827,357 sq km, which accounts for 25.17% of the country's geographical area, according to the State of Forest report 2023 released by the Forest Survey of India. The release of the report was delayed by more than a year. The last report, which is typically released biennially, was published in 2021. The forest cover spans about 715,343 sq km (21.76%), while the tree cover covers 112,014 sq km (3.41%). Compared to the 2021 assessment, there has been an increase of 1,445 sq km in the total forest and tree cover, nearly as large as the area of Delhi. According to the ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC).

"Marriage Built On Trust, Companionship, Shared Experiences": Supreme Court

Agencies : "Marriage is a relationship built on mutual trust, companionship and shared experiences," the Supreme Court has said as it upheld a Madras High Court decision granting divorce to an estranged software engineer couple. A bench of justices Vikram Nath and PB Varale said the length of separation and the evident animosity between husband and wife make it clear that there is no possibility of the marriage being revived. "Marriage is a relationship built on mutual trust, companionship, and shared experiences. When these essential elements are missing for an extended period, the marital bond becomes a mere legal formality devoid of any substance," the bench said. It added that the court has consistently held that prolonged separation, coupled with inability to reconcile.

Devendra Fadnavis Keeps Home, Eknath Shinde Gets 3 Maharashtra Ministries

Agencies : Nearly two weeks after the Maharashtra oath ceremony, the cabinet portfolios were announced Saturday, with Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, the Chief Minister in the last government, landing three ministries - Urban Development, Housing and Public Works - but not the Home portfolio, which he was reportedly keen on. Ajit Pawar, the second Deputy Chief Minister, was assigned the key Finance Ministry and State Excise portfolio. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will hold home, energy excluding renewable energy, law and judiciary, general administration, information and publicity and departments/subjects not allowed to any other minister. The portfolios were allocated after the weeklong winter session of the state Legislature ended earlier in the day. The strength of the Devendra Fadnavis-led cabinet is 42 against 43 permissible under the legislative norms. Hours before the big announcement, state minister Girish Mahajan said.

"Our Recollections Differ": Shashi Tharoor On Hardeep Puri's George Soros Claim

Agencies : Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Saturday refuted Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri's claims regarding the former insisting the inclusion of billionaire George Soros in an invite list to a 2009 dinner in the US. Mr Tharoor said his and Mr Puri's recollections of the dinner hosted by the latter during his tenure as the Indian Ambassador to the US differ. "I was completely unaware of any Mr Soros having any connection to any foundation in India - and have never discussed it with him either. All I remember hearing from him at that occasion was his strong objection to our government's stand on the West's responsibility for global warming," The Thiruvananthapuram MP wrote in a post on X. The matter began on December 15 when an X user who identified himself as a BJP worker from Karnataka showed Mr Tharoor an old post from 2009 in which Mr Tharoor wrote.



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Himachal: Ruckus in the assembly over closure of institute, opposition members walked out of the house shouting slogans

Diary Times Desk : There was a heated argument between Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur in the Assembly House on Saturday on the issue of denotifying institutes in Himachal Pradesh in the last two years. Dissatisfied with the CM's reply, BJP MLAs walked out of the House shouting slogans. The Chief Minister said that institutes are being opened as per the requirement. Departments will be rationalized. The Congress government will also reduce outsourced recruitments. Instead, emphasis is being laid on regular employment. The previous government opened hundreds of institutes without budget provision after April 2022 for electoral gains. Due to this, today Himachal Pradesh's position in the field of education has reached 21st position in the country. On the other hand, the opposition accused the government of giving priority to opening institutes only in Nadaun, Dehra and Haroli. Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that we believed that only 1200 institutes were closed. The government increased the figure to 1865 out of political vengeance.



Poll Rules Tweak Makes Electronic Records Harder To Get, Sparks Row

Agencies : The government has tweaked an election rule to prevent public inspection of certain electronic documents such as CCTV cameras, webcasting footage, and video recordings of candidates to prevent their misuse. This has led to the Opposition accusing the government of "eroding integrity of the electoral process". EC officials have said misuse of CCTV camera footage from inside polling booths could compromise voter secrecy. They also said the footage could be used to generate fake narrative using artificial intelligence (AI). The Union Law Ministry on Friday amended Rule 93(2)(a) of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, to restrict the type of "papers" or documents open to public inspection, based on a recommendation by the Election Commission (EC). According to Rule 93, all "papers" related to elections shall be open to public inspection.

Luxury tent city and budget stay options await pilgrims at Mahakumbh

Agencies : The Uttar Pradesh government is leaving no stone unturned in preparing for Mahakumbh 2025, where millions of devotees from across the globe are expected to gather in Prayagraj. Balancing luxury and affordability, the state has initiated projects to ensure a seamless and memorable experience for all attendees, including the establishment of a world-class tent city and the promotion of paying guest accommodations. To cater to the needs of pilgrims seeking a premium experience, a luxury tent city with over 2,000 Swiss cottage-style tents is being constructed in Sector 20 (Araii) of the Mahakumbh Mela area. This ambitious initiative is being led by the Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation Limited (UPSTDC) in collaboration with key partners including Aagaman, Kumbh Camp India, Rishikul Kumbh Cottage, Kumbh Village, Kumbh Canvas, and Era. The tent city is set to offer a range of accommodations, including Villa, Maharaja, Swiss Cottage, and Dormitory, with daily prices ranging from Rs 1,500 to Rs 35,000. Additional charges of Rs 4,000 to Rs 8,000 will apply for extra guests, excluding dormitory accommodations. "The work is progressing at a rapid pace, and we are confident that the tent city will be ready by January 1. Our goal is to provide a unique and spiritual stay.

