

Jairam Thakur: Leader of Opposition said- CM Sukhu should take action against the officers who lied about the injection



Diary Times Desk : Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that the Chief Minister should take strict action against those officers who hatched a cheap conspiracy and pointed fingers at the victim's family and tried to humiliate them in the case of Devraj Sharma's death due to non-availability of injection. Such people have crossed the limits of insensitivity and are not worthy of holding such important posts. Such people are hatching a criminal conspiracy with children who have lost their father to save their reputation. By getting their subordinates to tell lies, they are defaming a family which has lost its guardian a month ago due to the failure of the government and those officers. Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that the government had already committed a grave sin by not providing the medicine on time, but by pointing fingers at the family members, the government has done an even more heinous act. The government has also read the side of the victim's family in the newspapers, in the electronic age, no fact can be changed easily. If the government wants, then everything will be clear.

HPBOSE: Question papers will come in three different series in class 10th and 12th

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh School Education Board will ask questions in A, B and C series only this time in the annual examinations of class 10th-12th to be held in March. The education board had talked about changing the pattern of the question paper in this academic session, in which it was said to ask the questions given in the same question paper by moving them up and down in A, B and C series, but this time this arrangement will not be there in the examinations to be held in March. The board management claimed that it will change the pattern of question papers during the examinations to be held in March of the academic session 2024-25.

RG Kar Rape-Murder Convict Gets Life Imprisonment Till Death

Agencies : A Kolkata court sentenced Sanjay Roy to life imprisonment until death on Monday after he was convicted of raping and murdering an on-duty doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. Additional District and Sessions Judge in Sealdah, Anirban Das, had on Saturday found Roy guilty of committing the crime against the postgraduate trainee doctor on August 9 last year. The heinous crime triggered nationwide outrage and prolonged protests in West Bengal. The court also ordered Roy to pay a Rs 50,000 fine and directed the state government to pay compensation of Rs 17 lakh to the family of the deceased doctor. Judge Das stated that the crime did not fall under the "rarest of the rare" category, which justified the decision to not impose the death penalty on the convict. Roy, a former civic volunteer with the Kolkata Police, was found guilty under Sections 64 (rape), 66 (punishment for causing death), and 103(1) (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).



More visitors to attend Maha Kumbh than Rio Carnival, Oktoberfest: UP officials

Agencies : More visitors will attend the Maha Kumbh 2025 in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj than some of the other major global gatherings like Brazil's Rio Carnival and Germany's Oktoberfest. Uttar Pradesh government officials on Monday said 70 lakh had attended the last Rio Carnival, 25 lakh had gathered for the Haj pilgrimage and 72 lakh celebrated Oktoberfest. Visitation at the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj is, however, projected at 45 crore, including 15 lakh foreigners. The officials were speaking at a special briefing MEA and UP government organised today for foreign correspondents covering the largest religious gathering in the world. In the 2019 Kumbh, there were 25 crore visitors. The officials—Sanjeev Singh, OSD to Chief Minister of UP Yogi Adityanath, Awanish Kumar Awasthi, CM's Adviser, Shishir, Director Information, UP; Mrityunjay Kumar, Media Adviser to the Chief Minister—also said Maha Kumbh was projected to boost the economy up to Rs 2 lakh crore. Uttar Pradesh's GDP alone is expected to grow by over 1%, with trade in daily essentials projected at Rs 17,310 crore; hotel and travel sectors expected to reach Rs 2,800 crore and religious materials and flowers market projected to generate Rs 2,000 crore and Rs 800 crore, respectively. UP's outreach was part of state government's plans to celebrate and project the Maha Kumbh, expected to attract a million devotees from around the world and came a day after a fire at the Maha Kumbh Tent City gutted 18 tents. There were no casualties. The outreach was organised jointly by the Ministry of External Affairs and Uttar Pradesh government and highlighted the spiritual.

Govt allows 1 million ton sugar exports for 2024-25 season

Agencies : The Centre on Monday permitted the export of 1 million tonnes of sugar for the 2024-25 season ending September, a move aimed at stabilising domestic prices and supporting the industry. Food Minister Pralhad Joshi announced the decision on social media, stating the measure would benefit 50 million farmer families and 500,000 workers while strengthening the sugar sector. Joshi said it would boost the liquidity of sugar mills, ensuring timely payment of cane dues, besides balancing availability and prices for consumers. The Food Ministry order permits the export of all grades of sugar within allocated quantities. New mills starting production in 2024-25 and those restarting operations after closure have also received export quotas.

Dharamshala: Money laundering complaint against Tibetan Institute in McLeodganj, investigation begins

Diary Times Desk : A complaint of money laundering has been made against a Tibetan institute in the tourist city of McLeodganj. After the complaint reached from the CM's office, the police has started investigation. The manager of the institute was also questioned in this matter. However, no information has been found in this so far. In the complaint, allegations have been made against the institute of money embezzlement through admissions for meditation and other courses. It is alleged that the institute takes lakhs of rupees from foreign nationals for admissions in meditation and other courses, but the records prepared contain the names of local people and the amount of admission is also shown less in it. In this way, the institute is accused of embezzling lakhs of rupees by showing fake names. After the complaint, the police have questioned the manager of the institute about the matter. The manager said that the institute is closed since December and will open after February 15.



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Himachal Weather: Light snowfall on high peaks including Rohtang, forecast of bad weather till 23

Diary Times Desk : In Himachal, light snowfall occurred on Rohtang and other high peaks on Monday. However, the plains including the capital Shimla remained cloudy throughout the day. The minimum temperature of Shimla was recorded at 8.8 degrees Celsius, which was higher than other cold areas. The minimum temperature in Dharamshala was 4.5, in Manali 6.2, in Una 5.8 and in Chamba 7 degrees. On the other hand, the Meteorological Center Shimla has predicted bad weather from 21 to 23. According to the center, there is a possibility of light snowfall at one or two places in the high mountain areas on 21st, rain in the plains on 22nd and rain and snowfall at some places in the hilly areas on 23rd. On Monday, light snowfall occurred for the second consecutive day on the 13,050 feet high Rohtang Pass and other high peaks. The weather remained bad in Kullu and Lahaul Spiti districts since morning. Due to dense clouds, the cold wave was seen. However, all types of vehicles except HRTC buses were running from Solanganala towards Atal Tunnel Rohtang. About 100 connecting roads in Lahaul have not been restored for traffic yet. On Monday, the minimum temperature was recorded at -5.9 in Kukumseri and the maximum temperature at Paonta Sahib was 25.0 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature of Keylong was -1.9, and Tabo was - 4.3 degrees. In the coming days, the maximum temperature may fall by 4 to 5 degrees and the minimum temperature may fall by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius. The Chief Minister had to go from Nurpur to Manali on Sunday evening, but the helicopter could not take off due to bad weather. Due to this, the Chief Minister came to Dharamshala by road in the evening. After resting here at night, the Chief Minister had to leave for Manali from Dharamshala at 11 am.

