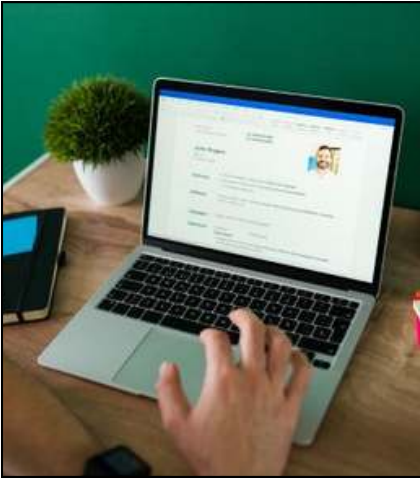


HP TET 2024 Result: Only 35 percent of the candidates were able to pass the TET, 31,896 had given the paper, 11,026 got success



Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh School Education Board declared the result of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) held in November on Monday. This result has been 35 percent. During this examination held in November, 31,896 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which only 11,026 have passed. During this, Shastri subject has the highest result of 66.67 and Punjabi subject has the lowest result of 4.92 percent. According to the information, Himachal Pradesh School Education Board had conducted Teacher Eligibility Test for JBT, Shastri, TGT Medical, Non Medical, TGT Arts, Language Teacher, Punjabi and Urdu subjects in November 2024. During this, the Education Board had issued admit cards to 35,031 candidates, out of which 31,896 candidates appeared in the examination. 3135 candidates were absent. During the result declared by the board, 3135 candidates have been declared passed, while the result of 20870 candidates has failed. Apart from this, the Education Board has declared the RLE results of six candidates.

Himachal News: 2,515 drug dealers caught in one year, most 480 in Shimla

Diary Times Desk : The network of drug dealers in Himachal Pradesh is expanding year after year. Talking about the year 2024, 2515 accused were arrested under the NDPS Act in the state during this period. Most of the drug dealers were caught in Shimla district. These included 473 men, 17 women. Two foreigners were also caught in drug abuse. One of them was arrested in Solan and one in Sirmaur. This has been revealed in the report given to the CM by the Additional Chief Secretary Home. CM Sukhu has also shared many figures related to Himachal Pradesh in the meeting of northern states chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah two days ago.

Rahul Fighting To Save Cong, I'm Fighting For Country: Kejriwal

Agencies : AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal was quick to respond to Rahul Gandhi's diatribe against him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his poll rally in Seelampur on Monday, saying the Congress leader is fighting just to save his own party. "Today Rahul Gandhi came to Delhi. He abused me a lot. But I will not comment on his statements. His fight is to save Congress, my fight is to save the country," Kejriwal posted on X. While addressing the rally in northeast Delhi's Seelampur, Rahul targeted the former Delhi CM on a range of issues and equated him with PM Modi for their "false promises". "You ask Kejriwal ji whether he wants reservations for the backward and a caste census. When I talk about the caste census, I don't hear a word from both PM Modi and Kejriwal. There is no difference between Kejriwal and PM Modi as they both make false promises," Gandhi said.



"Pakistan Epicentre Of Terrorism": Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi

Agencies : Indian Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Monday termed Pakistan as the epicentre of terrorism and said that 80 per cent of terrorists active in Jammu and Kashmir are Pakistanis. In his annual Army Day press conference, Gen Dwivedi blamed Pakistan for the violence levels in the Union Territory saying it was being orchestrated by the epicentre of terrorism that is Pakistan. "If the support is not forthcoming the way India is looking at it, this kind of terrorist infiltration will continue to be there," he said. The Army Chief said that the parliamentary elections and assembly elections in the Union Territory both had nearly 60% voting. "It means that the local population is going with the peace. People of Jammu and Kashmir are shunning violence and violence is being orchestrated by our Western adversary Pakistan," the chief said.

Himachal: Snowfall brings good apple crop, rain is a boon for wheat and vegetables

Diary Times Desk : After snowfall, there is hope of a bumper crop of apples in Himachal Pradesh this year. The snowfall in December and early January is likely to complete the chilling hours required for a good apple crop on time. On the other hand, rain can prove to be a lifesaver for the wheat crop which has suffered due to drought. Apart from this, rain and snowfall will also prove beneficial for cabbage, mustard, potato, carrot, radish. 1200 to 1600 hours of chilling hours are required for a good apple crop. For the last 10 years, the chilling hours were getting affected due to no snowfall in December and early January. This year, the chilling hours have started on time. The work of making towels in the gardens has started on time. There is a possibility of a good crop due to the availability of cow dung manure on time. The apple will also have a good shape. Former Additional Director of Agriculture Department, Dr. Hansraj Sharma said that the wheat crop will benefit from the rain.

UGC-NET scheduled for Jan 15 postponed on account of festivals

Agencies : The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Monday announced that the UGC-NET examination scheduled for January 15 has been postponed due to the Pongal and Makar Sankranti festivals. The new date would be announced later, the NTA said. On January 7, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin wrote to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to reschedule the UGC-NET examination as it falls during Pongal. "The National Testing Agency has received representations to postpone the UGC-NET December 2024 examination on account of Pongal, Makar Sankranti and other festivals on January 15," the NTA said in a statement. "In the interest of aspirants, the NTA has decided to postpone the exam scheduled for January 15 only. The new date will be announced later," it added.

PM Modi celebrates Lohri, Sankranti, and Pongal with locals and leaders

Agencies : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday celebrated Lohri with locals of Naraina village in Delhi and also took part in Sankranti and Pongal celebrations at the residence of Union Minister G Kishan Reddy. "This evening, I had the opportunity to mark Lohri at a programme in Naraina in Delhi. People from different walks of life, particularly youngsters and women, took part in the celebrations," the Prime Minister posted on X. He said that Lohri has a special significance for several people, particularly those from northern India. "It symbolises renewal and hope. It is also linked with agriculture and our hardworking farmers," the PM said and wished everyone a Happy Lohri.