HP Assembly : Minister Anirudh Singh said- Only those people who are eligible for geo tagging will be selected in PM Awas Yojana

Diary Times Desk : Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Aniruddh Singh said that only those people who are found eligible in geo tagging will be selected in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Himachal Pradesh has not received any special package in this scheme. The first survey was conducted in the year 2018. A survey was also conducted some time back. Those who do not fulfill the eligibility now, their amount will not be shifted anywhere else. Due to the entire process being online, the money will lapse. Minister Aniruddh Singh clarified the situation on the questions raised by BJP MLAs Vinod Kumar, Randhir Sharma, Jeetram Katwal, Pawan Kajal, Hansraj and Sukhrum Chaudhary during the Question Hour on Friday. He said that this year a target has been set to allocate 92 thousand houses. He also warned the Panchayat Pradhans who are arbitrary in sending the proposal. He said that in the last two years, till November 30, approval has been given to the eligible beneficiaries of a total of 81928 houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin in the state.

Himachal Assembly: Government employees cannot be arrested without permission, Police Bill passed in the Assembly

Diary Times Desk : Government employees can be arrested during duty only with the permission of the state government. The cadre of constables will also be state level now. Recruitment will be done by the State Police Board. The Police Bill was passed on Friday despite opposition from the opposition in this regard. Before passing the bill, a discussion was brought on the amendment in the Himachal Pradesh Police Act. On this, BJP MLA Randhir Sharma objected to the inclusion of a section to take the government's approval before arresting a public servant while on duty for any work. He said that due to this, police officers will not be able to do their work properly. Corruption will also be promoted. Trilok Jamwal said that if an employee has to be arrested under the POCSO Act, then will the government have to ask whether to arrest him or not. Is this arrangement not being made to benefit a particular person? CM said that BJP people are not interested in the interests of employees. This shows it. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that there will be no ban on arrests in serious cases like bribery, murder. This provision will be applicable only if an officer in the office takes some wrong action against an employee with malice. Its SOP will come. The situation will be clear in it. Many such cases are coming up every day. There will be a provision for arrest only with the permission of the government. CM Sukhu said that Randhir Sharma is using imaginary intelligence. Vigilance manual has not been changed. Many times officers register FIR with malice. Now in Himachal, even if the population is less than 25 thousand, Zila Parishad wards will be formed. For this, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Aniruddh Singh proposed to pass the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Amendment Bill in the winter session.

Mumbai boat accident: Parents on ferry thought of 'tossing children into sea water', says CISF jawan

Agencies : When a tourist ferry began sinking off the Mumbai coast, terrified parents, gripped by panic, thought of tossing their children into the sea to save them. But Central Industrial Security Force or CISF marine commandos quickly stepped in, calming them down with the promise that everyone would be rescued. CISF constable Amol Savant, 36, and his two colleagues were the first to respond to the December 18 accident. They reached the site around 4pm and immediately sprang into action, using the crucial "golden hour" to focus on saving the most vulnerable—starting with the children, news agency PTI. Fourteen people were killed after an Indian Navy boat rammed into the tourist ferry - 'Neel Kamal' - on way to the Elephanta Island from the Gateway of India in Mumbai late Wednesday afternoon. "We were on routine patrol at some distance off the shore when our walkie talkie crackled to inform us that a passenger ferry was sinking. I asked the pilot (speed boat driver) to go full throttle, and we reached the accident site about 3-4 km away in no time," PTI quoted Savant as saying. He said he was "astounded to see the accident site.



Shimla: BSNL starts internet fiber based live TV service, no extra charge will be charged



Diary Times Desk : Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited CMD Robert J Ravi on Saturday unveiled IFTV service in collaboration with M/s Skypro for BSNL's FTTH customers in Himachal Pradesh Telecom Circle. BSNL's Internet Fiber Based Live TV (IFTV) service is also commonly known as IPTV service. Director CFA BSNL Vivek Banjal, Director CM Sandeep Govil, Chief General Manager Telecom State Circle Vivek Jaiswal and other officials were present in this program. IFTV service is an important milestone in enhancing the customer experience by providing state-of-the-art digital entertainment by leveraging BSNL's fiber network. BSNL's Yash service is designed to redefine the way customers connect to television and OTT content. This service will be available to all BSNL FTTH customers without any additional charge. Chief General Manager Telecom Himachal Circle Vivek Jaiswal gave information about the features of IFTV service and its subscription details. He said that this service is available to customers using BSNL's FTTH (Fiber to the Home) connection. He stressed that this service is a unique initiative aimed at providing an exceptional experience to BSNL customers. IFTV is a fiber based intranet TV service without any additional charge.

Himachal Weather: Chances of rain and snowfall in many parts of Himachal for three days, minimum temperature in minus at 10 places

Diary Times Desk : The weather in Himachal Pradesh can change due to the activation of western disturbance. According to Meteorological Center Shimla, on 22 and 27 December, western disturbance will affect the western Himalayan region and the surrounding plains. Due to its effect, rain and snowfall is forecast in many plain, middle and high mountainous parts of the state on 23-24 and 27 December. The weather will remain clear in the entire state on 25 and 26 December. Cold wave is likely to continue for the next four days at some places in the lower hilly and plain areas of the state. On the other hand, on 24 and 25 December, dense fog will prevail in the reservoir area of Bhakra Dam (Bilaspur) and some parts of Balh Valley (Mandi) in the morning and evening. Even today, people faced problems due to fog in these areas. Orange-yellow alert has been issued for the continuation of cold wave till 25 December in some parts of Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Chamba, Kangra, Kullu and Mandi districts. During the last 24 hours, cold wave was recorded in Sundarnagar, Una, Mandi, Chamba and Hamirpur. Minimum temperature has been recorded in minus at 10 places in the state. The constant cold has increased the difficulties of the people.