Army, IAF conduct drill to enhance joint capability in high-intensity airborne operations

Agencies : A four-day long high-intensity joint exercise by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force was undertaken to validate integrated operations in multi-faceted combat environments and enhance joint operational capabilities Codenamed Exercise Devil Strike, the drill between the Army's elite airborne troops and the Air Force showcased seamless integration, operational preparedness and the ability to operate in the most challenging environments. Conducted across training areas and firing ranges, the exercise focused on validating complex airborne operations, including precision insertion of troops and equipment into hostile terrains. It also tested and refined logistic sustenance strategies, ensuring that troops remained operationally effective under extreme conditions.

International Mahashivratri Festival Mandi: The first Jaleb will be held on 27th February, foreign artists will also make a splash

Diary Times Desk : Preparations have begun for the Mandi International Mahashivratri Festival. The first procession will be taken out on February 27. The middle procession will be taken out on March 2 and the third and final procession will be taken out on March 5. Attractive tableaux will also be included in these. Cultural evenings will be organized on Seri stage from February 27 to March 4. This time international cultural groups will also participate in the International Mahashivratri Festival. All the formalities for inviting the groups have been completed by the fair committee. North Regional Cultural Group Patiala has also been invited. A general meeting was organized at Sanskriti Sadan Kangnidhar on Monday under the chairmanship of Dharmpur MLA Chandrashekhar. Non-government and government members of various sub-committees related to the organization of the fair gave their valuable suggestions. Arrangements for the stay of deities and devalus, traffic management, cleanliness, sports competitions, decoration of the city, income-expenditure, maintenance of roads, cultural programs, publication of souvenirs, holding exhibitions, etc. were discussed.

Lakhimpur Kheri case: SC asks UP Police to submit report on Ashish Mishra allegedly influencing witnesses

Agencies : Amid allegations of attempting to influence witnesses by 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case accused Ashish Mishra – son of former Union Minister Ajay Mishra, the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Uttar Pradesh Police to furnish a report. In our considered view the veracity, genuineness and reliability of such material can only be gone into by the police administration. The police administration may submit a report in support or against the allegation made in the application seeking cancellation of bail," a Bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh said, directing the Lakhimpur Kheri Superintendent of Police to furnish the report in four weeks. Seeking the cancellation of Ashish Mishra's bail, advocate Prashant Bhushan said he had an audio recording of an attempt made to influence crucial witnesses in the case. He also alleged Mishra attended a public meeting in violation of bail conditions. Denying the allegations, Ashish Mishra, however, said every time the matter was listed, such allegations were made to get his bail cancelled.

Neeraj Chopra Marriage: Neeraj Chopra took seven rounds in Himachal, completed the marriage rituals by putting tape on CCTV

Diary Times Desk : Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra tied the knot in a secret ceremony at a private resort near Gandhigram on Kumarhatti-Nahan National Highway-5. Neeraj Chopra married former tennis player Himani Mor amidst the serene valleys of Himachal. The wedding took place between 15 and 17 January. On Sunday, Neeraj Chopra posted on social media that he has married Himani. As soon as this news came out, discussions have started on social media. People are very curious to know about Himani. After the wedding, he left the resort immediately. Only after this, mobiles were given to the employees. It is being told that the employees were also strictly instructed not to tell anyone about the wedding. Due to this, no one got a hint of Neeraj's wedding. When Neeraj Chopra himself shared this information on social media. After this, people could know about the wedding.



Sandeep Dikshit files Rs 10 crore defamation suit against AAP leaders Atishi, Sanjay Singh

Agencies : As the campaign for Delhi Assembly elections peaked, senior Congress leader and the party's candidate for the New Delhi constituency Sandeep Dikshit has filed civil and criminal defamation cases against Aam Aadmi Party leaders—Chief Minister Atishi and MP Sanjay Singh and others. While the Rs 10 crore civil defamation suit has been filed in the Delhi High Court, the criminal defamation complaint was filed in the Rouse Avenue court here last week. The hearing on Dikshit's civil defamation suit was on Monday deferred by Justice PK Kaurav to February, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Paras Dalal last week asked the AAP leaders to appear before him on January 27 to respond to the charges. The defamation cases arose from accusations made by the two AAP leaders during a press conference here on December 26, 2024, that Dikshit had accepted "crores of rupees" from the BJP and conspired with the party to sabotage AAP's chances in the Assembly elections. Denying the charges, Dikshit termed them as baseless and defamatory and sought Rs 10 crore as damages for the harm caused to his reputation.



HP Rajya Chayan Aayog: Government will soon take a decision on the recruitment of 1,423 posts, 2 years relaxation in age limit has been sought

Diary Times Desk : The state government will soon take a decision on the recruitment of 1,423 posts in 80 post codes issued during the disbanded Staff Selection Commission in Himachal Pradesh. There is doubt on whether only the candidates who have already applied for these posts will get a chance or new youth will also be given an opportunity to apply. A few days ago, the Himachal Pradesh State Selection Commission has prepared a detailed report in this regard and sent it to the state government. Now the government has to decide whether a fresh advertisement will be issued for recruitment in these post codes or the recruitment process will be taken forward keeping in mind the current situation. In the report, the commission has recommended giving relaxation in the age limit of up to two years to the candidates, so that the candidates affected by the recruitments hanging in the balance due to the paper leak case can also get a chance. However, the final decision of the government on this recommendation is still awaited.



