

Himachal CM: Chief Minister Sukhu said- Dhagwar milk processing unit will strengthen the rural economy



Diary Times Desk : CM Sukhinder Sukhu said that the foundation stone of a state-of-the-art milk processing unit will be laid at Dhagwar in Dharamshala Vidhan Sabha at a cost of about Rs 250 crore. This will strengthen the rural economy. Strengthening the rural economy is the priority of the state government. Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu said this while talking to the media in Dharamshala. He said that the development of Kangra district is the priority of the government and such visits to this area are necessary to accelerate the pace of development. By visiting various areas, the government is trying to understand the problems of the people and is continuously working towards their solution. The Chief Minister said that the government is purchasing cow milk at the rate of Rs 45 per liter and buffalo milk at the rate of Rs 55 per liter. Apart from this, maize grown through natural farming is being purchased at the rate of Rs 30 per kg and wheat at the rate of Rs 40 per kg. This year the state government has purchased 4000 metric tonnes of maize produced through natural farming method.

Water Supply Scam: Two reports of 120 pages each are ready in the scam, Vigilance will submit it to the government

Diary Times Desk : Vigilance has prepared an investigation report on the scam of crores in the water supply through tankers in Theog assembly constituency of Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh. Two reports have been prepared in this. The first report of 50 pages contains details of bank accounts and the second report of about 70 pages deals with the irregularities committed by engineers and contractors. Today, the vigilance team will submit its report to the state government. If the state government gives permission to file an FIR in the case, then shocking revelations will be made in this case.

Parliament Session To Begin on January 31, Budget on February 1

Agencies : The first part of Parliament's Budget Session will be held between January 31 and February 13, with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman set to table her eighth straight budget on February 1. In line with the convention, the session will start with President Droupadi Murmu's address to a joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on January 31, followed by the tabling of the economic survey. The second part of the session will be held from March 10 to April 4. The first part is marked by a debate in both Houses on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address and ends with the prime minister's reply in the two Houses of Parliament. "The fourth session of the 18th Lok Sabha will commence on Friday, January 31. Subject to exigencies of Government Business, the session is likely to conclude on Friday, April 4. The President will address both Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Lok Sabha Chamber, Parliament House, at 11 am on Friday, January 31," a press statement issued by the Lok Sabha secretariat said.



Supreme Court Pauses High Court Order Over Ayushman Bharat Scheme In Delhi

Agencies : The Supreme Court has paused a Delhi High Court order asking the Delhi government to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to implement the Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) scheme. A bench of Justices BR Gavai and AG Masih also issued notices to the Centre, AIIMS, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi after hearing a petition by the Delhi government challenging the High Court order. Last month, the High Court had asked the central and state governments to sign an MoU by January 5 to ensure that the central scheme was implemented in the national capital. The AAP government has been opposing the central scheme in Delhi stating that was announced in 2020 to improve the health systems and fill in gaps in health infrastructure.

Dense Fog Continues To Blanket Delhi, Over 100 Flights, 27 Trains Delayed

Agencies : A thick blanket of fog continued to blanket Delhi on Friday, reducing visibility and delaying more than 100 flights and over 20 train operations. Officials said that at least 130 flights are running late this morning as the visibility across the national capital dropped between zero to 200 meters. The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), in an update, said the flights that are not CAT III compliant may get impacted. It also advised passengers to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. While landing and take-offs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected. Passengers are requested to contact the airline concerned for updated flight information. Any inconvenience caused is deeply regretted," it said in a post on X. IndiGo also issued an advisory saying.

Himachal News: IIT Mandi researcher created 5G chip, energy consumption will be reduced

Diary Times Desk : The 5G network is continuously growing in the country. The demand for 5G network is increasing from cities to villages. Every mobile service provider is expanding in this direction. Meanwhile, Dr. Anuj Verma, a researcher at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, has created a hardware (chip) for 5G to talk clearly with less energy. This chip has also been tested. This will be a revolutionary step in the 5G network field. The 5G network is continuously growing in the country. The demand for 5G network is increasing from cities to villages. Every mobile service provider is expanding in this direction. Meanwhile, Dr. Anuj Verma, a researcher at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, has created a hardware (chip) for 5G to talk clearly with less energy. This chip has also been tested. This will be a revolutionary step in the 5G network field. Dr. Anuj Verma completed his thesis on 'Efficient VLSI-Architectures and ASIC-Fabrication of Channel.

Journalist-writer Humra Quraishi dies at 70

Agencies : Veteran journalist and writer Humra Quraishi, who died due to heart failure and diabetic complications, was known as an advocate for truth, justice and as a champion for the marginalised. Quraishi breathed her last at a hospital in Gurugram on Thursday, her daughter Sarah Quraishi told PTI. She was 70. Born in Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh on April 25, 1956, Quraishi worked as a Delhi-based writer and columnist. Having spent long years covering Kashmir as a journalist, Quraishi published 'Kashmir: The Untold Story', a volume of her collective writings based on her coverage of the region, followed by a novel, 'Meer', a love story based in the Valley. Some of her other noted works include 'Views: Yours and Mine', 'More Bad Time Tales', and contribution to anthologies.



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Kasauli gang rape case: Police will record statements of more witnesses, direction changed after main witness, victim's friend refused

Diary Times Desk : The police will take statements of more witnesses in the gangrape case registered in Kasauli police station. The investigating officer has asked for some more time. It is being told that the police is not able to get concrete information yet. Due to this, some witnesses will be called again. However, the police still has 25 days left to present the report in the court. When the case was registered, the victim's friend was made the main witness. But now the victim's friend has backed out from it. In such a situation, the direction of the investigation done by the police in the last 35 days has changed. The police is now asking the victim about other witnesses as well. The hotel manager and employees have already been questioned in this. Now the police is questioning the victim about such persons, who met her at the time of the incident. The police has already questioned most of the people whose names the victim had mentioned earlier. At the same time, it is being told that it has become difficult for the police to collect necessary evidence in this one and a half year old case. On the other hand, DSP Parwanoo Mehar Panwar said that the investigation of the case is ongoing.



