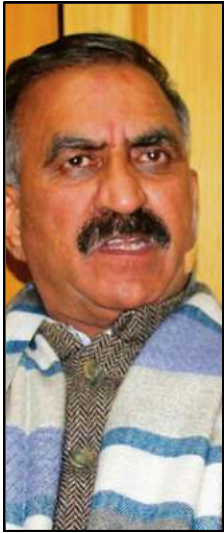


Himachal Chief Minister Sukhu Said- Temples Will Be Beautified, Bamboo Based Industry Will Be Set Up In Gagret



Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that Shaktipeeths Jwalamukhi, Naina Devi, Chintapurni and Baba Balaknath temple are being beautified in the first phase. After this, work will be started on the beautification of other temples of the state. The Agriculture and Forest Department has been instructed to explore the possibilities of setting up bamboo-based industries in Gagret. Also, he asked to start water sports soon in Gobindsagar Lake in Kulehad of Una district. He said that the state government is promoting the operation of e-vehicles and the tender process for purchasing 327 electric buses is also in the final stage. He also emphasized on setting up charging stations for e-vehicles in the state. The CM said that Himachal will become a green energy state by March 31, 2026. On Tuesday, the second day of MLA priority meetings, the Chief Minister discussed their priorities with the MLAs of Shimla, Mandi, Sirmaur, Una and Hamirpur districts. Sukhu said that funds will be made available to start the Kurpan drinking water scheme of Theog. He directed the Jal Shakti Department to complete this scheme by April 30. The condition of Rohru-Chidgaon road will be improved. The Chief Minister said that the state government is promoting industries in accordance with the natural beauty of Himachal Pradesh by bringing policy changes. Tourism, dairy, IT and data storage, food processing and other green industries are being promoted in the state.

Himachal: Himachal stood third in the senior category korfbal competition

Diary Times Desk : The players of Himachal Pradesh have given an excellent performance in the 20th sub-junior and 36th senior category national level korfbal competition held at Jalandhar Lovely University. In the senior category, the Himachal Pradesh team defeated the Jammu & Kashmir state team and secured the third position in the competition. Whereas in the sub-junior category, the Himachal Pradesh team could reach only till the quarter finals. All India Korfbal Federation's Vice President and State General Secretary BR Suman said that in the sub-junior category, the state's team topped its pool by defeating the teams of Goa, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir states. Similarly, the senior category players have also performed brilliantly. In this, the players defeated many states.

PM Modi Tells Opposition To Read 'JFK's Forgotten Crisis'

Agencies : A day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Chinese troops were forcibly occupying Indian land — a remark the Government dismissed today — Prime Minister Narendra Modi advised Gandhi and the Opposition to read "JFK's Forgotten Crisis", a book by US foreign policy expert Bruce Riedel. Taking a veiled jibe at Gandhi, Modi, in his reply to the Motion of Thanks to President's address, said anyone interested in foreign policy must read the book. "Some people feel they don't look mature enough until they have spoken on foreign policy even if it means harming the country. I have a suggestion for such people — if they really have interest in foreign policy, they should read "JFK's Forgotten Crisis", Modi said. The PM added the book mentions important milestones in the life of former US president John F Kennedy, including his meetings and decisions with India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In the chapter titled "Tibet, CIA and the Sino-Indian War", the author says, "The embassy had rented a villa for Mrs Kennedy to stay in but Nehru insisted that she stay in a guest suite at the prime minister's residence. It was the suite often used by Edwina Mountbatten, the wife of India's last viceroy Lord Mountbatten, who had presided over the Partition.



'Bodies dumped in JCB machines': Akhilesh Yadav's Maha Kumbh stampede speech in Lok Sabha

Agencies : Bodies were filled in JCB machines and tractors, and no one knows where they went, alleged former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav while speaking in Lok Sabha on Maha Kumbh stampede. Yadav said: "When it was known that some people had lost their lives, their bodies were lying in the mortuary and in the hospital, then the govt filled their government helicopter with flowers and showered flower petals. What kind of Sanatani tradition is this?... God knows how many slippers, clothes, and sarees were lying there and they lifted all of them using JCB machines and tractor trolleys. Nobody knows where they were thrown. To hide everything, it is heard that some pressure and some sweeteners are being given so that their news does not come out..." The SP leader's statement could spark a controversy ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Prayagraj on Wednesday. Yadav demanded transparency regarding the fatalities at the Maha Kumbh stampede, urging the government to present accurate figures on the deaths, treatment of the injured, and arrangements made for the event. He also called for an all-party meeting to clarify the situation and recommended that disaster management and the lost and found centre be handed over to the Army. "While the government is continuously giving budget figures, please also give the figures of those who died in Mahakumbh. I demand an all-party meeting should be called to give clarification about the arrangements for Mahakumbh. The responsibility of Mahakumbh disaster management and lost and found centre should be given to the Army.