Himachal News: PWD officer fined Rs 5 in Himachal

Diary Times Desk : A strange fine has been imposed on a PWD officer for being absent from meetings for four consecutive years. This fine is only five rupees. This fine has been imposed on the officer of PWD Mandal Tauni Devi in the quarterly meeting of Panchayat Samiti Hamirpur. The officer will now have to pay a fine of five rupees. The quarterly meeting of Panchayat Samiti Hamirpur was held in the committee room on Monday. The meeting was chaired by BDC President Harish Sharma. In the meeting, the budget of the Fifteenth Finance Commission was also discussed along with preparing a new outline of development works. Apart from the block committee members, BDC Vice President Sanjeev Sharma and BDO Hamirpur Himanshi Sharma were also present in the meeting. Taking an important decision during the meeting, development works were being affected due to the absence of the Public Works Department officer of Tauni Devi Mandal in the meeting for the last four years, due to which a fine of five rupees has been imposed on that officer.

Himachal News: Main supplier running drug racket from Hoshiarpur arrested, Gagret police makes fourth arrest

Diary Times Desk : In a case of Chitta smuggling, Gagret police has arrested the main supplier who was running a drug racket from Hoshiarpur city of Punjab. This is the fourth arrest made by Gagret police in the case of Chitta smuggling. The main supplier of Chitta smuggling, who was arrested from Ghumarwin in Bilaspur, had made online transactions worth about 1.5 lakh rupees from November 1 to November 5. Gagret police is now trying to obtain police remand of the main supplier by presenting him in the court. On November 5, Gagret police had arrested two youths from Mandi and Bilaspur districts with 30 grams of Chitta. During interrogation, it was revealed that the person who ordered the consignment of Chitta was another drug smuggler from Ghumarwin subdivision of Bilaspur. He had deposited money in the account of the drug supplier sitting in Hoshiarpur to get the supply of Chitta.

Himachal Pradesh: Flight schedule changed at Gaggal airport, change was made due to this reason

Diary Times Desk : Keeping in mind the preparations for Republic Day in Delhi and the weather, the schedule of flights arriving at Gaggal airport has been changed. The companies have made this change due to more air traffic in the morning due to Republic Day in Delhi. Due to this, some flights are arriving early in the morning while some are getting delayed by about an hour. For about two weeks, SpiceJet's flight that used to arrive at Gaggal airport at 12:40 pm is now arriving at 8 am. While it is returning from Gaggal at 8:50 am. There has also been a slight change in Indigo's flight services. The flight that used to arrive at 10 am is returning to Delhi at 11:30 am. While the second Indigo flight is reaching Gaggal airport at the scheduled time of 3 pm and is leaving for Delhi at 3:30 pm. Gaggal airport director Dhirendra Singh said that it depends on the airlines to make changes in the schedule. Currently, three flights are arriving at Gaggal from Delhi. The timetable of flights arriving at Gaggal Airport has been changed. The companies have made this change due to heavy air traffic in the morning due to Republic Day in Delhi.

Himachal Weather: Chances of rain and snowfall in many parts of Himachal Pradesh for four days

Diary Times Desk : Rain and snowfall is likely to continue for four days in many parts of Himachal Pradesh. Shimla and other parts are cloudy since this morning. There has been light snowfall on the peaks. Due to bad weather, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu could not leave for the inauguration of Manali Winter Carnival from Dharamshala in the morning. Due to bad weather, the helicopter could not fly. However, the CM reached Jogindernagar by helicopter at around four in the evening. After this, he left for Manali by road. On the other hand, light snowfall occurred on the high peaks including the 13,050 feet high Rohtang Pass yesterday as well. After light snowfall on the peaks, the cold wave intensified in Kullu and Lahaul Spiti. Amidst bad weather, tourists reached Lahaul via Atal Tunnel Rohtang in four by four vehicles and had fun amidst the snow. According to the Meteorological Center, due to the activation of Western Disturbance, there is a possibility of light rain and snowfall at some places.

Shimla Road Accident: Truck fell into Sainj ravine, two brothers died; they were going to Rampur with cement supply

Diary Times Desk : A truck carrying cement supply on Dhami-Sunni road fell into Sainj ravine. Two real brothers have died in this accident. The deceased include truck driver Dinesh Kumar (29) and Vinod Kumar (37) son of Baburam resident of village Thera post office Parnu tehsil Arki district Solan. According to the police, late on Sunday night, both the brothers were going towards Rampur with cement supply in truck number HP 11 A-2877. During this, when the truck reached near Bajju village in Bagipul, the driver Dinesh Kumar lost control of the vehicle and the vehicle fell 200 meters down on the banks of Sainj ravine. This incident is said to have happened around 12:30 late night. Hearing the sound of the truck falling, people nearby reached the spot and informed the Sunni police station. The police team headed by ASI Ramlal left for the spot.

Himachal News: Bail of senior TRAI official arrested on charges of taking bribe rejected

Diary Times Desk : District Court Shimla has rejected the bail plea of senior research officer of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) arrested for taking bribe from a cable operator in Himachal Pradesh. The court of Special Judge (CBI) Dr. Parvinder Singh Arora has refused to release the accused Narendra Singh Rawat resident of Uttarakhand (present address-Greater Noida (West), Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh) on bail. The judge remarked that the allegations against the petitioner are strong and of serious nature. Especially considering the senior position he holds. Releasing him on bail at this stage would not be in the interest of justice. The accused has been in judicial custody in Kaithu jail for the last 18 days. The complainant cable operator had lodged a complaint with the Shimla Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). After this, on January 2, the CBI arrested Narendra from New Delhi on charges of allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 1 lakh from a cable operator of Sirmaur to benefit him in compliance matters. He was caught red-handed with the bribe amount.