'Saif Ali Khan wasn't scared': Autorickshaw driver who transported actor to hospital

Agencies : The autorickshaw driver who transported actor Saif Ali Khan to Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital narrated the sequence of events after he picked up the injured actor from outside the latter's house. He said he didn't recognise the injured actor and that Khan was bleeding profusely. He said it took him around 8-10 minutes to reach the hospital. "It was only when we reached the hospital gate that he called the guard to fetch a stretcher, saying he was Saif Ali Khan," the auto driver told reporters in Mumbai on Friday. Bhajan Singh Rana, the auto-rickshaw driver, said Saif Ali Khan had been bleeding from the neck and his white kurta had turned red. He also said a child was accompanying the actor. "He (Saif) walked into the auto. There was a seven-eight year old boy who also boarded the rickshaw," he said.

Himachal officials put forward their views on improving agricultural marketing, two officials of the state participated

Diary Times Desk : A two-day workshop was organized in Telangana Hyderabad on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Assistant Project Director HP Shiva Dr. Ramal Angaria from the State Horticulture Department and Dr. Lovelit Rana from Horticulture Extension Officer Bhavarna Kangra participated in this workshop. The objective of this workshop is to shape the future of agricultural marketing in the country, to create synergy between marketing and production departments to facilitate improvement in agricultural marketing. Also, to facilitate discussion among various stakeholders to develop strategies to create a favorable environment for marketing. Dr. Ramal Angaria said that the workshop focused especially on the bright future of agricultural and horticultural marketing in India. A critical evaluation of the reforms along with the production aspects in agricultural marketing was also done during this period. Focusing on the future, the role of the participating departments in agricultural marketing through marketing extension and the participation of the private sector were also discussed. He said that 40 officers from across the country participated in this workshop.

Centre approves Rs 11,440-crore revival plan for debt-laden RINL

Agencies : The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 11,440 crore revival plan for debt-laden Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), according to a statement released on Friday. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the revival plan for RINL for Rs 11,440 crore, it added. The infusion includes Rs 10,300 crore as equity capital into RINL and conversion of Rs 1,140 crore working capital loan as 7 per cent non-cumulative preference share capital redeemable after 10 years to keep RINL as a going concern, the official statement said. With this revival package, many of the legacy problems that RINL used to face will be resolved, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said. The equity infusion of Rs 10,300 crore into RINL will help it overcome the operational problems related to raising working capital and start blast furnace operations in the most productive way, the statement said. The revival package would allow the company to gradually reach its full production capacity, which is critical and is in the national interest to have stability in the Indian steel market.

Himachal: Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra said- The target is to establish the country's own space station by 2035

Diary Times Desk : The country's own space station will be established by 2035. This target has been set by the Narendra Modi government at the Center. Prime Minister Modi has prioritized his vision of the India Meteorological Department. Within the first 100 days, we launched Mission Weather, which will revolutionize our meteorological services. This information was given by Union Minister of State for Science and Technology (Independent Charge) Dr. Jitendra Singh while addressing the media after visiting the Meteorological Center in Shimla on the occasion of the 150th Foundation Day of the India Meteorological Department on Friday. Dr. Jitendra said that Shimla is the oldest station of the India Meteorological Department, which was established in 1875 and has been helpful in providing important weather forecasts for northern India. He appreciated the efforts of the India Meteorological Department in using modern technology to deal with the complexities of changing climate. He emphasized the role of the department in supporting the socio-economic development of India by protecting lives and livelihoods through timely and accurate weather forecasts. Dr Jitendra also reviewed the functioning of the major sections of the Meteorological Centre Shimla. Dr Kuldeep Srivastava, Head of the Meteorological Centre, briefed him on the achievements of the institute, its current capabilities and plans for future progress. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh visited the Meteorological Centre, Shimla on Friday to mark the completion of 150 years of the establishment of the Meteorological Department.

US consulate opens in Bengaluru, visa services to begin later

Agencies : The US opened its consulate in Bengaluru on January 17, a move described as a "significant milestone" by external affairs affairs Minister S Jaishankar and is expected to benefit techies, business visitors and students. "While visa services will not be available immediately, we are committed to bringing them here as soon as possible. This consulate will play a pivotal role in fostering collaborations in commerce, science, technology, education, and culture," US ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said at the dedication ceremony. The outgoing US envoy stressed Bengaluru's importance as India's Silicon Valley, symbolising the synergy between the two nations. "The formal opening of this consulate is a significant milestone. I understand the importance of initiating visa operations here, and this will remain a priority moving forward," Jaishankar said. "This is intended to become the fifth US consulate in India. Initially, consular services will continue to be provided by the US Consulate in Chennai and other US diplomatic posts in India," said an official statement. "The consulate will build on the more than 30-year.



Himachal Weather: Weather will worsen in Himachal Pradesh from this day, yellow alert for rain and snowfall

Diary Times Desk : As soon as the weather cleared in Himachal Pradesh on Friday, dense fog engulfed the plain districts. On Thursday night, the minimum temperature was recorded in minus in ten areas of the state. After snowfall, difficulties have increased from Kullu to Lahaul. Atal Tunnel beyond Solanganala has been closed for movement. Due to this change in weather, cold wave has increased in many areas of Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Mandi, Kangra, Solan along with the hilly areas of the state. On Friday, the sun shone in most areas including the capital Shimla. The maximum temperature of the state also increased on Friday. There is a forecast of change in the weather again from Saturday. There are chances of rain and snowfall in eight middle and high mountain districts. The weather is likely to remain clear in the plain districts till January 20. A yellow alert has been issued for rain and snowfall in most areas of Himachal Pradesh from January 21 to 23. The weather remained clear throughout the day in the capital Shimla on Friday. Dense fog prevailed in many areas of Una, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Kangra, Mandi, Solan and Sirmaur on Friday morning and evening.