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Himachal CM: Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said- honorarium of artists will be fixed in cultural programs

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu has given instructions to fix and rationalize the honorarium of artists in cultural programs. He said that a provision would be made to give 33 percent of the total expenditure of the programs to local artists. District level festivals will be organized in all the districts from the next financial year. At least one evening in fairs and festivals will be reserved for local artists. While chairing a review meeting of the State Language and Culture Department in Shimla on Monday, the Chief Minister said that a master plan would be prepared for the beautification of Baba Balak Nath, Mata Chintpurni, Shri Naina Devi and Jwalaji Temple. World class facilities will be increased for the devotees in the temples so that religious tourism is promoted in the state. 107 fairs have been notified by the state government. These include 4 international, 5 national level, 29 state level and 69 district level fairs. So far in the financial year 2024-25, an assistance grant of Rs 1.10 crore has been given for organizing fairs.



Himachal : Avinash Jamwal won gold medal in the 8th Rlyte Men's National Boxing Championship

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh's boxing star Avinash Jamwal has won the gold medal in the 8th Rlyte Men's National Boxing Championship held from 7 to 23 January 2025 in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh. Jamwal performed brilliantly in the 65 kg weight category. In the first round, Jamwal defeated defending champion Vansh of SSCB. He then defeated Commonwealth gold medalist and Olympian Shiva Thapa in the semi-finals. In the final, he defeated boxing champion Amit of Railways to win the gold medal. Jamwal attributed his success to his hard training and the hard work of the coaches. He said that this victory is a new beginning for him and he is ready to perform even better in the coming days. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu has congratulated Avinash Jamwal of Mandi district on winning the gold medal in the National Boxing Championship held in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.

AAP Counters Lt Governor's Attack On Arvind Kejriwal Over Slum 'Land Use'

Agencies : With the Delhi election weeks away, the ruling AAP and Opposition BJP are going all out to woo voters in urban slums -- a key chunk of the capital's electorate. Doubling down on its earlier charge that Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena okayed the 'land use' change of a plot in north Delhi's Shakur Basti, endangering the future of the slum dwellers there, AAP today released a document to back its claim. The document contained minutes of the meeting of Delhi Development Authority's technical committee on December 20. The minutes mentioned the 'land use' change request of a 4.63-hectare land from 'Transportation' (Circulation-Rail) to 'Residential' at Shakurbasti. The minutes say that the proposal to change 'land use' was approved after detailed discussions. The AAP shared the document after Lieutenant Governor Saxena trashed AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal's allegations regarding the 'land use' change and accused him of lying and misleading people. In a video statement, the Lieutenant Governor said Mr Kejriwal's claims are "completely false". "Kejriwal is deliberately lying and misleading people. I urge him to stop making such statements otherwise DDA will take action against him," said Mr Saxena, who heads the DDA. "DDA has neither changed the land use nor given any eviction notices," he said, adding that the railway plot, the 'land use' of which was changed.

455 Donors, Rs 19 Lakh: How Atishi's Crowdfunding Drive Worked In 24 Hours

Agencies : Delhi Chief Minister Atishi has raised over Rs 19 lakh in online donations within 24 hours of launching a crowdfunding campaign to contest the assembly elections scheduled next month. Atishi, who is also the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate from the Kalkaji constituency, has set a goal of garnering Rs 40 lakh as her election campaign fund. As of noon today, the party's donation page shows 455 people have donated a total of Rs 19,32,728. "I am truly overwhelmed by the incredible response to my crowdfunding campaign on Day 1. This huge success is a reflection of people's unwavering faith in the Aam Aadmi Party's clean, honest, and transformative politics. Do keep the momentum going by spreading the word!" the Chief Minister wrote on X. Atishi launched the crowdfunding campaign on Sunday by releasing an online link to the portal for people to donate money. "People donated money to support Aam Admi Party's honest politics. We don't take money from big businessmen for elections.

CM Sukhu: Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said - Seven solar projects of 72 MW will be allotted soon

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that the state government is trying to harness green energy on a large scale. Tenders have been invited to set up seven solar power projects of 72 MW capacity, which are being evaluated. Their work will soon be allotted to the concerned companies. Apart from this, survey and investigation work of 8 projects of 325 MW is going on. In a statement issued on Monday, the Chief Minister said that for the first time the government is moving towards developing 200 panchayats of the state as green panchayats. In this, 200 kV ground mounted solar plants will be installed. The income received from these plants will be spent on the development works of the Panchayat. In the solar energy sector, the 32 MW Pekhubela Solar Power Project in Una district was dedicated to the public on April 15. In the period of six and a half months from April to October 2024, 34.19 million units of electricity have been generated through this project, generating an income of Rs 10.16 crore. The 5 MW solar power project at Bhanjal in Una district has been started on 30 November 2024, while the construction work of 10 MW Aghlaur solar power project is also expected to be completed this month. The Chief Minister said that the present government is working towards making the state the first green energy state of the country by 2026. The CM said that grid-connected roof top solar plants and water heating systems will be installed in Bal & Balika and Vridha Ashrams and Rajiv Gandhi Model Day-Boarding Schools of the state. Green energy sources are renewable and do not get exhausted, which will ensure the availability of energy to future generations.

IIT Kharagpur 3rd Year Student Found Hanging In Hostel Room By Parents

Agencies : A student of IIT-Kharagpur was found dead inside his hostel room, an institute official said on Monday. Shaon Malik, a third-year student of Electrical Engineering, was found hanging inside the room by his parents who had come to meet him on Sunday. His parents and institute personnel had to forcibly open the door of the hostel room after he did not respond to repeated calls, the official said. Malik had spoken to his parents over phone the previous night and "things seemed perfectly normal", according to the official. The institute will conduct an internal probe into the death and take steps to prevent such incidents in future, he said. A senior police officer said the post-mortem has been completed and the process was videographed. Investigation is underway, he said. IIT-Kharagpur, in a statement, said: "With a sense of utter shock, the students, staff and faculty members deeply mourn the sudden loss of Shaon Malik, a third-year student from the Department of Electrical Engineering. He was found dead in Azad Hall of Residence premises on the morning of January 12." The Azad Hall of Residence is one of the hostels.