Kumbh stampede not a big incident, says Hema Malini

Agencies : The Maha Kumbh stampede was not a "big incident" and is being "exaggerated", BJP MP Hema Malini said on Tuesday asserting the congregation is being managed very well. The stampede took place on January 29, the occasion of Mauni Amavasya, one of the most auspicious days of the Hindu calendar. According to official figures released by the Uttar Pradesh government, at least 30 people lost their lives and 60 were injured in the pre-dawn stampede at the Sangam area in Prayagraj. "We had gone to Kumbh...We had a nice bath...Everything was well-managed. It is right that the incident (stampede) took place ... Itna kuch bada nai hua tha (it was not a very big incident). I don't know how big it was. It is being exaggerated... It was very well-managed, and everything was done very well... So many people are coming, it is very difficult to manage.

National Master Games Will Be Held in Dharamshala, 6000 Players From Across The Country Will Show Their Talent In 24 Games

Diary Times Desk : National Master Games will be organized in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh in April. Around 6000 players from across the country will show their talent in 24 sports including football and volleyball. Players above 30 years of age from across the country will participate in the competition. Super Masters Games and Sports Federation Director Organizer and State Master Games Association General Secretary Tejaswi Sharma gave this information in a press conference. Vinod Kumar of Super Masters Games and Sports Federation gave detailed information about the preparations for organizing the games. During this, the poster of National Master Games was also released. Players will also participate in the international games in Taiwan. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu will inaugurate the games.



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Kasauli gang rape case: Victim sought status report of her case, court is on holiday till 17 February

Diary Times Desk : In the gangrape case against Haryana BJP state president Mohan Lal Baroli and singer Rocky Mittal, the victim has written a letter to Kasauli court seeking a status report of her case. In this, the victim has asked for a report on how far the police investigation has progressed in her case. However, Kasauli court is currently on vacation till February 17. In such a situation, now the court has sought a full report of the case from the police. It is being told that last week when the court was open, the statement of the victim's friend was also taken in the court. In this, the friend has denied the gangrape. The friend told the court in her statement that nothing happened to her friend in front of her. However, the victim had given this statement to the media earlier as well. If sources are to be believed, the police has also prepared its report. Which will be presented after the court opens. It is being told that the police has not found any concrete evidence in this. Due to which this case has become very weak. Note that on December 13, a woman had registered a case of gangrape against Haryana BJP state president and singer Rocky Mittal. She had said that she was gang-raped in a hotel in Kasauli. After which the matter came into discussion. However, the woman had said that she was gang-raped in the year 2023. In such a situation, it became difficult for the police to investigate this one and a half year old case. But now the police has prepared its status report. After a rape case was registered against Haryana BJP state president Mohan Lal Baroli, his reaction has come for the first time. He called all the allegations against him false. He said that these allegations are false. I cannot say anything on these allegations. In the gang rape case against Haryana BJP state president Mohan Lal Baroli and singer Rocky Mittal, the victim has given a letter to the Kasauli court seeking a status report of her case.

EC hits back at AAP: We are 3-member body, not run by one person

Agencies : Amid allegations levelled by the Aam Aadmi Party that the Election Commission is being run by CEC Rajiv Kumar, the poll panel on Tuesday hit back saying it is a three-member body which has collectively noted "repeated deliberate pressure tactics" to malign the poll authority in Delhi polls. It said an impression is being created that the EC is a single member body. In a post on X, the EC said it has decided to have constitutional restraint, absorbing such outbursts with sagacity, stoically and not to be swayed by such insinuations. Top AAP leaders, including its convener Arvind Kejriwal, have claimed that the EC has been ignoring the BJP's alleged violations of poll code. Kejriwal had alleged that Kumar is not taking action against the BJP to bag a post-retirement assignment. Kumar demits office on February 18 on attaining the age of 65 years.