Techie Atul Subhash's Son To Stay With His Mother, Supreme Court Decides

Agencies : Custody of the four-year-old son of Atul Subhash - the Bengaluru techie who died by suicide December - and Nikita Singhania - his estranged wife, whom he had accused of harassment leading to his death - will remain with his mother, the Supreme Court said Monday evening. Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice SC Sharma delivered the verdict - in response to a plea by Anju Devi, Mr Subhash's mother, who sought the boy's custody - after speaking to the child via a video link. As the hearing began today, the petitioner sought a week's time to file a more detailed affidavit. But Justice Nagarathna dismissed any such request, and said, "This is a habeas corpus (petition)... we want to see the child. Produce the child. The court will take up the matter after some time..." After a break of 45 minutes the boy appeared on a video link, at which time the court went offline - except for the link to the child - to protect his identity. Earlier this month Ms Singhania had told the court the boy was a student of a boarding school in Haryana's Faridabad, and that he would be withdrawn to accompany his mother to Bengaluru.

Delhi's AQI remains 'very poor' as minimum temperature rises to 11.4°C

Agencies : Delhi's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category even as the minimum temperature rose across the city. Delhi's air quality index (AQI) stood at 342 at 9am, which was down from 368 at 4pm on Sunday. Delhi's minimum temperature meanwhile rose to 11.4°C, which was four degrees above normal. It was 9.2°C a day earlier. Delhi's maximum too had risen on Sunday and touched 26.1°C - six degrees above normal and Delhi's highest for January in six years. It was 20.7°C a day earlier. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the last time it was higher in January was January 21, 2019, when it was 28.7°C. A second western disturbance is expected to influence the region from January 22 onwards, likely bringing isolated light rain in the city on the same day, the IMD has forecast, raising the minimum further. In terms of visibility, shallow fog was reported across the city on Monday morning. The lowest visibility at Safdarjung was 500 metres, while it was 600 metres at Palam.

"If Case Stayed With Us...": Mamata Banerjee Reacts To RG Kar Case Verdict



Agencies : Kolkata Police would have ensured death penalty for the convict in RG Kar rape and murder case, but the probe was taken away and handed over to the CBI, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said today, minutes after a city court sentenced Roy to life imprisonment. "We demanded death penalty from Day 1. We demand it now too. But it's the court's order. I can share my party's opinion. We ensured death penalty in three cases within 60 days. If the case stayed with us, we would have ensured death penalty long back. I don't know the details." "The case was taken away from us. We had said that if we cannot do it, then hand it over to CBI. Because we want justice," she said, adding that she was "not satisfied". The Trinamool Congress government had come under heavy criticism after a 34-year-old doctor was found raped and murdered on August 9 in a seminar hall at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

Mysterious deaths in J&K village linked to contaminated spring water

Agencies : A remote village in Jammu and Kashmir is grappling with the mysterious deaths of 17 individuals, all from three related families. The victims include 13 children aged between three and 15. Preliminary investigations point to contaminated spring water as a possible cause of the mysterious fatalities. The tragedy began on December 7, 2024, when five villagers, including four children, fell ill and died after a community meal. Over the following weeks, more lives were lost to an unknown illness, with the latest deaths occurring in January. The affected families lived about 1.5 kilometers.

'Picture abhi baaki hai mere dost': Eric Garcetti bids farewell as US Ambassador to India

Agencies : Outgoing US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, reflected on his tenure in a farewell message, emphasising the strong ties built between the two nations during his tenure as the 26th US envoy. In a video shared on his social media, Garcetti expressed his deep connection to India, a country he first visited as a child and later as a student. He acknowledged the hospitality and warmth shown by the people of India and shared the rich experiences that shaped his time in the country.

Army soldier critically injured in Sopore gunfight succumbs

Agencies : The soldier, who was injured in the encounter between terrorists and security forces in Gujjarpati area of Zalora in Sopore, succumbed to his injuries, officials said. The encounter broke out in the area late last evening. An official told news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the operation was halted last night due to darkness. "With the first light of the day, fresh firing resumed. In the ensuing encounter a soldier was injured and was evacuated to a hospital." He said that the injured army soldier succumbed to his injuries.

Supreme Court halts criminal proceedings against Rahul Gandhi in defamation case

Agencies : The Supreme Court on Monday halted criminal proceedings against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the defamation case filed against him for his statements against Home Minister Amit Shah and the BJP. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing a Special Leave Petition filed by Rahul Gandhi challenging the Jharkhand High Court's order, which had dismissed his plea to quash the defamation case filed against him by BJP worker Navin Jha in 2018. Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Rahul Gandhi, said that there were several judgements which showed that only the aggrieved person can file a criminal defamation complaint and the complaint cannot be filed by a proxy party. The court granted four weeks' time to the complainant, Navin Jha, and the Jharkhand government to respond to Singhvi. It also any proceedings against Rahul Gandhi until further orders.



Kerala Woman, Who Killed Boyfriend With Poisoned Drink, Sentenced To Death

Agencies : A 24-year-old woman has been sentenced to death in Kerala on Monday for killing her boyfriend, around two years after the cold-blooded incident. The woman, Greeshma, had poisoned her then-23-year-old boyfriend Sharon Raj, to get out of their romantic relationship. A local court, which convicted Greeshma and her uncle for the murder last week, observed that there was no need to consider the accused's age over the gravity of the crime committed. The accused had sought leniency in sentencing by citing her academic achievements, lack of prior criminal history, and the fact that she is her parents' only daughter. The prosecution relied on circumstantial, digital, and scientific evidence to prove the crime, the court said. Greeshma is the youngest woman to face capital punishment in Kerala. Following today's verdict, the victim's lawyer said that he was "confident" the evidence would be accepted by the court.

Biden's Extraordinary Use Of Presidential Power Ahead Of Trump Inauguration

Agencies : US President Joe Biden on Monday issued pre-emptive pardons to former Covid-19 advisor Anthony Fauci and retired general Mark Milley to shield them from "politically motivated prosecutions" under the Trump administration. In an extraordinary move in his last hours in the White House, Biden gave similar pardons to members, staff and witnesses of a US House committee probing the violent January 6, 2021 US Capitol attack by Donald Trump's supporters. "These public servants have served our nation with honor and distinction and do not deserve to be the targets of unjustified and politically motivated prosecutions," Biden said in a statement. "These are exceptional circumstances, and I cannot in good conscience do nothing." Trump, who will be sworn in on Monday, has repeatedly promised "retribution" against his political opponents and threatened some with criminal prosecution. Fauci became the face of the country's fight against the Covid pandemic, but his straight-talking takes on the disease in Trump's first term brought him into conflict with the Republican.