Himachal: Consumers will have to wait for edible oil in ration depots, tender cancelled

Diary Times Desk : Consumers in Himachal will have to wait longer to buy edible oil from cheap ration depots. The government has cancelled the tender after there was no consensus on the rate. Now the tender process has been started afresh. Consumers in Himachal have not received oil for two months. Here, the government has claimed that after completing the tender process next month, consumers will be given oil for three months at once. There are 19.5 lakh ration card holders in Himachal Pradesh. Due to lack of oil in the depots for two months, consumers have to turn to the market. Mustard oil is available in the market at Rs 160 to Rs 200 per liter. This month the tender process was started by the department. This had raised the hope of consumers getting oil soon, but the government cancelled the tender when the rate was high. Now the Food Supply Corporation has invited tenders from companies for oil tender afresh.

Himachal News: Gardens dry up without rain, chilling hours in danger, apple production may fall

Diary Times Desk : There has been a drought like situation in Himachal Pradesh for about two months. Due to lack of rain and snowfall, apple orchards are in the grip of drought. There is a danger of completion of chilling hours in the orchards. If the weather remains like this, apple production may fall. In view of this, the Regional Research Center Mashobra of Horticulture University Nauni has issued an advisory. Dr. Dinesh Singh Thakur, Co-Director of Regional Horticulture Research and Training Center Mashobra, said that apple plants need 800 to 1600 hours of chilling hours in temperatures below 7 degrees. If chilling hours are not completed this season due to drought, then flowering may be affected. There will not be uniform flowering and weak flowering may lead to the problem of flower fall. This may affect apple production. Good rain and snowfall is required in the next few days. Gardeners can prune the orchards at this time. There is not enough moisture in the ground.

Shimla Winter Carnival: 25 singers showed their talent in the theatre round for Voice of Shimla

Diary Times Desk : 25 artists spread the magic of their voices in the theatre round of Voice of Shimla at Gaiety Theatre in Himachal Pradesh's capital Shimla. Apart from Himachal, artists from Chandigarh and Mumbai also gave auditions. Auditions started at 11:00 am and artists gave performances till late evening. During this, music professor Hemraj Chandel and Saregama fame Yogesh Mukul played the role of judges. Inspector Vijay Kumar and Kartik Sharma from Himachal Police Band taught the nuances of performing on stage to the artists participating in the auditions. Municipal Corporation Mayor Surendra Chauhan attended the program as the chief guest. Municipal Corporation Commissioner Bhupendra Atri was also present. Indian Idol fame Neha Dixit gave a performance. The names of the winners of the theatre round will be announced on Saturday. Out of these, 12 artists will perform in the finale to be held in the Winter Carnival. The winner of Voice of Shimla will be selected. The winner of Voice of Shimla will get a chance to perform before Satinder Sartaj in Star Night on January 2. 25 artists displayed their voices in the theatre round of Voice of Shimla at Gaiety Theatre, Shimla on Friday.

Rahul Gandhi FIR: Himachal CM and Deputy CM condemn the FIR filed against Rahul Gandhi

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has condemned the FIR lodged against the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. Talking to reporters in Dharamshala on Friday, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said that he and the entire Congress party stand firmly with Rahul. The Chief Minister said that Rahul selflessly undertook the Bharat Jodo Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to restore democratic values across the country as well as promote the spirit of brotherhood. He described the allegations leveled against the Congress leader as baseless and politically motivated. Recalling the sacrifices of the Gandhi family, he said that former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi sacrificed their lives for the unity and integrity of the country. It is unfortunate to level such baseless allegations against a member of a family that has made valuable contributions.

Himachal: CM Sukhu said- Radiographers' salary will increase, staff will be provided soon where machines are available

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that the salary of radiographers will be increased. Soon recruitments of various categories will be done in the health department. Staff will also be provided soon in the institutions which have machines. During the Question Hour, the Chief Minister said that the government has made 133 types of health tests free in IGMC and 42 types of tests in KNH. During the time of the previous government, 56 types of tests were free. The Congress government has increased the number of free tests to 175. He said that people are going to private labs in a hurry. BJP MLAs Deepraj and Vinod Kumar raised questions on the functioning of health institutions during the Question Hour. MLA Deepraj said that most of the tests in IGMC have to be done outside. For this, people have to pay a fee of Rs 1500 to ten thousand. No test is being done in Karsog Hospital. Machines are available in Karsog. Still patients are being sent outside for tests. MLA Vinod Kumar said that the talk of getting free tests done is wrong. The truth is that the tests are not being done free of cost.

Stop insulting our people by calling them Bangladeshi: AAP's Sanjay Singh

Agencies : The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) directed schools to identify children of illegal Bangladeshi migrants and ensure they are not issued birth certificates. This directive follows a recent order from the Delhi L-G Secretariat to crack down on illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. AAP MP Sanjay Singh criticised the MCD's order, calling it an attempt to humiliate and disrespect the Purvanchali community under the guise of targeting illegal migrants. He also accused BJP national president JP Nadda of equating Purvanchalis with "Rohingya infiltrators" and "Bangladeshis." Rohingyas are a Muslim minority group from Myanmar. "They want to humiliate the poor from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Through this order, they want to threaten Purvanchalis, their kids, and bulldoze their shops and houses in jhuggis," the Rajya Sabha MP stated.

Man recounts Jaipur LPG crash horror: 'Recognised sister's body by toe ring'

Agencies : Basram Meena's world came crashing down on the morning of December 20, as his sister, Anita Meena, died in the Jaipur tanker-truck accident fire. He identified his sister's body with her toe ring after a six-hour-long search. His sister, Anita Meena, a police constable with the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary (RAC), was among the victims of the deadly LPG tanker fire on the Jaipur-Ajmer national highway. She had been travelling from Dudu to Jaipur to report for duty when the bus she was on caught fire in the crash. Meena's harrowing journey began on Friday morning when Basram received a call from his brother-in-law (Anita's husband), informing him that Anita had not been answering her phone, a TOI report said. "I had already seen the news, so I rushed to the accident site, hoping to find her there," TOI quoted him as saying, adding that despite scouring the area, he could not locate his sister. On failing to find any leads on the site of the crash, Basram went to the burn ward of SMS Hospital, approximately 13 kilometres away hoping for a miracle. Desperate and running out of options, Basram finally looked for his sister's mortuary, where he came face-to-face with his worst nightmare. "Her body was severely burned and unrecognizable. I had a picture of her wearing the toe ring, and that's how I was able to identify her," he added. An LPG tanker collided with a truck on Friday, sparking a massive fireball.