Ice Hockey Cup: Evening winners in boys and Center Zone winners in girls, winning teams were awarded

Diary Times Desk : In the four-day Ice Hockey Cup competition held in Kaza, Sham Zone won the title among boys and Center Zone won the title among girls. On the last day, Sham Zone won the title in the boys category by defeating Center Zone. In the girls category, Center Zone won the title by defeating Tod Zone. In the boys under-18 age group, Tod Zone was the winner and Center Zone was the runner-up. Executive Additional Deputy Commissioner Shikha attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest and awarded the winner and runner-up teams. On this occasion, BMO Brijesh, SDO of Electricity Department Piyush, Sonam Dhakpa, Executive Member of Ice Hockey Association Sakaljong Dorje, Sanjeevan Rai, Manjushree from Royal Enfield, etc. were present.

Jitendra Singh said- Congress is working to divide the society to achieve its political agenda

Diary Times Desk : Before Republic Day, BJP's nationwide Samvidhan Gaurav Abhiyan was formally launched by Union Minister of State Jitendra Singh during a state level program in Shimla on Friday. The aim of the campaign is to spread awareness about the role of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, the maker of the Constitution. In this campaign, programs will be held in all the districts of the state for the next three days. Programs will be held at the Mandal level till January 25. On January 25, there will be a program at every booth. Yuva Morcha will play a key role in this. Union Minister of State Jitendra Singh was the chief speaker in the state level program. Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur, BJP State President Dr. Rajiv Bindal, MP Dr. Sikandar Kumar and State Organization General Secretary Siddhartha were also present. Jitendra Singh said that Congress leaders who always neglected Baba Saheb socially and politically, kept using his name for vote bank.

HPU Shimla: The university declared the results of the semester examinations of BBA, BTM and BCA

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh University (HPU) for the first time conducted on-screen evaluation of answer sheets of three semester exams and declared the results within two and a half months. On Friday, the university declared the results of semester exams of three professional degree courses BCA, BBA and BTM. The exams were held in October and November. Examination Controller Prof. Shyam Lal Kaushal said that the results have been uploaded on the website. Students can view and download the results with their login ID. According to Himachal University, the result of 3,000 students who appeared in the BCA first semester exam is 88.73 percent. Whereas 84.05 percent of the 2,659 students who appeared for the regular BCA third semester exam and 86.77 percent of the 1,338 students who appeared in the fifth semester have passed. The result of 1,650 students in the BBA first semester is 99.15, the result of 1,440 in the third semester is 97.43 and 98.47 percent of the 784 students in the fifth semester have passed. The result of the first semester in BTM was 100%. A total of 31 students appeared. The result of the third semester was 76.74 and that of the fifth was 96.30%.

Himachal: Cabinet meeting will be held in Dharamshala during CM Sukhu's Kangra visit, many decisions will be approved

Diary Times Desk : During the Kangra stay of Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, a cabinet meeting will also be held in Dharamshala. The meeting may be held on 23 or 24 January. The cabinet meeting is being called due to the state level full statehood day celebrations to be celebrated on 25 January. It is possible that the announcements to be made in the celebrations will be approved in the cabinet meeting. There is a discussion that on the occasion of full statehood day, the Chief Minister may announce the release of installment of dearness allowance. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu reached Dharamshala on Friday on his winter stay in Kangra district. He was warmly welcomed by the ministers of the Congress government, MLAs, Congress leaders, workers and local people at the helipad of Sai Ground. After this, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone of Dhauladhar Food Street and inaugurated the women police station. During this, PWD Minister Vikramaditya Singh, Ayush Minister Yadavindra Goma, Tourism Development Corporation Chairman Raghuveer Bali, Planning Commission Vice President Bhawani Singh Pathania.

HP Board: Many schools did not deposit the fees, data of the candidates was not prepared; papers are to be held in March

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh School Education Board has released the schedule for the annual examinations of class 10th and 12th to be held in March. But there are still many schools in the state that have not deposited the prescribed fee for the examinations. Due to this, the board is not able to prepare the data of the candidates appearing in the examinations. An ultimatum has been given to the schools to deposit the fees. Secretary of the School Education Board, Dr. Major Vishal Sharma said that till now the data of the candidates appearing in class 10th and 12th has not been prepared, because some schools in the state have not yet deposited the fees of the candidates. The Education Board does not want that a year of any candidate should be wasted in case of non-payment of fees. For this, the board management has asked the schools.

Army Bharti Hamirpur: 130 crossed the ground barrier on the first day of army recruitment, medical will be done on Saturday

Diary Times Desk : The recruitment rally of candidates from three districts started on Friday at the sports ground Anu under the Army Recruitment Office Hamirpur. After the ground test and document verification on the first day of recruitment, 130 candidates have been selected for the physical medical examination process. The medical process will be held on the ground on January 18. Candidates reached the sports ground from 3 am for the recruitment rally. Before the rally started, dope tests were conducted to check the misuse of 20 marked medicines of the candidates. After the investigation, the running process started at 7 am. 360 candidates from three tehsils of Bilaspur and Hamirpur participated in it. In the physical test, apart from the 1600 meter race for the candidates, tests like pull ups, long jump, high jump and zig-zag balance etc. and height, weight and chest measurement were also taken. After completing all the obstacles, 130 candidates were selected for the medical examination process. At the same time, 230 candidates were eliminated.

China lauds ISRO on successful docking of satellites in space

Agencies : China on Friday congratulated Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for the successful docking of its satellites in space. "Congratulations to India #ISRO for successful docking of satellites under the SpaDeX mission!" Chinese spokesperson in India Yu Jing said. The Indian space agency had successfully carried out the docking of two satellites in space on Thursday, making India the fourth country in the world to accomplish the feat. Before India, the United States of America, Russia and China had successfully docked their satellites in space. This is not the first time that China has praised India. In September 2014, India's Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), also known as Mangalyaan, successfully entered the Mars' orbit. China immediately congratulated India for its successful Mars mission, saying that it was not only a proud achievement for the country and Asia but also a "landmark progress" in the mankind's exploration of outer space. The MOM made India the first Asian nation to reach Mars' orbit and the first country worldwide to do so on its maiden attempt. China's own maiden mission to Mars, Tianwen-1, which was launched in 2020, had successfully entered Mars' orbit in February 2021.