Himachal CM: Chief Minister Sukhu reached Tandi village, government will give six months' rent, TD wood and seven lakhs

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu on Monday visited the site of the fire in Tandi village of Banjar valley in Kullu district and reviewed the relief work and met the affected families. He directed the officials to expedite the relief work on a war footing. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu announced to pay rent of Rs. 5,000 per month for six months to the people living in rented houses and in case the house is not rebuilt, rent of Rs. 5,000 per month for the next six months and Rs. 50,000 for building cattle sheds. The Chief Minister also announced assistance of Rs. 7 lakh for the construction of houses which have been completely burnt and those which are no longer habitable, free electricity and water connection, provision of wood as per rules for building houses and essential goods, utensils, clothes etc. for the houses whose belongings have been burnt. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu also announced Rs 75 lakh for building a paved road in the village and Rs one crore for repairing the 4 km road leading to the village. The Chief Minister also announced to open a fire station in Banjar. He also assured to explore the possibility of setting up a solar power project to solve the problem of low voltage.



HPU Shimla: HPU declared the results of UG supplementary examinations

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh University has declared the results of BA, BSc, BCom supplementary exams held in October. The result of BA first year was 98.93 percent. A total of 3,907 students appeared in the exam. The result of BSc first year was 96.55 percent. 1,073 BSc students appeared in it. Out of a total of 861 students who appeared in the BCom first year exam, 94.89 percent students have passed the exam. Now students will be able to fill the exam form for the next class. Students who could not pass the supplementary exam will have to fill the form again for the exams to be held in March-April. Examination Controller Prof. Shyam Lal Kaushal said that the results of the supplementary exams declared are available on the university website.

Himachal Tourism: Snowfall gives wings to tourism, tourists flock to Shimla-Manali

Diary Times Desk : After snowfall, tourist places of Himachal Pradesh have become crowded with tourists. A large number of tourists are visiting the tourist places of Himachal to enjoy the snowfall. On Sunday, a huge crowd of tourists gathered in Shimla and Manali. Tourists reached Sissu near Kufri and Rohtang Tunnel in Shimla to play in the snow. After the New Year celebrations, the movement of tourists has increased in Himachal. Snowfall is attracting tourists a lot. After the snowfall on Saturday night, the arrival of tourists continued throughout the day on Sunday in Shimla and Manali. The problem of traffic jam also arose due to the increase in the number of tourist vehicles. Apart from Shimla and Manali, tourists are also reaching Kasauli, Chail, Dharamshala and Dalhousie. Tourism businessmen are very excited with the increase in the number of tourists. President of Travel Agents Association Naveen Paul says that the number of tourists is increasing due to snowfall on New Year. If the snowfall continues in the coming days, then tourists will keep coming and there will be good business. Rajendra Thakur, chairman of All Himachal Commercial Vehicle Joint Action Committee, said that even in the new year, tourists are continuously reaching the tourist places of the state. A large number of tourists are also reaching Shimla.

HP High Court: Former MLA Chaitanya Sharma got permission to go abroad, had appealed in the High Court



Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh High Court has given one month's permission to former Gagret MLA Chaitanya Sharma to go abroad. A petition was filed in the court on behalf of Chaitanya Sharma. In it, he had pleaded that he has to go abroad for his mother's treatment. The court of Judge Bipin Chandra Negi accepted the petition of the former MLA and granted permission. The High Court has released former MLA Chaitanya Sharma on bail in another case with some conditions, which states that he cannot go abroad without the orders of the court.

Himachal News: Car fell into drain near Nerwa, four injured, were going from Kupvi to Chaupal, police engaged in investigation

Diary Times Desk : A car went out of control and fell into a drain at around 10:30 am on Monday near village Diyandli, some distance from Nerwa market. Four people were injured in this accident, while one person is completely safe. According to the information, five people were going from Kupvi to Chaupal in a Maruti Alto car on Monday morning. The car fell into the drain due to the driver losing control near Diyandli. At the time of the accident, passengers of other vehicles passing by and the villagers took the injured people from the drain to the road. After that, the information of the accident was given to the Nerwa police station. People took the injured to the Civil Hospital Nerwa in their vehicles. After providing first aid to the injured in Civil Hospital Nerwa, Bhagmal son Mast Ram, Divyansh son Bhagmal, Priyanka daughter Bhagmal and Vanita wife Suresh, all residents of village Jodna, Tehsil Chaupal, District Shimla were referred to Shimla, while the fifth person Suresh in the car did not get any injury. On behalf of the local administration, Naib Tehsildar Nerwa Arjun Singh Parmar went to the hospital.

Kaza: A budget of Rs 40.64 crore approved in the Tribal Development Programme Scheme in the Project Advisory Committee meeting

Diary Times Desk : MLA of Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Anuradha Rana, chaired the meeting of the Project Advisory Committee held in the conference room of Additional Deputy Commissioner Kaza on Monday. In the meeting, a budget of Rs 40 crore 64 lakh proposed for the year 2025-26 was approved under the Tribal Development Program Scheme. She said that the developmental projects and public welfare works being run through various departments in Spiti should be expedited and completed on time. During this, various pending developmental works were discussed in depth and necessary guidelines were given. The MLA directed the Public Works Department to keep the roads in good condition during the winter season and especially asked to keep the connecting roads in remote areas.

Jairam Thakur: Leader of Opposition said- Who is protecting the mining mafia that even the ministers are looking helpless

Diary Times Desk : Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that in Sukhu government, mining mafia has become so unbridled that even the administration and ministers seem helpless in front of them. Due to the failure of the government, people suffering from illegal mining have knocked the door of the High Court. From this orgy of mining mafia, it is clear that the government is not able to control the mining mafia or the government is openly protecting them. Jairam Thakur said that after all, whose protection is this that even the Deputy Chief Minister of the state is seen pleading before the administration. The things that the leaders sitting in the government should say in strong words in departmental meetings are being said from the platforms of public meetings. Is the lack of coordination so much that the things that should be ordered to the officers as ministers are being conveyed to them through public meetings. Or telling your point to the officers in this way, pleading with them to stop mining and threatening to stop mining is the ministers.