GST council defers tax cut on insurance premiums as Nirmala Sitharaman awaits IRDAI feedback



Agencies : The Goods and Services Tax (GST) council deferred the decision to cut tax on insurance premiums as many inputs including IRDAI comments on the matter are still awaited, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday. The council also agreed to issue a clarification on the taxation of popcorn, saying that pre-packed and labelled ready-to-eat snacks will attract a 12 per cent tax while an 18 per cent GST will be levied if it is caramelised. There is no change in the tax rate of popcorn and the GST Council has only agreed that the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) will issue a circular clarifying the current taxation regime of popcorn. The Council did not agree on bringing Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) into the Goods and Services Tax fold, Sitharaman said. The GST Council has decided to set up a GoM (group of ministers) to look into the demand for a 1 per cent calamity cess on certain luxury goods by Andhra Pradesh to raise resources to mitigate natural disasters.

PM's message at Hala Modi event: 'India has technology, manpower for new Kuwait'

Agencies : Addressing the Indian diaspora at the 'Hala Modi' event in Kuwait, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that India has the skill, technology, innovation and manpower that the "new Kuwait" needs. He said the two countries are connected with the bonds of the heart. "India and Kuwait are located on two shores of Arabian Sea; it's not just diplomacy that connects us, but also bonds of the heart. Relationship between India and Kuwait is one of civilization, sea, affection, trade, and commerce," he said at the event. "Kuwait, through trade and innovation, wants to be a dynamic economy. India is also focusing on innovation and strengthening its economy... India has the skill, technology, innovation and manpower that 'New' Kuwait needs," he added. PM Modi noted during the address that it was after 43 years that an Indian prime minister has visited the country. "This is a special moment for me.

Building collapses in Punjab's Mohali, several feared trapped

Agencies : A multi-storey building collapsed in Punjab's Mohali on Saturday. Several people could be trapped under the debris, the police said. The district authorities have launched a rescue operation. Two excavators have been pressed into service as part of the operation. A fire brigade team is also present. A local resident said a loud noise was heard when the building collapsed. Preliminary information suggests that the building collapsed after a basement was dug in a nearby area. Senior Superintendent of Police, Mohali, Deepak Pareek reached the spot to take stock of the situation.

Telangana Government imposes ban on benefit shows following Sandhya Theater tragedy

Agencies : The Telangana government has recently declared that it will no longer grant permission for benefit shows for films, a practice that was previously allowed. This decision was announced in the Assembly today by Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkata Reddy, during the ongoing session. On Saturday, 21 December, the Chief Minister expressed his dismay in the state Assembly, stating that it was deeply troubling to see stars from the Telugu film industry lining up to meet Arjun.

Amit Shah bitten by 'rabid dog,' says Karnataka minister Priyank Kharge amid Ambekar row

Agencies : Amid the ongoing BR Ambekar row, Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge on Saturday lashed out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his remarks and alleged that he was "bitten by a rabid dog". The Minister for Information Technology and Biotechnology said, "I don't know whether I will get a place in Heaven if I chant the name of God in seven births but by chanting the name of Ambedkar in this birth we will get political, social, economic equality and a life of self-esteem." Taking a dig at the Union Home Minister.

Sanction To Prosecute Arvind Kejriwal? AAP Demands Copy Of Approval Letter

Agencies : In more trouble for former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has sanctioned the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to prosecute him in the alleged money laundering case linked to the liquor policy scam, said sources. The sanction comes ahead of the Delhi elections, which will be a major test for Mr Kejriwal since the Lok Sabha elections debacle. The AAP, however, has called it "false and misleading" and asked the ED to show the copy of the sanction given by the Lt Governor. A case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) charges was earlier filed against Mr Kejriwal, but the trial had not started. After the Supreme Court made the Lt Governor's approval mandatory to prosecute individuals holding government posts in money laundering cases, the ED wrote to the Chief Secretary asking for permission, said sources. The BJP doubled down on its charges against the AAP with Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva welcoming the sanction to prosecute Mr Kejriwal. "We have been saying that Arvind Kejriwal took commission in liquor scam. As the investigation progresses, he would be trapped. He has spoiled Delhi, and looted crores of rupees, we welcome the investigation," said Mr Sachdeva.



Three injured in central Israel after 'projectile' launched from Yemen

Agencies : Israel's military said Saturday it had failed to intercept a "projectile" launched from Yemen that landed near Tel Aviv, with the national medical service saying three people were lightly wounded. "Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in central Israel, one projectile launched from Yemen was identified and unsuccessful interception attempts were made," the Israeli military said on its Telegram channel. Yemen's Iranian-backed Huthi rebels have repeatedly launched missile attacks against Israel since the war in Gaza began more than a year ago, most of which have been intercepted. In return, Israel has struck multiple targets in Yemen -- including ports and energy facilities in areas controlled by the Huthis. "A short time ago, reports were received of a weapon falling in one of the settlements within the Tel Aviv district," Israel's police said Saturday. Israel's emergency medical service said three people had been taken to hospital with light injuries and several others treated near the scene -- including for shock.