Traders Sell Trump's Memecoin For Melania's, \$TRUMP Plummet

Agencies : The world of cryptocurrency has been abuzz with the launch of not one, but two meme coins affiliated with the incoming US President, Donald Trump, and his wife, Melania Trump. The first coin, \$TRUMP, was launched by the president-elect himself and quickly gained traction, with its value tripling to over \$70 in a short span of time. However, the launch of Melania Trump's rival coin, \$MELANIA, has sent shockwaves through the market, with investors piling in and causing the value of \$TRUMP to plummet. "The Official Melania Meme is live! You can buy \$MELANIA now," she posted on X, which was reposted by her husband. \$MELANIA also got listed in the top 20 of all cryptocurrencies, reaching a market capitalisation of \$13 billion. Some traders also sold Trump's memecoin for Melania's. The launch of \$MELANIA has been seen as a savvy move by the incoming First Lady.

Israel releases 90 Palestinian prisoners, Hamas frees 3 hostages as ceasefire passes 1st hurdle



Agencies : The fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas passed its first significant hurdle, with three hostages freed from Gaza and the first batch of 90 Palestinian prisoners released from Israeli custody. The long-awaited ceasefire was agreed to on Wednesday and began Sunday morning after a brief delay as Israel demanded a list of hostages to be released by Hamas. The ceasefire agreement has raised cautious hopes for an end to the 15-month war in Gaza, however, many challenges remain as the truce deal moves through its initial phase which is supposed to see a series of hostage and prisoner exchanges. Three Israeli hostages – Emily Damari, Romi Gonen, and Doron Steinbrecher – were released by Hamas in a tense handover to the Red Cross in Gaza City. The women were surrounded by a crowd of thousands, including masked armed Hamas militants, and later reunited with their families in Israel.

Yemen's Houthis To Limit Attacks On Israeli-Affiliated Ships In Red Sea Corridor After Gaza truce

Agencies : As a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip took hold, Yemen's Houthi rebels have signalled they will limit attacks in the Red Sea corridor to Israeli-affiliated ships. The Houthis, through their Humanitarian Operations Coordination Center, announced that they were "stopping sanctions" on the vessels it has previously targeted since it started attacks in November 2023, according to a report by the Associated Press. The rebel group is reportedly planning to issue a separate military statement on Monday about the decision. Claiming solidarity with the Palestinians, Houthis-- who are part of Iran's "axis of resistance", have repeatedly launched missile and drone attacks on Israel since the war in Gaza broke out in October 2023. They have also waged a harassment campaign against shipping.

Oxfam says billionaires' wealth soared in 2024, with 4 'minted' every week

Agencies : Billionaires' wealth globally grew three times faster in 2024 than the year before, global advocacy group Oxfam International says, as some of the world's political and financial elite prepare to attend an annual gathering in Davos, Switzerland. In its latest assessment of global inequality timed to the opening of the World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting, Oxfam on Monday said the combined wealth of billionaires rose by \$2 trillion to \$15 trillion last year. The report, titled Takers Not Makers, said there were 2,769 billionaires worldwide in 2024, an increase of 204 over the previous year. It noted that at least four new billionaires were "minted" every week during the year, and three-fifths of billionaire wealth came from inheritance, monopoly power or "crony connections". Oxfam predicted that at least five trillionaires will crop up over the next decade. A year ago, the group forecast that only one trillionaire would appear in that period. "The capture of our global economy by a privileged few has reached heights once considered unimaginable. The failure to stop billionaires is now spawning soon-to-be trillionaires. Not only has the rate of billionaire wealth accumulation accelerated – by three times – but so too has their power," Oxfam International Executive Director Amitabh Behar said in a statement.

Pope Francis Hopes Trump's US Will Have "No Room For Hatred"

Agencies : Pope Francis urged incoming United States president Donald Trump on Monday to lead a society with "no room for hatred" and to promote "peace and reconciliation among peoples". In a message marking Trump's inauguration, the 88-year-old pontiff offered the incoming president "cordial greetings and the assurance of my prayers that Almighty God will grant you wisdom, strength and protection". "It is my hope that under your leadership the American people will prosper and always strive to build a more just society, where there is no room for hatred, discrimination or exclusion," the head of the worldwide Catholic church added. "At the same time, as our human family faces numerous challenges, not to mention the scourge of war, I also ask God to guide your efforts in promoting peace and reconciliation among peoples." Francis had in an interview on Sunday condemned Trump's plans for large-scale deportations.

Hamas' Parting Gift To Israel Hostages: Souvenirs To Commemorate Captivity

Agencies : The three Israeli hostages freed by Hamas were each given a 'gift bag' to commemorate their 15-month captivity after they were captured during the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israeli cities. These 'gift bags', according to reports, contained their photos in captivity, a photo of Gaza and a 'certificate'. Visuals show the three hostages holding up the bags and smiling before their release, apparently left with no other choice. While a large section of social media users slammed the gesture, describing it as "sick" and a "new definition of cruelty", a section of Hamas supporters cheered it. The three hostages have been freed in exchange of the release of 90 Palestinian prisoners under a 42-day truce brokered by Qatari, US and Egyptian mediators. Emily Damari, 28, Romi Gonen, 24, and Doron Steinbrecher, 31, returned to tears of joy with people lining up on the roads to welcome them. They will be in hospital for some days for evaluation and recovery from their 15-month nightmare.



Sukhbir Badal gets fresh membership at Badal village as SAD begins drive in Punjab

Agencies : The SAD on Monday started its fresh membership drive as per its schedule given on January 10. Former SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal got a fresh membership of the party by filling a form at the party's office at Badal village here. Sukhbir said that as per the directions of acting president Balwinder Singh Bhunder, the party has started its membership drive today. "Nearly 40,000 people are expected to become the members of the SAD from just Lambi Assembly constituency. We have an overall target to make 50 lakh members of the party," said Sukhbir. Notably, the rebel Akali leader Gurpartap Singh Wadala had on Thursday met the Akal Takht Jathedar Raghbir Singh seeking clarification regarding the supervision of the new membership drive of the SAD. After the meeting, Wadala had claimed that only the seven-member committee formed by the Akal Takht on December 2 last year was able to undertake the membership drive of the SAD. He had claimed that the Jathedar asked him to meet the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhama to decide about the drive.