Isro to review strategy as space docking trial postponed

Agencies : The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) was just 3 meters from executing India's first docking mission when scientists postponed the procedure. The two spacecraft—SDX01 and SDX02—after being brought as close as about 230 metres on Saturday evening, at 3:11 am Sunday, were subsequently spotted from an inter-satellite distance of 105 metres. However, Isro shared the news of "safely moving the spacecraft away from each other to a 'safer distance.'" While sharing the news of X (formerly known as Twitter) and Isro wrote, "A trial attempt to reach upto 3m from 15m is done. Moving back the spacecraft to safer distance. The docking will be done after analysing data further." The whole country was expecting a new history in making and watching Isro's new Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission which seemed an inevitable achievement on Sunday early hours. Isro scientists were closely observing and monitoring the two spacecraft of the SpaDeX mission before postponing the docking.

Flight Operations Affected At Chennai Airport Due To Dense Fog, Poor Visibility

Agencies : Flight operations were affected at the Chennai International Airport due to poor visibility amid dense fog conditions in Tamil Nadu. Air India, on its official handle on X, requested the passengers to check their flight status before heading to the airport. "Poor visibility may impact flight operations to and from Chennai and some cities in Southern India, like Tirupati and Tiruchirapalli. Kindly check your flight status before heading to the airport," the airline said. The Indian Meteorological Department has not issued any warning for Southern India for the next six days. Meanwhile, as cold waves envelop the national capital, several flights were delayed at IGI Airport due to fog. Homeless individuals sought refuge in night shelters in the national capital as the winter chill intensifies in Northern India. According to the IMD, dense fog conditions are very likely in the Delhi/NCR region and an orange alert was issued regarding the same. Air quality monitoring stations in Delhi have reported concerning pollution levels across the city. According to CPCB data, the AQI of the national capital recorded 285.

'A memory to cherish forever': Millions take holy dip as Maha Kumbh begins



Agencies : "I walked almost the entire night to reach the ghats. I was tired but the sight of the Ganga rejuvenated me," said Ram Kali, a 65-year-old devotee from Azamgarh, her voice filled with emotion as she stood at the banks of the Sangam. Accompanied by her son, Ram Kali reached the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati, her steps steady despite the fatigue of a 12-kilometer walk. With trembling hands, she scooped up a handful of holy water, sprinkled it over her head, and lit a diya. Standing knee-deep in the sacred waters, she performed an aarti of the Sangam, floated the diya, and then folded her hands in prayer. Finally, she took a deep breath and plunged into the icy waters, emerging with a radiant smile. "Thakawat dur ho gayi (My tiredness has gone)," she exclaimed, as chants of "Ganga Maiya ki Jai" echoed around her. Ram Kali's story was just one among millions as the Maha Kumbh 2025 began on Paush Purnima with an overwhelming surge of devotion. By 5:30 pm.

Patna High Court's Chief Justice Appointed As Supreme Court Judge

Agencies : Patna High Court Chief Justice K Vinod Chandran was on Monday elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Collegium recommended Justice Chandran's name on January 7, and his appointment was announced on Monday by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal in a post on X. Justice Chandran was appointed as a judge of the Kerala High Court on November 8, 2011. He was elevated as the chief justice Patna High Court on March 29, 2023. Once he takes oath as a judge of the top court, the working strength of the Supreme Court would rise to 33. Its sanctioned strength is 34, including the chief justice of India.

Bangladesh Top Envoy Summoned By Foreign Ministry A Day After Dhaka's Move

Agencies : The Foreign Ministry today summoned Nural Islam, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India, to discuss the escalating tensions between New Delhi and Dhaka. This comes a day after the Bangladeshi Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma following allegations that India was attempting to construct fences at five specific locations along the 4,156-kilometre Indo-Bangladeshi border. These actions were said to be in violation of a bilateral agreement governing border activities.

'Factually Incorrect': Union Minister Trashes Mark Zuckerberg's India Election Results Claim

Agencies : Union Minister Ashwini Vaisnaw today fact-checked Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg's claim on the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections. In an interview on Friday with popular podcaster Joe Rogan, Mr Zuckerberg wrongly claimed that most incumbent governments, including India, lost elections in 2024. Mr Zuckerberg's claim "is factually incorrect," said the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government had won the 2024 general elections. Correcting Mr Zuckerberg, Mr Vaishnaw posted on X, "As the world's largest democracy, India conducted the 2024 elections with over 640 million voters. The people of India reaffirmed their trust in the NDA led by PM". Mr Zuckerberg, trying to highlight how COVID-19 pandemic led to the global erosion of trust in governments and influenced elections, said, "2024 was a very big election year around the world and all these countries, India, had elections.

'Dragging Your Feet': High Court Slams Delhi Government Over Auditor's Report

Agencies : The Delhi High court pulled up the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government over a delay in placing before the Assembly Speaker a report by the Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) on the ongoing liquor scam, which resulted in the arrests of former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and senior leader Manish Sisodia. "The way you've been dragging your feet is something unfortunate. You should've been prompt in sending it (reports) to the Speaker and having a discussion at the floor of the assembly," the court told the Delhi government.

'PM Modi, Kejriwal failed to reduce inflation': Rahul Gandhi at Delhi rally

Agencies : Leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor Arvind Kejriwal, accusing them of having "failed" to reduce inflation. "Inflation is at its peak. Poor people are becoming poorer and rich people are becoming richer. Ambani and Adani do marketing for PM Modi. Have you ever seen PM Modi, Arvind Kejriwal saying anything about Adani? ...We don't want a country of billionaires," ANI quoted the Congress leader as saying at the "Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan" rally in Delhi's Seelampur area. Continuing his attack on Prime Minister Modi, Gandhi said, "People of BJP and RSS are destroying the Constitution. They are spreading hatred... We travelled 4000 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to save the Constitution." "Prime Minister Modi, BJP and RSS attack Dr BR Ambedkar's Constitution every day... Only love will defeat hatred in the country...I don't want an India where the billionaires can do anything. People like Ambani and Adani have bought the whole nation and controlled all the businesses," he added.