US drops \$10m reward for arrest of Syria's new leader after Damascus talks

Agencies : A senior diplomat has announced that the United States is dropping a \$10m reward for the arrest of Syria's new leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, after an uprising that toppled President Bashar al-Assad. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf made the announcement on Friday after she and other US officials visited the Syrian capital, Damascus, to hold talks with the new Syrian administration. It was the first visit by US diplomats to Syria since al-Assad was removed from power earlier this month in a lightning offensive, led by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group. The US, however, had designated HTS a "terrorist" organisation in 2018. Al-Sharaa -- also known as Abu Mohammed al-Julani -- is the group's leader and was once aligned with al-Qaeda. Leaf said the US decided to drop the reward for al-Sharaa after receiving "positive messages" during Friday's discussions.

Elon Musk emerges as power player amid US government shutdown crisis

Agencies : In the midst of the US shutdown crisis, Elon Musk emerged as a significant influencer, wielding considerable power alongside President-elect Donald Trump. The world's richest person played a key role as the Republican-controlled US House of Representatives passed legislation on Friday that would avert a midnight government shutdown. Next, the Democratic-controlled Senate would need to pass the bill to ensure the government will be funded beyond midnight, when current funding expires. The White House said President Joe Biden intends to sign it into law if they do. A government shutdown would disrupt everything from law enforcement to national parks and suspend paychecks for millions of federal workers. A travel industry trade group warned that a shutdown could cost airlines, hotels and other companies \$1 billion per week and lead to widespread disruptions during the busy Christmas season. Authorities warned travelers could face long lines at airports.



"Justin Trudeau Failed": Canadian PM's Key Ally Vows To 'Bring Him Down'



Agencies : Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has been able to retain his position despite political turmoil over the last several months, looks set to lose power early next year, a good nine months before the scheduled federal election in October 2025. This is because New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh, a key ally of Trudeau, has decided to pull the rug from under his feet. Singh has announced that he will move a no-confidence motion in the House of Commons after the winter break on January 27. According to him, the Liberals don't deserve another chance. "No matter who is leading the Liberal Party, this government's time is up," he said. "Justin Trudeau failed in the biggest job a Prime Minister has: to work for people, not the powerful. The NDP will vote to bring this government down, and give Canadians a chance to vote for a government who will work for them," Singh wrote in a post on X. Justin Trudeau failed in the biggest job a Prime Minister has: to work for people, not the powerful.

UK man runs midway through haircut to help policeman under attack

Agencies : In a remarkable act of compassion, a man in the UK has become an overnight social media sensation after a video captured him abandoning his haircut to assist a police officer being assaulted on the street. The incident unfolded in Warrington, Cheshire, where 32-year-old Kyle Whiting, a resident, was getting his hair trimmed at Haron Barbers when he noticed a violent altercation outside. Without hesitation, Whiting sprang into action, still wearing his barber's cape, as he ran across the street to intervene. The video, which has since gone viral, shows him pulling the assailant off the officer and holding the man until others joined in to help. "Before you know it, my barber had taken his phone out and had gone up to the window.

Colombian lawmaker Cathy Juvinao apologises after vaping video in Parliament during 'healthcare' debate goes viral

Agencies : A Colombian lawmaker, Cathy Juvinao, was caught on camera vaping during a parliamentary meeting on healthcare reforms. The incident, which was captured on camera, sparked widespread criticism and outrage. Juvinao, a representative of Bogotá and a member of the Green Alliance Party, was seen using a vape pen during a December 17 session in the country's Chamber of Representatives. Ironically, the meeting focused on discussing changes to Colombia's health policies, making her actions even more jarring. In the video, Juvinao can be seen vaping as she prepares to address the legislative body, a moment that has sparked widespread outrage. She appeared to notice the cameras, quickly exhaled the vapour, and hid the device, but not before her actions were captured on film. The footage quickly circulated online, prompting her to apologise on social media, acknowledging her lapse in judgement, and vowing not to repeat the behaviour.

China Woman Hires Actors To Pose As Family, Extorts Money From Blind Date

Agencies : A married woman in China has been detained by police for hiring actors to impersonate herself and her parents on a blind date. The man, named Xin, a resident of central China's Hubei province, met the woman who identified herself as Xiaoyu. She reached out to him in August 2022 after seeing his contact details in a wedding planning advertisement, South China Morning Post reported. A month after their initial online meeting, Xiaoyu professed her love to Xin. As the two of them started planning their marriage last year, the woman informed Xin that he will have to pay a 'bride price' of 188,000 yuan (US\$26,000) to her family, according to the local customs. In January 2023, Xin visited her home and brought along gifts worth 10,000 yuan to meet her parents. However, she claimed that she would not be able to meet him as she was ill. Thereafter, she continued to take money from him claiming that she required it for her mother's surgery as well as gifts for her sister, while consistently denying Xin's request to meet in person, citing that it was "inconvenient". In order to deceive the culprit, she continued to share her photographs and spoke to him over the phone which helped her assuage his growing suspicions. According to Xin, he transferred more than 220,000 yuan to the woman throughout last year.

Punjab MC elections : Violence mars civic body polls; AAP, SAD, BJP workers lock horns in Patiala



Agencies : Sporadic incidents of violence marred elections to five municipal corporations and 44 municipal councils and nagar panchayats in Punjab on Saturday. Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) alleged casting of fake votes at the behest of the Aam Aadmi Party at many places in Patiala, a charge denied by the ruling party. There were also reports of scuffles and heated exchanges between AAP and BJP supporters in Patiala. Among political leaders who exercised their franchise were BJP's Tarun Chugh, Congress MP Gurjeet Singh Aujla, Ludhiana MLA Ashok Prashar and Jalandhar Cantt MLA Pargat Singh. BJP leader Jai Inder Kaur alleged that some outsiders were roaming around in Patiala, demanding police action against them. BJP candidate from Ward No. 34 in Patiala, Sushil Nayyar, threatened to self-immolate after alleging that fake votes were being cast at a polling booth. After Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police Nanak Singh reached the spot, Kaur and BJP supporters were seen arguing with the officer, claiming that some people were being allowed to enter polling booths without proper verification and they were casting fake votes. "Nobody was stopping them. And who is responsible for it," asked a BJP supporter.