Vehicle owners with 5 unpaid traffic challans to lose driving licence: Chandigarh Admn

Agencies : Taking a firm stance on the issue of over 7.5 lakh pending traffic challans in the city, the UT Administration has decided to issue notices to vehicle owners with five or more unpaid challans asking them to clear their dues within 15 days. Failing to do so, driving licences of the vehicle owners will be cancelled and their registration certificates (RC) suspended. Highlighting a significant rise in unpaid challans over the years, Registering and Licensing Authority In-charge Pradhuman Singh said, "Despite repeated reminders and notices, many drivers continue to neglect fines for offenses such as speeding, red light violations, and dangerous driving." He said the notices would be issued to violators with five or more unpaid challans, requiring them to pay the penalties within 15 days. Non-compliance will result in the revocation of their driving licences and suspension of their RCs. Additionally, vehicles of defaulters will be flagged as "not to be transacted," which will block any transactions related to the vehicle. This includes ownership transfers, RC renewals, issuance of duplicate RCs, pollution certificates, and insurance.

Rajoana mercy plea: Either you decide by March 18 or we will hear it on merits, SC tells Centre

Agencies : As the mercy petition of Beant Singh assassination case convict Balwant Singh Rajoana continues to hang fire, the Supreme Court on Monday set March 18 as the deadline for the Centre to take a call on the contentious issue, failing which it would proceed to decide the matter on merits. "We are giving you the last chance... Either you decide or we will hear the case on merits," a three-judge Bench led by Justice BR Gavai told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who represented the Centre. "We will hear on merits on March 18... If you can decide by then... well and good..." said the Bench, which also included Justice PK Mishra and Justice KV Vishwanath. "This has been going on since the time of CJI SA Bobde (since retired). He is on death row for 15 years and is in prison for 29 years. He should be released now," senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi told the Bench on behalf of Rajoana. Mehta said, "It's a murder of a sitting CM." Hours after directing the Secretary to the President to place the mercy petition of the Beant Singh assassination case convict before the President with a request to consider it within two weeks, the Supreme Court had on November 18, 2024 chosen to put on hold its order.

Punjab and Haryana HC Collegium recommends elevation of 15 District Judges after 2 years

Agencies : Amid 40 per cent shortage of judges and a backlog of over 4.32 lakh cases, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has recommended the elevation of 15 District and Sessions Judges after a gap of more than two years. The High Court Collegium, which convened last week, proposed the names of eight judges from Punjab and seven from Haryana for elevation. The move comes as the high court grapples with a staggering pendency of cases. According to the National Judicial Data Grid, nearly 85 per cent of these cases have remained unresolved for over a year, with some dating back nearly four decades. Of the 4,32,227 pending cases, 2,68,279 are civil matters, while 1,63,948 are criminal cases, directly impacting fundamental rights such as life and liberty. The last elevation of District and Sessions Judges to the high court was made in November 2022. Despite concerted efforts to tackle "legacy" matters, the pendency figures have shown little improvement. A total of 48,386 second appeals, including five from 1986, are still awaiting adjudication, underscoring the gravity of the judicial delay.



Above-normal minimum temperatures in Punjab, Haryana

Agencies : Punjab and Haryana recorded above-normal minimum temperatures on Monday and several parts of the two states witnessed fog. Average minimum temperatures were 4.6 and 3.6 notches above normal in Punjab and Haryana respectively, according to a meteorological department report. In Punjab, Faridkot registered a minimum temperature of 7.5 degrees Celsius, the report said. Amritsar recorded a low of 8 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal, and Ludhiana 13.4 degrees Celsius, seven degrees above normal. The mercury settled at 11.1 degrees Celsius in Patiala, 10 degrees Celsius in Pathankot, 8.4 degrees Celsius in Bathinda and 8.5 degrees Celsius in Gurdaspur. In neighbouring Haryana, Ambala recorded a minimum temperature of 12.4 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal.

Former minister Kirpa Ram Punia dies at 89 in Panchkula

Agencies : Bureaucrat-turned-politician and former Haryana minister Dr Kirpa Ram Punia died of a heart ailment on Saturday night. He was 89. The former minister passed away at 9:46 pm at Paras Hospital in Panchkula. Punia had been admitted to the hospital after he had received an injury. He is survived by four sons, a daughter and 11 grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Punia was born on January 1, 1936, in Salhawas village of Jhajjar district. Kiran Punia, elder daughter-in-law, who unsuccessfully contested Parliamentary polls from Ambala constituency in 2024 said that her father-in-law was the first IAS officer of Haryana after separated from Punjab.

Vegetable seller among 2 nabbed for rape of minor in Faridabad

Agencies : The police have arrested two persons for allegedly raping a 12-year-old girl in the Surajkund area here recently. A case under the POCSO Act has been registered in this connection. A police official said the accused, identified as Prem Pal (33), had taken the victim to a guest house on his two-wheeler on some pretext and committed the crime. The second accused, Gurung (40), has also been booked under Section 17 of the Act, as he indirectly helped Prem commit the act by not registering his name in the register of the guest house, as per the norms.

2 dead in accident in Shimla

Diary Times Desk : Two brothers were killed after a truck plunged into Sainj Khad on Dhami-Sunni road in Shimla. The deceased have been identified as Dinesh Kumar (29) and Vinod Kumar (37), both residents of Thhera village in Arki Tehsil of Solan district. The accident took place on Monday around 1:00 am when they were on their way to Rampur. Dinesh, who was driving the truck, lost his control and it plunged into the ravine, killing both of them on the spot. Police reached the spot as soon as it received the information and launched a search operation to find out the bodies. The operation continued till early morning after which the bodies were taken to Civil Hospital, Sunni, where postmortem is being conducted. Superintendent of Police Shimla Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi confirmed the report and said further investigation is underway.