Pollution Curbs Eased In Delhi, These Categories Of Cars Can Be Used Again

Agencies : Anti-pollution curbs under Stage-III of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) were revoked in Delhi and its neighbouring areas today amid a dip in air pollution levels. The curbs have been eased further a day after the centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality rolled back GRAP-4. The relaxation means that BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel cars can again enter Delhi-NCR roads. GRAP-3 was withdrawn after the Air Quality Index or AQI of Delhi was recorded as 289 - 61 points below the benchmark set by the Supreme Court for invoking Stage-III - on Friday, said the Commission for Air Quality Management or CAQM. The curbs under GRAP-3 and 4 were reimposed on January 15 after the air quality index touched the 'severe' mark. Stage-IV was revoked amid a dip in pollution levels following a spell of rain in the region and the air quality improved further today amid strong winds. The ban has also been lifted on non-essential diesel-operated medium goods vehicles.

AAP, BJP, Congress Offer Cash Transfers, Chase 'Women Power' In Delhi Poll



Agencies : As the clock ticks down to February 5 - the date of voting for the Delhi Assembly election - the Aam Aadmi Party, the Congress, and the Bharatiya Janata Party are scrambling for favour among women, a cross-section of voters the country's political parties seems to have woken up to in recent polls. The results of some of those recent polls - Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in particular, in each of which the BJP scored dominant wins on the back of women-centric welfare schemes and financial freebies - underscores the importance of women voters to winning elections. And over 46 per cent - around 71 lakh - of Delhi's registered voters are women, with more signing up daily, according to the national capital's Chief Electoral Officer. Last week the city's top poll official also said more women were registering to vote, ahead of this election, than men. All three main parties in the 2025 race in Delhi seem to have recognised this.

India approves over ₹10,000 crore funds to revive state-owned steel maker RINL

Agencies : Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, on Friday, January 17, approved the allocation package of ₹11440 crore for the revival of the State-owned Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), according to the Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav. "Honorable PM Shri Narendra Modi ji has approved a package of ₹11,440 crore rupees for the revival of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL)," said the Minister in an official statement. According to the Union Minister the Government of India's overall package of the revival plan comprises a fresh fund infusion of 10,300 crore along with a working capital loan converted into preferred share capital of 1,140 Cr.

Robbers Loot Valuables Worth Over Rs 10 Crore From Bank In Karnataka

Agencies : A gang of armed robbers looted valuables worth an estimated Rs 10 crore to Rs 12 crore from the Sahakari Sangh Bank in Kotekar, Mangaluru on Friday, police said. The heist occurred between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm, with the assailants fleeing in a blue Fiat car, police added. According to police, a group of five to six masked men, aged between 25 and 35, entered the bank armed with a pistol, a sword, and a knife. Speaking in Hindi, they allegedly threatened the staff and forced them to open the vault containing gold jewellery and other valuables. At the time of the incident.

12 Indians Fighting For Russian Army In Ukraine Killed, 16 Missing: Centre

Agencies : Twelve Indian nationals, among a total of 126, who were misled into settling in Russia have died fighting for the Russian Army in Ukraine, and sixteen others are currently "missing", the Ministry of External Affairs has confirmed today. We have been in constant touch with Russian authorities for the release and repatriation of all Indian nationals currently trapped in Russia and fighting in the war, the foreign ministry added. "As of today, of all the known cases that have come to us of Indian nationals serving in the Russian army - we have a total of 126 such cases - 96 people have already returned to India. They have been discharged from the Russian armed forces. 18 Indian nationals still remain in combat. Of these 18, the whereabouts of 16 individuals are not known. The Russian authorities have categorised them as 'missing persons'. So far, 12 Indian nationals have died in combat," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"Child Was With Him": Auto Driver Who Rushed Saif Ali Khan To Hospital

Agencies : A woman came running shouting "roko, roko, roko (stop, stop, stop)", said the auto driver, Bhajan Singh Rana, who took Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan to hospital early on Thursday. The actor, 54, was repeatedly stabbed in an apparent burglary at his home in Mumbai, his public relations team said. "I was going via Linkin Road. The building where he (Saif Ali Khan) lives is named Satguru Niwas. A woman comes running shouting rickshaw, rickshaw, roko, roko, roko (stop, stop, stop). She then asked to stop the auto near the building gate," Mr Rana told NDTV.

Mahakumbh 2025: Prohibitory orders issued till Feb 28 to safeguard law and order

Agencies : The additional commissioner of police in Prayagraj on Friday announced that prohibitory orders will be in place during the period of the Mahakumbh Mela to prevent any potential disruption of law and order in the area. The prohibitory orders under section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, will be imposed from January 16 to February 28. Due to the urgency of the matter, the order was passed without giving notice to any other stakeholders, reported ANI. The order was passed to take into account the Mahakumbh as well as other overlapping festivities such as Republic Day, Mauni Amavasya, Basant Panchami, Sant Ravidas Jayanti, Maghi Purnima, Valentine's Day, Shab-e-Barat, Mahashivratri, as well as various competitive examinations. In the official statement quoted by ANI, the ACP states, "In view of the communal sensitivity of the district, on the basis of information received from reliable sources, I am convinced that there is a possibility of anti-social elements causing disruption in law and order of the district. In view of the said festivals, there is an urgent need to maintain peace."