Two arrested with pistols, cartridges in Punjab

Agencies : The Punjab Police has busted a gangster module with the arrest of two members and seized from them two pistols and cartridges, a top officer said on Saturday. The Punjab Police's Counter Intelligence, Pathankot, seized two sophisticated 9 mm Glock pistols along with four magazines and 14 cartridges, Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said. The arrested accused have been identified as Sunil Kumar alias Ashu of Rauwal and Dilpreet Singh alias Dil of Raimal, both in Batala city. Kumar has a criminal history with a case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act registered against him. He was released on bail from the Gurdaspur jail on February 27. Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused received the consignment from the Ajnala area of Amritsar on the directions of their handlers. They were meant to deliver the weapons to an unidentified person, Yadav said.

37-year-old woman hangs self at Kharar house



Agencies : A 37-year-old woman morning ended her life by hanging herself at her house in Kharar on Friday. According to the information, the deceased, who has been residing in Kharar, had been reeling under a lot of stress for the some few days. Her husband had been suffering from an illness since a prolonged period of time. He had recently returned from Italy but his health failed to improve, causing his wife to be stressed. The deceased's body had been found hanging from the ceiling fan in her room. However, no suicide note has been found from the spot.

Supreme Court wants Dallewal shifted to hospital, asks Punjab to take call

Agencies : The Supreme Court on Friday said it wanted farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on an indefinite fast since November 26, to be shifted to a makeshift hospital near the protest site even as it left it to the Punjab Government to take a call on the issue. "It is entirely the responsibility of the state of Punjab to ensure stable health conditions of Dallewal, for which, if he requires hospitalisation, the authorities must take a call as to whether he can be shifted to a makeshift hospital, which is said to have been set up 700 metres from the (protest) site," a Bench led by Justice Surya Kant said. The Bench, which also included Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, asked the Punjab Chief Secretary and the chairperson of the medical board constituted to monitor Dallewal's health to file a fresh medical report by January 2, 2025, on his health along with the necessary steps taken to ensure that no harm was caused to him. Noting that its previous directions should continue to operate, the top court gave liberty to the parties to move it for any further directions, if needed. The order came after Punjab Advocate General Gurminder Singh told the Bench that the authorities were ready to shift Dallewal to the makeshift hospital, subject to his own consent as they didn't want to cause any physical discomfort or trauma to him in view of his health condition.

High Court grants bail to ex-minister Ashu

Agencies : The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Friday granted regular bail to former state minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu in a case registered by Directorate of Enforcement. Justice Mahabir Singh Sindhu of the high court also quashed two FIRs registered by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau. The matters pertained to food and transportation policy and the alleged tender scam. The two FIRs in the matters were registered at Ludhiana and Nawanshahr. Ashu's stand in the matter has all along been that a new policy for procuring of foodgrains through various agencies and the Food Corporation of India, on the Government of India's behalf from various purchase centres or mandis in Punjab was made when he took over as Cabinet minister in 2018. It was approved by the then Punjab Cabinet. In pursuance of the new policy, e-tenders were floated by the District Tender Committee and work was allotted on merits to various contractors. The process of e-tendering was online and transparent and he had no role in the allotment of tender to any person.

Panchkula: 162 challaned for lane driving violations

Agencies : A special campaign against lane driving violations by the Panchkula Police saw 162 drivers being challaned between December 12 and 19. Cases were registered against 22 people. Police Commissioner Rakesh Kumar Arya had instructed all personnel to take strict action against those flouting the traffic rules to ensure road safety. Challans were then were also issued against those driving in the wrong lane. Police personnel were instructed to ensure that every heavy vehicle and speed restricted vehicle runs in the left lane within its prescribed speed limit. Besides, those driving on the wrong side/lane were also fined under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act. "The campaign will continue in future as well. Many road accidents happen due to driving at high speed for a short time, driving in the wrong direction. One should never overtake from the wrong side. Whenever the driver changes the lane, he should always use the turn indicator. Changing the lane without signal can cause a serious accident," a police official said.

Former Haryana CM O P Chautala cremated with state honours

Agencies : Former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala was cremated on Saturday with full state honours in Teja Khera village in his native Sirsa district. Chautala, who was a five-time chief minister, died in Gurugram on Friday. He was 89. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal reached Teja Khera to attend the last rites of the departed leader. Many Haryana ministers, state Assembly Speaker Harvinder Kalyan, former Union minister Venod Sharma, SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia, BJP's Manpreet Badal and Manjinder Singh Sirsa and several other leaders also reached Teja Khera to pay their last respects. Political leaders cutting across parties laid floral wreaths to pay their last respects to the departed leader. Earlier, Chautala's mortal remains were on Saturday kept at the family's Teja Khera farmhouse here for people to pay their last respects to the departed Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) chief. His body was wrapped in the Indian Tricolour and decked with garlands. An INLD spokesperson said Chautala was rushed to a hospital after his health worsened on Friday.

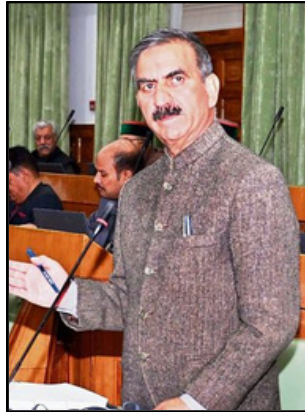
Govt college teachers' body opposes new recruitment Bill

Diary Times Desk : The Himachal Pradesh Government College Teachers Association (HGCTA) has expressed its anguish over the recent HP Recruitment and Conditions of Service of Government Employees Bill-2024, 2024, which has been enacted by the state government. The Mandi unit of HGCTA staged a protest here today against this bill. HGCTA state president BK Saklani said the Bill was "unconstitutional and contemptuous" in its nature, which is anti-employee. "The Bill aims to discredit the services rendered by the employees on contract basis who have been recruited by the state government through Public Service Commission of Himachal Pradesh," she added. "In the past, many judgements have been passed by the HP High Court and the Supreme Court in favour of the employees to count the period of contract service for all types of benefits as they have discharged similar duties as the regular counterparts. The court has directed the state government in various judgements to count contract period for the benefit of increments, promotions and other consequential benefits. However, the state government has been reluctant to implement these judgements in letter and spirit," she remarked.