Oil hits more than 3-month high as US sanctions hit Russia exports

Agencies : Oil prices hit their highest level in more than three months on Monday's open, extending their rally on expectations that wider US sanctions will affect Russian crude supplies to the world's top and third largest importers China and India. Brent crude futures climbed \$1.35, or 1.69%, to \$81.11 a barrel by 2339 GMT after hitting an intraday high of \$81.44, the highest since August 27. US West Texas Intermediate crude rose \$1.40, or 1.83% to \$77.97 a barrel after touching a high of \$78.32, the loftiest price since Oct. 8. The US Treasury on Friday imposed sanctions on Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas, as well as 183 vessels that have shipped Russian oil, targeting the revenue Moscow has used to fund its war with Ukraine. Russian oil exports will be hurt severely by the new sanctions, pushing top buyers China and India to source more oil from the Middle East, Africa and the Americas, which will boost prices and shipping costs, traders and analysts said. "The last round of OFAC sanctions targeting Russian oil companies and a very large number of tankers will be consequential in particular for India," said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of research at Inyx Capital Group.

"Have Message For Donald Trump": Ex-Justin Trudeau Ally Jagmeet Singh's Big Warning

Agencies : Jagmeet Singh, leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and once an ally of former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, has warned US President-elect Donald Trump sternly over his plans to annex Canada. In a video posted on the social media site X (formerly Twitter) said, "I have a message for Donald Trump. Our country (Canada) is not for sale. Not now, not ever." Singh said that Canadians are proud people, they are proud of their country and ready to "fight like hell to defend it." The NDP leader boasted about being a good neighbour and extending support to the US amid the Los Angeles fire that has killed at least 24 people so far. "Right now, with the forest fires ravaging homes.

UK will be 'AI superpower', says Starmer as he unveils plans to boost growth

Agencies : The UK will be an AI "superpower", Sir Keir Starmer said as he unveiled plans to expand use of the technology in a bid to boost growth. The Prime Minister conceded there would be "teething problems" involved in the process but insisted changes would help revolutionise creaking public services and turn around Britain's economy. The Government has said it will "take forward" all 50 recommendations made by tech entrepreneur Matt Clifford, who was commissioned by Science Secretary Peter Kyle in July to come up with a plan to identify AI opportunities. Among the proposals are greater use of the technology in the public sector to enable workers to spend less time doing administrative tasks and more time delivering services, as well as a series of AI "growth zones" around Britain to help speed up planning approvals for data centres and improve access to the energy grid. In a speech in east London on Monday, Sir Keir said: "AI isn't something locked away behind the walls of blue chip companies; it's a force for change that will transform the lives of working people for the better. "So if you're sitting around the kitchen table tonight worrying about the opportunities.



"Distinct Possibility" Of Israel-Hamas Deal Over Gaza This Week: US



Agencies : US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said there's a "distinct possibility" that Israel and Hamas will be able to reach a ceasefire deal before President Joe Biden leaves office in a week. "The pressure is building for Hamas to come to yes," Sullivan said in an interview at Bloomberg's Washington bureau on Monday. "It's there for the taking so the question is now can we all collectively seize the moment and make this happen." Sullivan said Biden's Middle East envoy, Brett McGurk, had been in the region for more than a week working out the details of an agreement. He said he'd spoken with Qatar's prime minister as well as Israeli officials and "there is a general sense that this is moving in the right direction." The Biden administration has tried to work closely with President-elect Donald Trump's team on the issue. Sullivan suggested that Trump's demand for a deal before he takes office hasn't hurt the talks. "The pressure building here toward the end of President Biden's term has been considerable," Sullivan said. "That will help contribute to a positive outcome if we can generate that final yes from both sides.

Troops Captured by Ukraine Provide Rare Glimpse Into North Korea's Military

Agencies : One young soldier from North Korea said he didn't know where he was fighting when he was sent from his isolated homeland to the frontline of the war between Russia and Ukraine. When asked whether his parents knew where he was, another North Korean soldier shook his head. The three-minute video clip that President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine posted on the social media platform X on Sunday showed a Ukrainian official questioning two North Korean prisoners of war with the help of a Korean interpreter. The Ukrainian authorities announced their capture on Saturday, saying they were the first North Korean troops to be taken alive.

"You Are Alive": US Man's Tearful Reunion With Dog After Devastating Fire

Agencies : A Los Angeles man broke down in tears of joy after reuniting with his dog, Oreo, who was feared lost in the wildfire that devastated parts of the city. Casey Colvin's emotional moment came on January 12 when a professional dog tracker helped him find Oreo, who had taken shelter in the debris of a neighbour's home in the Pacific Palisades neighbourhood, one of the worst-hit areas. Approaching the driveway, Mr Colvin saw Oreo sitting atop the rubble, dirty but unharmed. Gently asking Oreo to come closer, Mr Colvin's reassuring calls encourage the dog to come down the driveway and into his arms. Overwhelmed with emotion, Mr Colvin cheers joyfully, expressing his relief and happiness. "Oh my God! You're alive! Oh, honey!" he said. The heartfelt reunion, captured on video, has gone viral on social media. NBC News reporter Liz Kreutz shared the video on X, formerly Twitter, clarifying that Mr Colvin had not abandoned his pets. He was at work when evacuation orders were issued and spent hours fighting to get back home.

Saudi Arabia to enforce mandatory qualification verification for work visas

Agencies : Saudi Arabia is set to introduce a mandatory pre-verification of professional and academic qualifications of Indian nationals for all work visa applications, effective from Tuesday, January 14. This initiative, initially proposed six months ago for 19 professions, including electricians, plumbers, welders, and HVAC mechanics, will now extend to all work visa applicants. Under the new regulations, applicants must have their educational and professional qualifications thoroughly verified before being granted a visa. According to a TNIE report, a circular issued by the Saudi embassy in India professional verification procedures for issuing work visas will be implemented from January 14. The report further stated that professional verification would become a mandatory prerequisite for obtaining work visas. The initiative aims to prevent unqualified Indian workers from entering the Saudi labour market by ensuring foreign workers possess verified educational credentials. As part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which seeks to boost employment opportunities for its nationals, the labour sector has introduced stricter certification requirements across various job categories.