The Dynamics That Polarise Us On Social Media Are About To Get A Lot Worse

Agencies : Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg has announced big changes in how the company addresses misinformation across Facebook, Instagram and Threads. Instead of relying on independent third-party factcheckers, Meta will now emulate Elon Musk's X (formerly Twitter) in using "community notes". These crowdsourced contributions allow users to flag content they believe is questionable. Zuckerberg claimed these changes promote "free expression". But some experts worry he's bowing to right-wing political pressure, and will effectively allow a deluge of hate speech and lies to spread on Meta platforms. Research on the group dynamics of social media suggests those experts have a point. At first glance, community notes might seem democratic, reflecting values of free speech and collective decisions. Crowdsourced systems such as Wikipedia, Metaculus and PredictIt, though imperfect, often succeed at harnessing the wisdom of crowds – where the collective judgement of many can sometimes outperform even experts. Research shows that diverse groups that pool independent judgements and estimates can be surprisingly effective at discerning the truth. However, wise crowds seldom have to contend with social media algorithms.

China Says Population Fell For Third Year In A Row In 2024

Agencies : China said Friday its population fell for the third year running in 2024, extending a downward streak after more than six decades of growth as the country battles a looming demographic crisis. The population stood at 1.408 billion by the end of the year, Beijing's National Bureau of Statistics said, down from 1.410 billion in 2023. But the decline was less sharp than the previous year, when it was more than double the fall reported for 2022. China ended its strict "one-child policy", imposed in the 1980s amid overpopulation fears, in 2016 and started letting couples have three children in 2021. But that has failed to reverse the demographic decline for a country.

Pulitzer-Winning Cartoonist Darrin Bell Arrested For Possessing Child Pornography

Agencies : Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Darrin Bell has been arrested on charges of possessing more than 100 videos of child pornography, authorities said. On Wednesday, a search warrant was served at the 49-year-old's home in California's Sacramento County, the Sheriff's Office said in a statement on Thursday. During the search, authorities discovered 134 videos of Child Sex Abuse Material (CSAM) linked to the account, which is owned and controlled by Bell. The videos also included some computer-generated content, they added. "Sacramento Valley Internet Crimes Against Children Detectives (ICAC) conducted an investigation stemming from a tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) related to someone uploading Child Sex Abuse Material (CSAM), also referred to as child pornography. The tip was related to 18 files containing CSAM," read the statement.

Gaza ceasefire won't last without political process, analysts warn



Agencies : The ceasefire agreed by Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas has brought some optimism that Israel's 15-month war on Gaza will finally end and Israeli captives and Palestinian prisoners will be released. But there is still uncertainty from some analysts that the deal, announced on Wednesday and due to begin on Sunday, will go ahead as planned. Israel's security cabinet greenlit the agreement on Friday evening after postponing a meeting that was initially scheduled for Thursday. Still, the division of the deal into three phases opens up the potential for its terms to be violated or for the parties – particularly Israel – to backtrack on its terms, analysts said. The deal stipulates that an initial 42-day phase – which is to see a handover of some captives and prisoners, an Israeli retreat from populated areas and an increase in aid – will be followed by additional phases in which more prisoner exchanges will happen as well as a permanent Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a sustainable ceasefire.

Indians lose Rs 662 cr to visa refusals: US, Schengen travel still a dream

Agencies : "I submitted all the documents, yet my Schengen visa or US visa was rejected." This is a complaint frequently seen on social media when searching for visa rejection experiences. In December 2024, social media was flooded with accounts of Indian travellers struggling with visa rejections, particularly for the UAE. Many shared their experiences of difficulties securing visas to a destination traditionally viewed as welcoming for tourists. The UAE, which accounted for 24.8% of outbound Indian travellers between January and October 2024, remains one of the most popular destinations for Indian tourists. However, Dubai's emigration department introduced stricter requirements last year for tourist visas, leading to visa rejections. But it's not just the UAE. Rejection rates for visitor visas have soared in the post-pandemic.



US Braces For Freezing Weather Fueled By Polar Vortex

Agencies : Americans were bracing Thursday for frigid temperatures that forecasters said could produce life-threatening conditions, with Donald Trump's inauguration expected to be the coldest in 40 years. The bitter weather -- tied to an Arctic "polar vortex" blast -- is expected to bring nighttime lows as cold as minus 23 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 31 degrees Celsius) over the weekend for some of the northernmost parts of the United States. President-elect Trump, who takes office Monday, will see his swearing-in ceremony in Washington hit by freezing temperatures and winds of up to 30 miles per hour. "It's going to be pretty gusty," said Marc Chenard, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service (NWS). He told AFP that a "few inches" of snow is forecast on Sunday in the US capital, which is still blanketed in ice from a winter storm earlier this month. Trump's inauguration -- set to draw more than 200,000 visitors to Washington -- will go ahead under chilly conditions of no more than 21 degrees Fahrenheit (minus six degrees Celsius), according to the NWS.

Pakistan pulls closer to post-Hasina Bangladesh amid shared India concerns

Agencies : The flags of their nations planted on a table between them, Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, sat with Lieutenant General SM Kamrul Hassan, an officer in the Bangladesh military. It was the high point of Hassan's trip to the Pakistani capital, where he also met other senior Pakistani military officials. Commenting on Tuesday's meeting between Munir and Hassan, the Pakistani military's media wing described the countries as "brotherly nations". That's not how Dhaka and Islamabad have viewed their relationship for much of the 54 years since Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan, winning independence after one of the 20th century's bloodiest wars. The tension in their ties only deepened during the nearly 16-year rule of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted from power in August after mass protests and forced to flee to neighbouring India, which backed her government. But since Hasina's departure, Pakistan and Bangladesh have edged closer to each other in an apparent reset at a time when politics in both countries have a general anti-India sentiment, overriding the historical animosity between Islamabad and Dhaka.