Bhattyat-McLeodganj road link to boost tourism in Kangra

Diary Times Desk : The state government is planning to open new areas for tourism in Kangra by developing road connectivity between McLeodganj, the prime tourist spot, and the Bhattyat area of Chamba district. The road would pass through Kareri Lake — an area that was till date only accessible through trekking. It would also provide road connectivity to Khabru Waterfall — a picturesque location on the trek to Kareri Lake. While talking, Shahpur Congress MLA and deputy chief whip in Himachal Assembly Kewal Singh Pathania said a detailed project report (DPR) of Rs 45 crore had been sent to the state government for connecting McLeodganj with the Bhattyat area. The road connectivity would open many serene villages in Kareri, Dhar Kandi and other interior areas of the Shahpur Assembly constituency for tourism. Besides, it would provide tourists the access to many treks in the Dhauladhar mountain ranges, he said. There are eight lakes in Dhauladhar mountain ranges along Dharamsala that can be reached within one or two days by trekking on foot. While three lakes are small, the other three are comparatively larger.

Drive against drug mafia launched, Rs 11 crore properties seized: CM



Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today said the government has ordered crackdown on drug mafia in the state. The police have launched extensive campaign against drug traffickers in recent months, confiscating assets worth Rs 11 crore. The state government has implemented the PIT-NDPS Act, enabling the detention of habitual offenders in drug trafficking to safeguard public interest. While addressing a public rally in Nurpur Assembly constituency of Kangra district, he said the previous BJP government left a debt of Rs 75,000 crore along with pending liabilities of Rs 10,000 crore for employees. Despite this, the current government is striving to deliver quality services to the people through systemic reforms. He criticised the BJP for failing to mobilise resources and for opposing the reforms that the people of the state support wholeheartedly. The current government has taken loans amounting to Rs 28,000 crore over the past two years of which Rs 18,000 crore was spent on repaying old debts and interest.

Neeraj Chopra's closely guarded marriage took place at Himachal resort



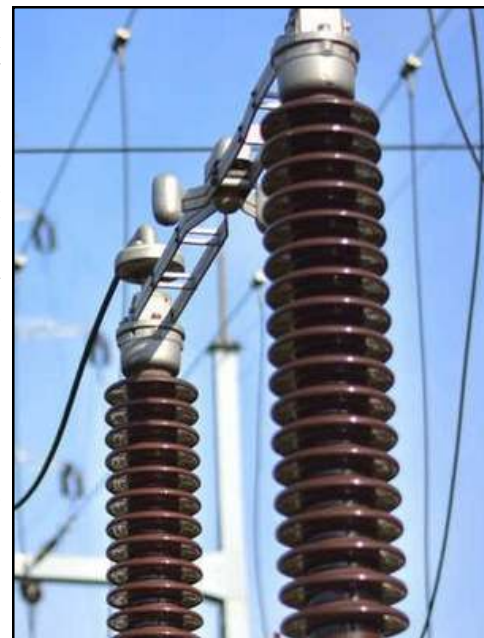
Diary Times Desk : It has come to light that Olympian Neeraj Chopra tied the knot at a luxury resort near Kandaghat in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district. A link road connects the resort to the Kumarhatti-Nahan road. The wedding, which was kept under wraps, took place on January 15-16, and the couple checked out on January 17. According to information, the wedding was attended by 70 guests.

Ensure safety of migratory birds: Sukhu to forest dept

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today visited Pong Dam Lake in Kangra district for bird watching and toured the ancient temples at the famous tourist site Bathu-Ki-Lari. These temples remain submerged in Pong Dam lake during monsoon as the water level rises in lake and emerges back when the water level recedes. The Chief Minister said this area has immense potential for tourism and the state government was making significant efforts to promote tourism in the region. Sukhu said that migratory birds from Siberia and Mongolia flock to the Pong Dam, attracting bird watchers from across the country. He directed the forest department to ensure safety of these birds. For the convenience of tourists, two boats have already been deployed and two more speed boats would soon be arranged. Basic facilities for tourists would be provided in the area. The Chief Minister said the government's initiatives have led to an increase in tourist footfall in the region, with nearly 30,000 tourists visiting the area last year. "Efforts are underway to introduce water sports activities at the Regional Water Centre.

Kinnaur transmission project returned to electricity board

Diary Times Desk : In a major U-turn in the power sector, the government has handed back the construction work of 66 Kv transmission line from Pooh to Kaza and a 66 kv sub-station at Samdo in Kinnaur district to Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited. In a notification issued on October 5 last year, the government had handed over this project to Himachal Pradesh Power Transmission Corporation Limited (HPPTCL), stating that the work did not fall within the purview of the electricity board. Not too long back, the government had returned four small hydroelectric projects in Chamba to HPSEBL after handing it to Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited. Also, the administrative control of Chief Engineer (System Operations) also went back to HPSEBL from Himachal Pradesh Energy Management Centre. "Such back and forth not only delays the projects but also results in cost escalation, causing financial losses to both government and the board," said an HPSEBL official. The transmission line project in Kinnaur, worth Rs 362 crore, was conceived to provide 24x7 power supply in the border areas of Kinnaur and was initially awarded to HPSEBL. As per the Joint Front of the HPSEBL Employees and Engineers, the board had completed the groundwork like survey and investigation and land acquisition when the project was handed over to HPPTCL.



LSG will revolve around a never-say-die attitude: Pant



Agencies : Rishabh Pant, unveiled as the captain of the Lucknow Super Giants on Monday in Kolkata, is determined to establish himself as a players' skipper. In the complex world of Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises and private ownership, this might seem like a lofty target, but Pant remains clear and resolute. He is also unfazed by how others perceive his leadership style - calm, cool, aggressive or dynamic. Tags, he says, will not worry him. "I will focus on ensuring that our players are comfortable with me and my communication style. I want to keep constant communication with them, as it will be a key part of my captaincy," Pant explained. He was in conversation with select media personnel in Kolkata on Monday. "I aim to be seen as someone who genuinely cares about the players and strives to bring out the best in them." And on the field? "The team's philosophy will revolve around a never-say-die attitude. Regardless of the match situation, we will always try to win and see how the match progresses. That will be the mindset." He has also expressed satisfaction with the LSG management that have put together a team for the season through auction in Jeddah, in November. "There is a good mix of experience and youth," he remarked.