Despite having buried the hatchet, Punjab farmer unions' meeting inconclusive



Agencies : The meeting of all major farmer unions of Punjab to establish unity remained inconclusive as all stakeholders have decided to meet again on January 18. Members from Ekta Resolution of SKM All-India, including Joginder Singh Ugrahan, Balbir Singh Rajewal, Darshan Pal, Raminder Patiala and Yuddhvir Singh reached Patran for a joint discussion with Kisan Mazdoor Morcha leader and Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) members. During the Moga mahapanchayat on January 9, the SKM (All India) had passed the "Ekta Resolution", emphasising the need for broad unity among various unions to press for their long-standing demands. From KMM Satnam Singh Pannu, Sarwan Singh Pandher and from SKM (Non-Political) Abhimanyu Kohar and Kaka Singh Kotra are leading their respective five-member panels. On January 10, the members of SKM (All India) had reached the Khanauri border and met Jagjit Dallewal, who has been on a fast-unto-death for 48 days.

High Court expresses concern over execution of Haryana cow protection law

Agencies : Expressing serious concern over the enforcement of the Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Act, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has asserted that an alarming increase in cases under the legislation indicated its improper execution. "The prime objective of the Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Act, 2015, is to curtail the cow slaughtering, consumption of beef menace emanating from powerful meat lobby consuming and selling beef for their own satiation. But the alarming situation with the increase in such litigations apparently shows that the Act is not executed properly in its true spirit," Justice Sandeep Moudgil asserted. The observation came as Justice Moudgil dismissed the anticipatory bail plea of an accused in a case registered at the Dhauj police station in Faridabad for attempt to murder and other offences under Sections 148, 149, 186, 429, and 307 of the IPC, and the provisions of the Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Act and Arms Act.

Rahul fighting to save Cong, I'm fighting for country: Kejriwal

Agencies : AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal was quick to respond to Rahul Gandhi's diatribe against him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his poll rally in Seelampur on Monday, saying the Congress leader is fighting just to save his own party. "Today Rahul Gandhi came to Delhi. He abused me a lot. But I will not comment on his statements. His fight is to save Congress, my fight is to save the country," Kejriwal posted on X. While addressing the rally in northeast Delhi's Seelampur, Rahul targeted the former Delhi CM on a range of issues and equated him with PM Modi for their "false promises". "You ask Kejriwal ji whether he wants reservations for the backward and a caste census. When I talk about the caste census, I don't hear a word from both PM Modi and Kejriwal.

SC awards Rs 76 lakh to family of Punjab man killed in accident

Agencies : Holding that an insurance company can't repudiate a claim by merely alleging a fraud in obtaining an insurance policy, the Supreme Court has ordered an insurance company to pay a compensation of Rs 76.2 lakh to the mother and daughter of a Punjab man who along with his wife died in a motor vehicle accident in 2017. A Bench of Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said that merely alleging a fraud on the part of the policy holders in obtaining an insurance policy is not enough for an insurance company to repudiate a motor vehicle accident claim. "The law is very clear - fraud vitiates everything, but merely alleging fraud does not amount to proving it. For, it has to be proven in accordance with law by adducing evidence etcetera, the onus of which would also lie on the person alleging fraud," the Bench said in a recent verdict. The National Insurance Company Ltd had alleged that the vehicle which was insured with it was not involved in the accident and some other vehicle was mentioned in the initial Written Statement filed before the MACT (Motor Accident Claims Tribunal), Gurdaspur.

Court dismisses bail plea of accused in Mumbai hacker Manish Bhangale kidnapping case

Agencies : A local court has dismissed the bail application of Ravi Sharma, a Punjab resident arrested on charges of kidnapping Mumbai-based hacker Manish Bhangale in Chandigarh. The police registered an FIR under Sections 308(2), 3(5), 140(3) and 61(2) of the BNS at the Sector 36 police station based on a complaint by constable Surender Kumar. On September 24, 2024, Kumar was patrolling near Fragrance Garden in Sector 36 when he noticed a silver-coloured Swift Dzire car with a Delhi number plate. Three persons were sitting in the car, with two people in the back seat. One person was banging his hands on the glass. When Kumar and another policeman approached the car, the driver tried to escape. They followed the car and stopped it near Sector 43 ISBT. The person banging his hands on the glass identified himself as Manish Bhangale. The accused, Ranjit and Ravi Sharma, were arrested from the car. Bhangale claimed he was forcibly detained by the accused, who tortured him and asked him to transfer money from different bank accounts by hacking. He said he had gone to Amritsar for a deal and was moved to various locations in Punjab before being brought to Chandigarh. The accused's counsel argued that Sharma was falsely implicated.

Man dies as lintel of 3-storey building collapses in Mohali

Agencies : A 28-year-old labourer died as the lintel of a three-storey showroom collapsed in Sector 118, TDI City, here on Monday evening. The deceased has been identified as Jaswinder Singh of Chuharmajra near Landran. Three others sustained minor injuries. Aerocity residents Uday Paswan (42), Karan Kumar (30) and Kuldeep Paswan (25) were rushed to the Phase-6 Civil Hospital. Locals said the lintel of the second floor of the showroom was being laid when the lintel of the first floor collapsed, trapping six workers in the rubble. Locals raised an alarm after which the trapped workers were rescued. The supervisor and two workers reportedly ran away from the spot. Tehsildar Arjun Grewal and SP (Rural) Manpreet Singh reached the spot and oversaw the rescue work. "An inquiry will be conducted and action taken. A technical committee is probing the Sohana building collapse and the report will be submitted soon," Grewal said. Two youths had died as a gym-cum PG accommodation at Sohana village collapsed on December 21 as digging work was being carried out illegally.