'Complete harassment': Kangana reacts as her film 'Emergency' screening halted in Punjab



Agencies : Statewide protests erupted on Friday against the screening of Kangana Ranaut's "Emergency" in Punjab, with state leaders alleging that the film "hurt" the brotherhood in the country. "Emergency" is a character-driven exploration of Indira Gandhi's controversial tenure and the imposition of the Emergency. Reacting to the protests, a statement from Kangana team read: "This is complete harassment of art and the artist, from Punjab many cities are reporting that these people are not allowing Emergency to be screened. I have utmost respect for all religions and after studying and growing up in Chandigarh I have closely observed and followed Sikh". The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) stated that their protest was against the film "Emergency" because it depicts the history of the Sikh religion and the history of 1984 in a "distorted" manner. If the film is released in Punjab, it will spark "outrage and anger" in the Sikh community and therefore it is the responsibility of the government to ban its release in the state, he wrote. The SGPC has also submitted memorandums to all the deputy commissioners in Punjab, seeking a ban on the film in the state.

Chandigarh shivers at 6.5 °C, as temps drop in Punjab/Haryana

Agencies : Cold weather persisted in Punjab and Haryana on Friday, the meteorological department said. In Punjab, Pathankot was the coldest place as it shivered at 2.8 °C. Among other places, Amritsar's minimum temperature was 6.9 °C, three degrees above normal, according to a meteorological department report. The weather office said Ludhiana recorded a low of 7.6 °C, one degree above normal. Patiala recorded 8.4 °C, followed by 7 °C in Bathinda, 6.9 °C in Faridkot and 6.5 °C in Gurdaspur districts, the weather department added. Union Territory Chandigarh and the common capital of both states, recorded a low of 6.5 degrees Celsius, it said. In neighbouring Haryana, Ambala's minimum was 8.5 °C while recorded Rohtak recorded 10.1 °C the weather office said. It said, Karnal recorded a low of 7 °C, 6 °C in Narnaul while Hisar, Bhiwani and Sirsa logged 7.4 °C each.

Now, residents can get online nod for 11 events

Agencies : Residents will no longer have to do the rounds of departments to get permission for holding various events. To book a ground or hold a rally, they can now apply for permission online. A single-window system for granting permission for 11 types of events in Chandigarh has been started. According to the officials, more services can be added to it as per the need. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Nishant Kumar Yadav today inaugurated three online services. To obtain permission for various events, residents can visit the website <https://serviceonline.gov.in/>. The can also pay fee online and track the status of their application. The events include rallies, nagar kirtans, road shows, shobha yatras, protests, awareness programmes, cyclothons, walkathons, exhibitions or melas, concerts and jagrans (for gathering of 500 or more). For events where 20,000 or more people will participate, organisers can apply for permission through this system.

High court issues notice on dismissed Punjab DSP's plea alleging scapegoating

Agencies : The Punjab and Haryana High Court has issued notice on an application filed by dismissed DSP Gursheer Singh Sandhu, alleging that he was made a scapegoat to shield the real perpetrators behind the controversial interview of "known criminal" Lawrence Bishnoi. His interview was allegedly conducted while he was confined at the CIA Kharar facility in Mohali under the custody of the Anti-Gangster Task Force. In his application submitted in connection with a "suo motu or court on its own motion" case initiated by the high court, Sandhu accused the state authorities of carrying out a "witch hunt" against him. He claimed that the steps taken against him were intended to protect those actually responsible for facilitating the interview. The DSP also requested the court's permission to intervene in the ongoing proceedings to ensure justice in the matter. Sandhu was represented by senior advocate Sanjay Kaushal, with counsel Ishan Gupta, Amrinder Singh, Arjun Kaushal and Abhimanyu Kaushal. The case stems from the airing of Bishnoi's interview, which raised serious concerns over security lapses and the misuse of custodial privileges. Following the incident, the high court took suo motu cognisance and directed an inquiry into the matter. Sandhu's plea alleges procedural lapses and questions the investigative approach adopted by the authorities.

Punjabi singer moves high court for anticipatory bail in rape case

Agencies : The Punjab and Haryana High Court today fixed January 23 for the state of Punjab to furnish a status report, while taking up an anticipatory bail plea filed by a "renowned" Punjabi singer facing allegations of rape and other offences. The case was registered under Sections 376, 406, and 420 of the IPC in November last year at the NRI police station under Jalandhar Commissionerate. Justice Namit Kumar of the high court also issued notice of motion to the state and other respondents on the plea. In his petition placed before Justice Kumar, the singer contended that the FIR was lodged after an unjustifiable delay of 18 years from the alleged first occurrence in 2006 and six years since the last alleged incident in 2018. The petitioner added that the complainant, a 45-year-old Canadian citizen, was an educated and mature individual married in 1999. This, the singer submitted, made her claim of being exploited.

CM Saini holds meeting, emphasises implementation of new criminal laws by February 28

Agencies : Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini reviewed the development works being carried out across the state. He also assessed the implementation of three new criminal laws, stressing the need for reforms in alignment with these new laws. While chairing a meeting at Haryana Police Academy (HPA), Madhuban, he said, "Haryana will fully implement the three new criminal laws by February 28. For the smooth implementation of these laws, there is a need of fundamental changes in the system." The meeting was also attended by Chief Secretary Dr Vivek Joshi, Chief Principal Secretary to the CM Rajesh Khullar, DGP Shatrujeet Kapur, all Divisional Commissioners, ADGPs, IGP's of all ranges as well as police commissioners, DCs and SPs. The meeting began with the reading of the 'Preamble of Constitution' under the "Our Constitution - Our Pride" campaign. The CM also announced that video conferencing will be introduced in nearly 445 courts across the state and inmates will appear for hearing through that mode directly from jail.

170 employed as middlemen by patwaris in Haryana

Agencies : In a startling revelation, out of a total of 370 officials of the Revenue Department, 170 private individuals have been found to be employed as assistants by patwaris. These individuals are neither government employees nor authorised staff and they double up as agents to facilitate works in lieu of taking bribes. A letter issued by the Revenue and Disaster Management Department to the Deputy Commissioners stated that these private individuals are being involved in handling administrative tasks, leading to widespread corruption and exploitation of the public. The private assistants allegedly carry out crucial work such as khata takseem (partition of land records), land measurement, mutation of property and corrections in land records. Acting as intermediaries, they exploit common people by demanding bribes in exchange for completing official procedures. Sometimes, the visitors approaching the patwari offices are deliberately turned away, forcing them to meet these unauthorised agents to get their work done.