Shoolini University attains h-index of 140

Diary Times Desk : Shoolini University has achieved a milestone by attaining an h-index of 140, making it the highest among institutions established in and after 2008. Chancellor PK Khosla said this accomplishment places Shoolini ahead of many premier institutions, including IIT's. "The h-index is a widely recognised metric used to assess the productivity and citation impact of a researcher or an academic institution. It reflects the number of publications (h) that have been cited at least h times," he said. This metric serves as a reliable benchmark for evaluating the quality, influence and global reach of an institution's research output, he added. "Shoolini University's vision for research excellence is supported by its world-class faculty.

Bill to amend land ceiling Act passed amid doubts from Agri Minister, BJP



Diary Times Desk : The Assembly today passed the Himachal Pradesh Ceiling on Land Holdings (Amendment) Bill, 2024, though some BJP members and Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Chander Kumar expressed apprehensions about it. A total of 14 Bills were passed. The government had introduced the Bill to help the transfer of land of a hospital set up by Radha Soami Satsang Beas at Bhota in Hamirpur district. The Dera Beas was holding land in the state beyond the permissible limit, as prescribed under the Himachal Pradesh Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1972, as it was exempted under the provisions of Clause (i) of Section 5 of the Act. The Dera Beas had requested the state government time and again to allow it to transfer about 30 acres and the building of the Bhota Charitable Hospital to the Jagat Singh Medical Relief Society, a sister organisation, for better management of medical services. The Section 5 of the Act bars the transfer of land or structure. The government introduced the Bill to facilitate land transfer of the Bhota Charitable Hospital to the Jagat Singh Medical Relief Society in public interest.

Centre clears strategic Bhubu Jot tunnel for Himachal

Diary Times Desk : The construction of the much-awaited strategic Bhubu Jot tunnel in Himachal Pradesh has been cleared, an official statement by the state government said on Saturday. The Ministry of Defence has officially recommended to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) that the Bhubu Jot tunnel, along with the Ghatasani-Shilha-Bhubu Jot-Kullu National Highway, be designated as a project of strategic importance. In its communication, the Ministry of Defence highlighted the critical role this highway and tunnel would play as an alternative route to Leh and Ladakh, significantly enhancing the operational readiness of the armed forces in forward areas. Apart from its strategic significance, the tunnel was expected to bring substantial socio-economic benefits to the region and budgetary provisions for the project will now be made accordingly. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu reaffirmed the state government's unwavering commitment to the Bhubu Jot tunnel project. "I personally met the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on October 25 to request prioritisation of this project while considering its strategic importance. The issue was also raised with Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari. The construction of this tunnel would be a milestone for the development of the state.

Sanjauli Mosque row: Commissioner's Court gives 3 months for razing unauthorised floors



Diary Times Desk : The Commissioner's Court today granted three months to the authorities concerned to raze the unauthorised floors of the mosque in Sanjauli in Shimla. The court has also directed the Sanjauli Mosque Committee and Himachal Pradesh Waqf Board to file the next status report on March 15, after which the hearing of the remaining two floors of the mosque will take place. During the hearing of the case that was held today, the Sanjauli Mosque Committee requested additional time from the court to demolish the three floors. The next hearing on the matter will take place on March 15. The committee's lawyer, BR Thakur, said they needed time to collect the revenue records. He said the court was informed that 50 per cent of the demolition work for the three floors had already been completed.

Public Works Dept 'negligence' endangers lives in Sirmour dist

Diary Times Desk : The recent spell of snowfall in Sirmour district has turned treacherous for commuters, as the Public Works Department (PWD) has failed to address the issue of ice accumulation on key roads. Over the past week, icy patches have led to multiple accidents, with eight reported in just seven days, including a tragic incident on December 9 near Rondi in Nohra Dhar, where one person lost their life. Despite the growing number of accidents, the PWD has yet to take effective measures such as spreading sand on icy roads to prevent vehicles from skidding. This inaction has sparked criticism from locals, who fear further casualties if immediate steps are not taken. The danger posed by icy roads became evident on December 9, when a vehicle skidded near Rondi, resulting in the loss of a life. On the same day, a private bus narrowly avoided a major accident after sliding on ice. On December 12, another incident occurred on the Nohra Dhar-Punnar Dhar route, where a tipper skidded and nearly went off the road. The Haripurdhar region, under the jurisdiction of the PWD Sangrah division, has been particularly affected. On December 17, two accidents were reported on a 6-km stretch due to icy conditions. The first was on Haripurdhar-Rajgarh Road, when a jeep carrying two passengers skidded on ice near Sashkhil and veered off the road. Fortunately, no injuries were reported.



Ravindra Jadeja Slammed For Speaking Hindi In Australia By Media Outlet. Report Termed As 'Hypocrisy'

Diary Times Desk : The India vs Australia Test series recently witnessed an off-field controversy when Virat Kohli asked a reporter to not take picture of his family at the airport. Now, another controversial incident has happened involving Ravindra Jadeja. The left-arm spinner addressed a press conference on Saturday ahead of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne and the proceedings of it have not impressed some media outlets it seems. 7 News, one of whose reporters was asked by Kohli to not film his family, has said that that the "strange and frosty media conference" as Jadeja refused to answer questions in English. The report added that it was 'an annoying situation' for the Australian journalists as Jadeja answered the questions in his 'native language' - Hindi. It also said that Jadeja left the PC early. The report further claimed that "India's media team said the conference was for "travelling Indian media only", even though Australian media was invited." However, two journalist travelling for the series - Abhishek Tripathi of Dainik Jagran and Subhayan Chakraborty of RevSportz - claimed that the Australian media were over-reacting.