Kejriwal accuses BJP of 'betraying' Jats of Delhi over reservation issue

Agencies : AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Monday accused the BJP of "betraying" the Jats of Delhi over the issue of reservation, asking the party when will they be included in the Centre's list for the Other Backward Classes (OBC). Kejriwal met a delegation of Jat leaders at his residence ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls on February 5. The community accounts for a significant chunk of votes in some Assembly constituencies in the national capital, especially in the outer Delhi areas. The Jats here are included in Delhi's OBC list but not in the Centre's list, Kejriwal said. "Jats from Rajasthan can get admissions in the Delhi University and its colleges, jobs in the AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital and all the central government organisations but not the Jats of Delhi," the former chief minister said at a press conference. The top two leaders of the country—Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah—had promised the Jat community of Delhi that they will be given OBC reservation at the central level but the promise remains unfulfilled, he added.

Edu sector revamp planned, 3 separate directorates likely be set up: CM

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu laid the foundation stone of Rajiv Gandhi Day Boarding School (RGDBS) in Amlehar village of the Nadaun Assembly constituency, near here, on Sunday. The school would be built at a cost of Rs 25 crore on 125 kanal land. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the state government had planned big changes in education sector. The government is considering creating three separate directorates of education — one for pre-primary to class second, second for classes up to XII and third for colleges. He added that the decision on restructuring of education directorates could be taken in near future. He said that Rajiv Gandhi Day Boarding School would bring drastic changes in the field of education. The construction work of schools has been started in 10 Assembly constituencies. Sukhu said, "It is the vision of the state government to provide quality education to the children studying in government schools in rural areas. Hence, we are opening Rajiv Gandhi day boarding schools in a phased manner in every Assembly constituency, where all the modern facilities will be available under one roof".

Shooting stone kills woman, granddaughter

Diary Times Desk : A 70-year-old woman and her granddaughter died after they were hit by a huge shooting stone in their village near Mashobra in Shimla. Geeta Devi and her 21-year-old granddaughter Varsha had gone to a jungle to gather leaves for their cattle when the accident happened on Sunday afternoon. According to Gaurav Verma, vice pradhan of the Dummi panchayat, both of them were struck by a huge stone while they were gathering leaves, killing them on the spot. Verma said that some children playing in the nearby ground saw the stone rolling down the hill and tried to alert both the women. "The two probably got, too, scared and could not get out of the way of the stone.

Shimla receives traces of snow, wet spell predicted in Himachal from Thursday



Diary Times Desk : The local meteorological office on Monday predicted rain and snow in the middle and high hills of Himachal Pradesh from January 16-19, as a fresh western disturbance is likely to affect northwest India from January 14 night. Snow and rain were seen at isolated places since Sunday evening, with Gondla in Lahaul-Spiti district receiving 1 cm of snow, Kalpa 0.4 cm, while state capital Shimla witnessed traces of snow. Bharmaur received 5 mm of rain followed by Nahan 4.1 mm, Poanta Sahib 3.2 mm, Rajgarh and Banjar 3 mm each, and Dhaulakuan and Dalhousie 2 mm each. The tribal areas and higher reaches shivered under piercing cold wave conditions with Kukumseri recording a night temperature of -12.3°C, the lowest in the state, followed by Tabo at -10.9°, Keylong -8.7°, Samdho -7° and Kalpa -3.6°. The minimum temperature hovered around the freezing point at most of the tourist destinations. Narkanda recorded a night temperature at -2.5°C, Manali -1.1°, Kufri -0.8°, Dalhousie 0.6°, and Shimla 2.4°.

Rs 200 crore project to enhance safety, structural integrity of Bhakra and Pong dams

Diary Times Desk : The Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) is undertaking a major project to assess the structural integrity and safety attributes of its two major dams — Bhakra and Pong, located in Himachal Pradesh, and implement corrective measures and technical upgradation where required. The exercise, spread over four years, is being undertaken by the central government's Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) that is granted loans by the World Bank on easy terms. It has a total projected financial outlay of Rs 200 crore, according to BBMB sources. The World Bank finances up to 70 per cent of the outlay, while the remaining part is funded by the central and state agencies concerned. The project involving Bhakra and Pong is expected to continue till 2029. "The first part of the project will be executed in 2025-26 for which Rs 70 crore has been sanctioned by the World Bank," a senior BBMB functionary said. "Documents for the same were finalised in December 2024 and we expect the funds to be released within the current financial year," he added. Located on the Sutlej, Bhakra Dam was inaugurated in 1963, while Pong Dam that lies on the Beas was commissioned.

Bathinda man, friend flee after leaving woman's body in hotel in Kullu's Kasol

Diary Times Desk : The Himachal Pradesh Police have registered a murder case against two youths who are allegedly absconding after abandoning the body of a 23-year-old woman in the reception of a hotel in Kullu's Kasol on Saturday night. Akash Deep Singh from Bathinda district in Punjab, his friend, and the woman had been staying in room number 904 since January 10. A woman receptionist and two other staff members were having dinner in the restaurant at around 12.30 am when they saw the two youths come down the stairs. They were carrying the woman. The receptionist and the other staff became suspicious and enquired them. The two claimed that the woman had fallen in the bathroom and fainted after consuming liquor, and that they were taking her to hospital. They asked for directions to the hospital, and the receptionist told them to wait. She said she would speak with the manager and send the hotel staff with them. On hearing this, the youths placed the body on the floor and fled in their SUV, bearing a Punjab registration number.

Snowfall disrupts life in Lahaul-Spiti, admn issues advisory for tourists

Diary Times Desk : Fresh snowfall in Lahaul and Spiti district, including its headquarters at Keylong, has significantly impacted normal life in the region today. The district administration has issued a public advisory urging residents and tourists to avoid unnecessary travel, as the fresh snow has made roads slippery and hazardous. Authorities are concerned about the risks posed by the icy conditions, particularly for travellers unfamiliar with the terrain. In addition to the snowfall in Lahaul and Spiti, higher reaches of Kullu, Mandi, Chamba and Shimla districts have also experienced fresh snow, causing a drastic drop in temperatures. The fresh snowfall in these areas has intensified the cold wave sweeping across the state, with temperatures plummeting to lower-than-usual levels. The entire state is now under the grip of this severe cold wave, which has made life difficult for residents and tourists alike. The weather conditions in the lower regions are equally challenging, with cloudy skies and intermittent rain showers. Local authorities in affected areas are on high alert and have deployed teams to clear roads and ensure the safety of travellers. However, officials continue to emphasise the importance of heeding the travel advisory, particularly in the remote and high-altitude regions where road conditions can change rapidly.