BCCI's New Guideline Implemented Ahead Of England T20I Series. Restrictions On...

Agencies : The implementation of the 10-point policy guidelines for the Indian cricket team has begun with the BCCI communicating to the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) that no separate vehicle should be arranged for any player as all are required to travel by the team bus. The Indian team is in Kolkata for the T20I series-opener against England at the Eden Gardens on January 22. After the Australia series debacle, the BCCI has come out with a 10-point SOP. As per the SOP, "all players are required to stay for the entire duration of scheduled practice sessions and travel together to and from the venue. This rule ensures commitment and fosters a strong work ethic within the team." India skipper Rohit Sharma has already expressed his reservations on certain clauses but it is understood that BCCI has already put at least one of the 10 clauses in force. The 10-point 'policy document' outlining the new guidelines was shared with all state cricket boards, hosting the India-England matches, including the CAB. CAB president Snehasish Ganguly confirmed the arrangements and expressed the association's commitment to adhering to the policies.

Steve Smith cleared to join Australia Test squad

Agencies : Steve Smith is set to join the Australian squad ahead of the first Test against Sri Lanka, Cricket Australia announced on Monday. The middle-order batter has undergone a specialist medical review and has been cleared to rejoin the Test squad and travel to Dubai to begin his preparation for the two-match series. Smith, while representing Sydney Sixers in the ongoing Big Bash League, had sustained an injury on his right elbow while throwing a ball from the outfield in Friday's rain-affected encounter against Sydney Thunder. Smith is expected to lead Australia in the Test series in the absence of Pat Cummins, who is on paternity leave.

Shreyas Iyer breaks silence on how 'lack of communication' led to KKR departure: 'Had a conversation right after IPL...'

Agencies : There were rumours that Kolkata Knight Riders would retain Shreyas Iyer after the India star led the franchise to their first IPL title in 10 years in the 2024 season. However, he incurred the same fate as Eoin Morgan in 2021, as KKR released him before the mega auction last November. Speaking for the first time on what led to the departure, Iyer, who was roped in by INR 26.75 crore by Punjab Kings at the auction in Jeddah, said that it was all down to "lack of communication." Since making the final under Morgan in 2021, KKR has finished seventh in both successive seasons. Iyer missed the 2023 edition of the IPL owing to a back injury. However, on his return to the franchise the following year, the India batter, along with newly appointed mentor Gautam Gambhir, guided the franchise to its third title in history. Speaking to The Indian Express at Idea Exchange, Iyer admitted that he certainly felt he would be retained by KKR, especially after the franchise had the retention talk right after the end of the season. However, he was left "perplexed" over no effort from KKR thereafter, as it eventually led to him deciding to part ways.

Shami puts in the hard yards at India's first training session ahead of England T20Is

Agencies : Mohammed Shami's bowling was the focus of India's first training session in Kolkata ahead of their T20I series against England that gets underway on January 22. Shami, who has not played international cricket since the 2023 ODI World Cup final, bowled for over an hour with his knee strapped, with bowling coach Morne Morkel keeping a close eye on his progress. Shami had not been considered for any part of the Border-Gavaskar Test series, despite having fully recovered from his ankle surgery, because of swelling on his knee. On Sunday, Shami began by marking a spot on a good-length area on the practice pitches, and then warmed up by bowling with a half run-up for more than 20 minutes. Later, he bowled with his full run-up to openers Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma in the nets. In between, he practiced short- and long-range catching with fielding coach T Dilip and head coach Gautam Gambhir. After the net sessions ended, Shami closed the evening out with a ten-minute spell of bowling on the practice pitches. By the time his session wound down, Shami was bowling at nearly full tilt. The fitness of Shami, 34, has been a concern for India for more than 12 months, and now he has been selected for the upcoming T20Is and ODIs against England to test his readiness.

Sachin Tendulkar Reveals His Only 'Special Request' To BCCI For Farewell Match At Wankhede

Agencies : Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar revealed, "Before the series for my last match was announced, I reached out to the BCCI with one request: I wanted my final match to be held in Mumbai for a very special reason. Despite playing cricket for nearly 30 years-24 of them for India-my mother had never seen me play live. At the time, her health wasn't good enough for her to travel anywhere except Wankhede. I wanted her to see, firsthand, why I had been traveling to different places for 24 years. The BCCI graciously accepted my request..."

India cricketer Rinku Singh to marry Samajwadi Party MP Priya Saroj

Agencies : Star Indian batter Rinku Singh is set to marry Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Priya Saroj, according to her family. Priya Saroj's father, Tufani Saroj, SP MLA from Kerakat, said that his family held "meaningful talks" with Rinku Singh's father in Aligarh on January 16 regarding the marriage of their children, and both sides agreed to the matrimonial alliance. "No ring ceremony or pre-wedding program has been held so far," Tufani Saroj told PTI. Tufani Saroj said that his daughter Priya met Rinku Singh through one of her friends, whose father is also a cricketer. "Rinku and Priya have known each other for more than a year now. They both liked each other but needed their families' consent for the relationship. Both families have agreed to this marriage," he said. Saroj's father confirmed that the dates for the engagement and wedding will be finalised after the Parliament session, while the engagement is planned in Lucknow. Rinku Singh shot to prominence when he hit Gujarat Titans pacer Yash Dayal for 5 sixes in an over to help KKR win a last-over thriller in IPL 2023. Rinku was then part of the KKR side that won IPL 2024 and has been a regular figure in India's T20I side. Rinku is part of India's squad for the five-match T20I series against England, starting from January 22 in Kolkata. The Indian cricketer will then represent Kolkata Knight Riders in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025. "It will be ensured that the wedding functions do not affect his cricketing schedule," Saroj's father added. The two families met at Rinku Singh's house in Ozone City, Aligarh, and finalised the marriage by exchanging shagun.