Short TAKES

KL Rahul gets hit on finger in fresh injury scare for India days before Boxing Day Test

Agencies : KL Rahul was seen getting some treatment on his arm in the nets while batting in what seems like a fresh injury scare for India going into the fourth Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The series is level at 1-1 after three matches going into the Boxing Day Test. In a video that has gone viral on social media, Rahul can be seen receiving treatment on his right hand in the India nets in Melbourne while holding a bat in the other hand. He is in full batting gear as well. Rahul doesn't seem to be in too much discomfort and there have been no further reports of his participation being potentially being affected. Injuries have been the bane of Rahul's career, particularly in Test cricket. He seemed to have made a spot in the middle order his own late last year but then a long spell on the sidelines due to an injury in the five-match Test series at home against England led to him losing that place to Sarfaraz Khan at home. The return of Rishabh Pant and the exceptional performances of Dhruv Jurel after Rahul sustained the injury in the England series put the latter practically out of contentions to take up the gloves.

Anmolpreet Singh hits third-fastest List A century off just 35 balls in Vijay Hazare Trophy

Agencies : Anmolpreet Singh, the Punjab top-order batter, has gone into the record books for hitting the third-fastest List A century, his 35-ball effort putting him at No. 3 on the all-time list. Only Jake Fraser-McGurk (29 balls) and AB de Villiers (31) sit above him. Walking out at No. 3 against Arunachal Pradesh in a Vijay Hazare Trophy game in Ahmedabad after the fall of captain Abhishek Sharma in the second over, Anmolpreet got to his century with 11 fours and eight sixes. While all the Arunachal Pradesh bowlers went for plenty - left-arm spinner Hardik Verma was the most economical at 9.52 - he took a special liking to offspinner Tech Neri, who conceded 31 runs in his only over. Thanks to Anmolpreet's blitz, Punjab overhauled Arunachal Pradesh's 164 in just 12.5 overs for a nine-wicket win. Anmolpreet finished with 115 in 45 balls, hitting one more six and one more four after crossing the three-figure mark. Abhishek's opening partner Prabhsimran Singh was the other unbeaten batter with a relatively sedate 35 in 25 balls.

Prithvi Shaw faces demotion after 'fitness, discipline' issues; asked to play in Police Shield

Agencies : Prithvi Shaw is facing one setback after another. Recently, the right-handed batter was snubbed from Mumbai's squad for the first three matches of the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Subsequently, the 25-year-old took to Instagram Stories to express his displeasure. However, this move did not go down well, and since then, several issues have surfaced. Shaw's fitness and discipline have been put under the scanner. Now, Shaw has been asked to play in the Police Shield Invitational Tournament. He will lead the Mumbai Colts team. For the uninitiated, the competition involves two-day matches at various venues around Mumbai. Earlier, an MCA official, speaking to news agency PTI, raised fitness and discipline issues. Recently, the youngster who made his debut for India in 2018 also underperformed with the bat in the recently concluded Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, which was won by Mumbai under the leadership of Shreyas Iyer. Shaw did not even reach the 200-run mark in the entire tournament, and his only substantial knock came during the quarter-final against Vidarbha. "In the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, we were playing with 10 fielders as we were forced to hide Prithvi Shaw.

Ghazanfar's fifer seals whitewash for Afghanistan

Agencies : A five-wicket haul by 18-year-old spinner AM Ghazanfar triggered another batting collapse from Zimbabwe in the third and final ODI, and helped seal the series for Afghanistan 2-0 with an eight-wicket victory. Put into bat on a fresh pitch, Zimbabwe were skittled out for 127 inside 31 overs, which Afghanistan chased with 23.1 overs to spare at the Harare Sports Club. It was a difficult start from the hosts, who were coming off a 54 all-out in the last match. So it wasn't a surprise that Azmatullah Omarzai started proceedings from one of the ends with a maiden and that Zimbabwe's first boundary came in the fifth over when Ben Curran drove an overcooked delivery to the long-off fence. Ghazanfar, who had three wickets in the last match, was brought on to bowl inside the first PowerPlay this time around and he took all of five balls to strike. Joylord Gumbie became the first of his five wickets on the day when he top-edged a sweep, having had difficulties reading the spinner. Before Ghazanfar could come back for his next over and pin Curran lbw in front, Omarzai had gotten the big wicket of Craig Ervine with an unplayable seam that did just enough to take the outside edge. There was a semblance of recovery when Sikandar Raza and Sean Williams.

"Might Be Someone From RCB": CSK Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad Trolls IPL Rivals During Live Event

Agencies : Chennai Super Giants (CSK) captain Ruturaj Gaikwad took a cheeky jibe at his rivals Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) during an event recently. As he was about to address the audience, a microphone malfunction prompted a viral moment. The CSK star batter jokingly blamed RCB for the mic malfunction, drawing laughter and applause from fans at the event. The microphone was accidentally turned off by the sound team, prompting the host of the event to say "How can you turn off Ruturaj's mic?". However, Gaikwad gave a glimpse of his humour by suggesting "Might be someone from RCB". A video of the same exchange has gone viral on social media. Gaikwad recently led Maharashtra in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, with his team crashing out in the group stage of the tournament. He scored a brilliant 97 in their final group game against Services, but had a poor season in general, managing just 193 runs in five group games. He will now lead Maharashtra in the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy, starting December 21. CSK retained Gaikwad as their first pick ahead of the IPL 2025 Mega Auction for Rs 18 crore.