Rohit Sharma Asks BCCI To Let Him Remain Captain, Says Report. To End International Career After...

Agencies : Another big revelation has emerged from last week's Board Of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) meeting, attended by Test and ODI skipper Rohit Sharma, as well as head coach Gautam Gambhir. It is already known that the topic of Rohit's successor in the leadership role is intensely being discussed, with Jasprit Bumrah emerging as the top candidate. However, Rohit is said to have informed the BCCI selectors and top bosses that he wants to remain the team's skipper, in both Tests and ODIs, for a few more months, post which he is likely to end his international career. According to a report in Dainik Jagran, Rohit isn't keen on giving up the leadership baton yet, even though Jasprit Bumrah has emerged as a top candidate to lead the team in the longest format. The Hitman, who has been struggling for form over the past few months, is said to have informed the BCCI that he is unlikely to continue his international career after this year's Champions Trophy. In the meantime, the board has been asked to find his successor for the captain's role in both Tests and ODIs. If all goes to plan, Rohit could end up hanging his boots after the conclusion of the Champions Trophy.



Punjab women's panel chief takes note of Yuvraj Singh's father's sexist remarks

Agencies : Punjab State Commission for Women chairperson Raj Gill on Monday said that the panel is enquiring about the sexist comments made by Yuvraj Singh's father, Yograj, during an interview with YouTuber Samdish Bhatia. Yograj Singh had made disparaging comments about women, claiming that "if women are given power, they will destroy everything." Appearing on Unfiltered by Samdish, Yograj Singh said that the household head is always a man and that is how a house is run. When asked if a woman can be a household head even if her husband is there, Yograj Singh answered in a roundabout manner. "Indira Gandhi ran this country. She ruined the nation. Sorry to say this," he said. "You ask any woman to run a household and she will ruin it. Never give power to women. Give them love, respect, and honour," Yograj Singh said. "If you give them power, they will destroy everything. I've seen it. If you give women power, they will hold everything for themselves." He went on to claim that all the babas (spiritual leaders) have more women devotees who ask for wishes like "mere husband ko mere vash me kar do, mere bete ko mere vash me kar do".

Cricketer Abhishek Sharma shreds IndiGo: 1-day holiday completely ruined

Agencies : Indian cricketer Abhishek Sharma criticised IndiGo Airlines on Monday, January 13, alleging misconduct by a staff member at Delhi Airport. Abhishek expressed frustration, stating that his single day of holiday was ruined after missing a flight despite arriving on time. Abhishek, 24, is set to join the Indian team for the much-awaited five-match T20I series against England, starting January 22. In a strongly worded statement shared on social media, Abhishek claimed he was unnecessarily redirected between counters, causing him to miss the flight. He named a specific staff member and demanded action. "I had the worst experience with Indigo at Delhi airport, and the behaviour of staff, especially counter manager Ms Sushmita Mittal, was absolutely unacceptable. I arrived on time at the correct counter, but they redirected me unnecessarily to another counter. Only to tell me later that check-in was closed, making me miss my flight. I only had a one-day holiday, which has now been completely ruined. To make it even worse, they are offering no further helpful assistance. This is by far the worst airline experience."

Manoj Tiwary Defends 'Hypocrite' Remark On Gautam Gambhir: "They Will Try..."

Agencies : A recent interview of former India cricketer Manoj Tiwary went viral on internet in which he made some relentless attack at current national team head coach Gautam Gambhir. Tiwary even went on to call Gambhir a 'hypocrite', owing to his recent results with the Indian team, particularly the 3-0 clean sweep to New Zealand at home and 1-3 loss against Australia Down Under. While reacting to the scathing attack targeted at Gambhir, another ex-India player Aakash Chopra criticised Tiwari. Now, Tiwari has issued a clarification, giving a direct reply to Chopra on social media. "I was at my coaching centre, sitting there after practice. The local media came there to take my interview. We spoke for 20-25 minutes, and you know that when these people (media) take interviews, they go back to the office and edit it - whatever is convenient, what they feel is required will be kept. They will try to keep whatever there is demand for," said Tiwari in a video posted on X.



Short TAKES

Last Played For India 8 Years Ago, Batter With Average Of 664, Back In Selection Fray: Report

Agencies : "Dear cricket, give me one more chance," said Karun Nair in a post on X (formerly Twitter) in December 2022 after seeing his cricketing career nearing a heartbreaking end. However, the middle-order batter turned things around dramatically over the next 12-13 months and is reportedly back in the fray for national selection. Nair's case remains one of the most interesting in Indian cricket. He scored the famous 303 against England in Chennai, yet couldn't become a central figure in India's plans for the longest format. However, with an exemplary performance in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy campaign, Nair's astonishing numbers have forced the Ajit Agarkar-led national selection committee to stand up and take notice. Over the last 6 innings in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, a domestic 50-over competition, Nair has aggregated scores of 112*, 44*, 163*, 111*, 112*, 122*. He is yet to be dismissed in this edition of the tournament, having accumulated over 600 runs without getting out.

Huge Pat Cummins Surprise As Australia Announce ICC Champions Trophy Squad

Agencies : Pat Cummins returns for Australia's ICC Champions Trophy campaign in Pakistan next month after skipping their Sri Lanka Test tour, with injured paceman Josh Hazlewood also in the squad announced Monday. Australian captain Cummins opted out of the Sri Lanka series starting later this month for the birth of his second child. He is also reportedly carrying a knee injury. Hazlewood was included in the two-time tournament winners' preliminary 15-man line-up after calf and side strains restricted him to just two Tests against India over the summer. While they return, opener Jake Fraser-McGurk was dumped, paying the price for his poor recent form after opening for Australia during their most-recent one-day series against Pakistan. "This is a balanced and experienced squad with the core having been involved in the previous one-day World Cup, the West Indies series, last year's successful tour of the UK and the more recent Pakistan home series," said chief selector George Bailey.