Bad weather delays CM's visit by a day

Diary Times Desk : The winter sojourn of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu to Kangra got delayed due to bad weather. The Chief Minister was to arrive at Dharamsala today afternoon and hold meeting of the officials regarding various development projects being executed in Kangra district. He was also slated to listen to the grievances of common public in Dharamsala mini secretariat today evening. However, sources here said that the helicopter of the CM could not take off from Shimla due to bad weather. The CM is expected to arrive at Dharamsala tomorrow morning now. Meanwhile, the officials of the Kangra district administration remained on their toes throughout the day waiting for the arrival of the CM. Preparations were made for grand welcome of the CM in Kangra and ministers and MLAs were expected to welcome him here. Rains continued to lash Kangra region today till afternoon causing disruption in preparations of various programmes planned during the CM's visit. The weather cleared in the evening raising hopes of arrival of the CM. However, late in the evening the officials confirmed that the CM was to arrive tomorrow.

Speaker for quick resolution of public grievances

Diary Times Desk : A district-level Public Grievances Redressal Committee meeting was held at the Chamba District Headquarters. The meeting was chaired by Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Kuldeep Singh Pathania. It was attended by MLAs from various Assembly constituencies, district administrative officers and both government and non-government members of the grievance redressal committee. The committee discussed issues related to various departments raised by members. Pathania gave necessary directions to departmental officers during the discussions. The majority of the items pertained to the Public Works Department, Jal Shakti Department, Electricity Department, Transport Department.

CBI grants 5-day remand to ED officer in Himachal scholarship scam



Diary Times Desk : A CBI court in Chandigarh has granted a five-day remand to Vishal Deep, an ED officer, in connection with a bribery case registered by the Central Investigation Agency (CIA) related to the Himachal scholarship scam. Deep was produced before the court by Ambala Jail authorities following a production warrant issued by the court. CBI had registered an FIR against Deep, former Assistant Director-II (Intelligence) in Shimla, on December 22, 2024, under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The allegations stem from complaints filed by directors of two educational institutions, who claim that Deep, along with two relatives, extorted money from them by threatening arrest in the investigation he was overseeing. Public Prosecutor Narender Singh argued for the remand, stating that it was necessary to unearth the larger conspiracy in the case.

Snowfall in higher reaches in Himachal, cold wave grips lower hills

Diary Times Desk : Tribal areas and other higher reaches of Himachal Pradesh experienced another spell of light to moderate snowfall. The lower hills faced severe cold wave conditions with dense fog observed in Bilaspur, Sundernagar and Mandi, the Meteorological Department officials said on Friday. In the last 24 hours, Kothi recorded 24 cm of snow, followed by Manali with 14.8 cm, Gondla 11 cm, Moorang 10 cm, Jot 7 cm, Kalpa 6.7 cm, Khadralla 5 cm, PooH 4.5 cm, Sangla 4.2 cm, Keylong and Chhatrari 4 cm each and Kufri 2.4 cm, the local MeT office reported. Light rain occurred in some areas, with Bharmour receiving 10 mm of rain, followed by Seobagh with 8.2 mm, Jogindernagar 8 mm, Bhunter 7.1 mm, Salooni 6.3 mm, Gohar 6 mm, Bajaura 5.5 mm, Rohru and Dharamshala 5 mm each, Palampur 4.2 mm and Ghumarwin and Pandoh 4 mm each. Severe cold wave conditions were observed in Una and Hamirpur, while a cold wave was reported in Berthin and Kangra. Thick ground frost occurred in Bilaspur and thunderstorms lashed isolated areas in Bhuntar, Sundernagar and Kangra, the MeT office added.

Manali, Kufri, Narkanda witness light snowfall

Diary Times Desk : The state has received light snowfall in higher reaches of several districts and light rainfall at most places across the state since Wednesday night. Tourist destinations like Manali, Kufri and Narkanda also received light snowfall on Thursday morning and later in the day. Shimla also received traces of snowfall in the morning and light rainfall during the day. As per the officials of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), 300 roads are blocked for traffic across the state and around 90 power Distribution Transformers have been disrupted. The early morning snowfall disrupted National Highway 05 at Narkanda and the traffic was diverted on to the alternate route of Sainj-Luhri-Shimla. The Kufri-Fagu stretch got slippery following the snowfall. As per the weather department, there's a possibility of light rain at isolated places over high hills and adjoining mid hills from January 17 to 20. There's a forecast for light to moderate snowfall on January 21-22. Meanwhile, maximum temperatures are likely to fall by 5-6 degree Celsius during the next 24 hours. Thereafter, maximum temperatures are likely to rise gradually by 3-4 degree Celsius.

After snowfall, road connectivity disrupted in Lahaul

Diary Times Desk : Fresh snowfall in the Lahaul and Spiti district has led to severe disruption in road connectivity, affecting traffic movement across key highways and roads. The heavy snowfall, particularly near the Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, on the Manali-Leh Highway, has blocked vital routes between Keylong and Manali, halting transportation. In addition to the Manali-Leh highway, the roads leading to Darcha from Keylong and from Tandi to Udaipur have also been closed due to the accumulation of snow, further complicating access to these regions. The Spiti Valley, known for its harsh terrain, has experienced significant snowfall, causing disruption of normal life. The snowfall has impacted residents and the movement of goods, making it difficult for the public to go about their daily activities. In the light of these challenges, the district administration of Lahaul and Spiti has issued an advisory urging both tourists and locals to avoid unnecessary travel in the region. The advisory is meant to ensure public safety in the wake of unpredictable weather conditions, with authorities warning of potential hazards on slippery roads and limited visibility due to the ongoing snowstorm.



Rohit Sharma keeps his spot as captain for England ODIs and Champions Trophy

Agencies : Rohit Sharma is set to continue as India's ODI captain; this was confirmed when the BCCI announced he will sit in as captain on the press conference scheduled for January 18, when the squads for the Champions Trophy and the ODIs against England will be announced. The three ODIs against England will be India's last in the format before they begin their Champions Trophy campaign against Bangladesh in Dubai on February 20. Rohit's future came into sharp focus after he had stood down from India's XI in the fifth and final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy earlier this month. He, however, clarified that the decision shouldn't be misconstrued as a retirement. Rohit, 37, has been struggling for form and during the home series against New Zealand, he also admitted to captaincy errors, which contributed to India's 3-0 whitewash. In six Test innings against New Zealand at home, Rohit managed only 91 runs at an average of 15.16 and then in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, his average slumped further to 6.20 in five innings. In a bid to rediscover his form, Rohit had linked up with the Mumbai squad for training sessions in the lead-up to the start of the second phase of the Ranji Trophy.



Virat Kohli To Play Ranji Trophy For First Time Since 2012. But There Is A Catch

Agencies : Star batter Virat Kohli has been named in Delhi's 22-member provisional squad for their next Ranji Trophy game against Saurashtra in Rajkot but doubts remain about his participation after it came to light that he is nursing a niggle. It is learnt that Kohli has intimated the Delhi and Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) top brass that he has a neck niggle that he sustained in Sydney during the final Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test against Australia. He was treated by the physio there and as of now, there is no clarity on availability for the Ranji match starting January 23. Whether he will play or just fly down to Rajkot for a couple of days' training will be clear only after he details his position to DDCA president Rohan Jaitley. Kohli had last played a red-ball game for Delhi back in 2012 against Uttar Pradesh in Ghaziabad. A year after that, the legendary Sachin Tendulkar played his last Ranji Trophy match against Haryana at Lahli. Talismanic wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant will feature in a Ranji Trophy game after nearly seven years although it has been learnt that he has declined captaincy, which means Ayush Badoni will continue in the role.

"It Is No Small Deal...": World Championships Gold Medalist Saweety Boora On Receiving Arjuna Award

Agencies : Indian boxer and World Championships gold medalist Saweety Boora expressed happiness at being felicitated with the Arjuna Award and dedicated her accomplishment to her family. The World Championship gold medalist was among the players to be felicitated with the Arjuna Awards during the National Sports Awards ceremony on Friday by President Droupadi Murmu. Speaking to ANI, Boora said, "For a player, this award matters a lot. It is no small deal to get a national award. I feel really happy to get the fruits of my hard work over the years. I would like to dedicate this award to whoever supported me, prayed for me, wished something positive for me, be it my fans, family, coaches etc. My mother has supported me a lot through all my ups and downs. I dedicate this award to my husband, to my brother and sister, to my family, to my father." Other than a gold medal and silver in world championships, she has also secured a gold medal in the Asian Championships, during the 2022 edition of the competition in the light heavyweight.

Manu Bhaker's oops moment seconds before receiving Khel Ratna award, Indian shooter gives wry smile

Agencies : Manu Bhaker encountered an awkward situation before quickly realising her mistake as she received the prestigious Major Dhyani Chand Khel Ratna award from President Droupadi Murmu on Friday at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of National Sports Awards 2024. Bhaker was one of the four recipients of the country's highest sporting honour along with Harmanpreet Singh, D Gukesh and para-athlete Praveen Kumar. The incident took place as Bhaker was about to receive her Khel Ratna award. Winner of two shooting bronze medals at the Paris Olympics, Bhaker stood at the mark just before walking down to President Murmu. While her achievements were being read out, Bhaker took a couple of steps but realised the announcer wasn't finished. She sported a wry smile on her face before walking down a few seconds later to receive the award.



Short TAKES

Gardner's century and King's five-for give Australia ODI series sweep

Agencies : Australia 308 for 8 (Gardner 102, McGrath 55, Mooney 50, Sciver-Brunt 2-51, Dean 2-53) beat England 222 (Sciver-Brunt 61, Beaumont 54, King 5-46, Schutt 3-57) by 86 runs. The Ashes are within touching distance for Australia after Ashleigh Gardner's maiden international century turned a stuttering innings into a comprehensive 86-run victory in Hobart to leave them 6-0 up and requiring just two points for retention. Gardner's run-a-ball century rescued Australia from 59 for 4 in conjunction with Beth Mooney and Tahlia McGrath, the latter made a 38-ball fifty, then they were launched over 300 by a late onslaught from the recalled Georgia Wareham. In the chase, Tammy Beaumont and Nat Sciver-Brunt made half-centuries but both fell to Wareham in what became a starring return to the side. Then just as Danni Wyatt-Hodge and Amy Jones were raising hopes of a dramatic push towards the target, Phoebe Litchfield produced a stunning diving catch running back from cover to remove Wyatt-Hodge.

"Scoring 752 In 7 Innings..." Sachin Tendulkar's Message In Karun Nair Post Is For All To See

Agencies : Legendary Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar lauded Vidarbha batter Karun Nair amid his purple patch in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, saying that performances like this just do not happen out of nowhere, they come from "immense focus and hard work". Nair, who is captaining Vidarbha in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy, will play the title clash against his former team Karnataka at Vadodara on Saturday. Nair is the top-run-getter in the tournament so far, having accumulated a massive 752 runs in seven matches at a mind-boggling average of 752.00 due to him being unbeaten in six innings. He has also scored five centuries and a fifty in the competition, with the best score of 163*. His strike rate is 125.96. Taking to X, Sachin wrote, "Scoring 752 runs in 7 innings with 5 centuries is nothing short of extraordinary, @karun126. Performances like these don't just happen, they come from immense focus and hard work. Keep going strong."