Mandi International Mahashivratri Fair: Badadev Kamrunag got Newdra, a grand meeting will be held on 25 February

Diary Times Desk : Badadev Kamrunag of the district has received the invitation from DC Mandi to inaugurate the International Mahashivratri Fair of Mandi. After the grand meeting of Dev Kamrunag and Rajdevta Madhorai in Mandi on 25 February, the work of Mahashivratri festival will formally begin. The temple committee has not yet decided the date of when the deity will leave for Mandi from his residence. Mahashivratri fair does not start until Badadev Kamrunag reaches Mandi. Badadev's caretakers have started preparations for Mandi Mahashivratri. The deity's Guru Devi Singh and Katwal Kahan Singh Thakur have confirmed the deity's arrival in Mandi on 25 February. It takes more than a week for the deity to reach Mandi. The deity is given a grand welcome at various places from Jahal to Mandi. On 25 February, DC Mandi will welcome Badadev at Pulgharat. After this, the deity will be welcomed by the royal family of Mandi state in Mandi city and Mahashivratri will commence with the union of Dev Kamrunag with Lord Madhorai. During the hospitality period, Dev Kamrunag stays in Mandi district for about a month. During the Shivratri fair, the deity visits the houses of devotees and blesses them. During the Mahashivratri fair, Dev Kamrunag sits alone in the Tarna temple. All other deities sit in the Paddal ground.

Elderly man duped of Rs 72.98 lakh in share trading fraud

Agencies : Thane police have registered a case against two persons and a company for allegedly duping a 70-year-old man of Rs 72.98 lakh after luring him to invest in a fake share trading scheme, an official said on Tuesday. The victim, hailing from neighbouring Mumbai, stayed at his brother's place in Maharashtra's Thane city over the last five months. During this period, the accused contacted him through various digital platforms, offering attractive investment opportunities in share trading with promises of high returns. However, after making the investments, the victim neither received the promised returns nor the invested amount, the official from Kasarwadavali police station said. When he tried to contact the accused, they stopped responding to his calls and messages, raising suspicion, he said. The victim approached the police on Sunday with a complaint. The police subsequently registered a case against two persons and an investment firm under relevant legal provisions, the official said. Efforts were on to trace the accused and identify whether the fraudulent activities extend to other victims.

Himachal News: Govinda's wife reached to visit Mata Shri Naina Devi ji, performed puja with her daughter

Diary Times Desk : On Tuesday, Bollywood's famous actor Govinda's wife Sunita Ahuja along with her daughter Tina Ahuja reached the famous Shakti Peeth Mata Shri Naina Devi to have darshan of Mata. She bowed down at the feet of the Mata and prayed for happiness and prosperity of herself and her family. The temple priest Amit Kumar got Sunita Ahuja and her daughter to perform the ritualistic worship. Sacrifices were also offered in the ancient havan kund. Priest Amit Sharma gave them detailed information about the history, miracles and religious programs of Mata Shri Naina Devi Ji. Sunita Ahuja was welcomed by the temple trust by giving her a chunari and prasad. She was also presented with a souvenir. During the conversation, Sunita Ahuja told that she has been visiting Mata Chintapurni, Jwala Ji and Brajeshwari temple every year, but she always missed the darshan of Mata Shri Naina Devi Ji. This time she started her journey with the darshan of Mata Shri Naina Devi ji, so that she may receive the blessings of the mother and all her future pilgrimages may also be auspicious.



UN General Assembly President Yang to arrive in India for 5-day visit

Agencies : Philemon Yang, President of the United Nations General Assembly, will arrive in India on Tuesday evening. Yang would be on a five-day visit to India (February 4 to February 8), the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement. Yang is scheduled to meet President Droupadi Murmu and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during his visit. The UN President is also scheduled to attend a programme in Bengaluru, Karnataka. In June last year, Cameroon's Yang was elected as the UN President of its seventy-ninth session, which runs from September 2024 until September 2025. Ahead of his India visit, Yang praised India, stating that New Delhi continues to fulfill its obligations as a member state of the UN by paying its dues in full and on time. India has paid US\$ 37.64 million to the United Nations Regular Budget for 2025, joining the "honour roll" of 35 member states who have paid their regular budget assessments in full and on time to the UN. According to the UN Committee on Contributions, as of January 31, 2025, thirty-five member states have paid their regular budget assessments in full within the 30-day due period specified in UN financial regulations.



ASER: Learning level of Himachal children increased in language and mathematics, survey report submitted to Education Minister

Diary Times Desk : There has been a significant improvement in the learning level of children in government schools of Himachal Pradesh. This conclusion has come out in the ASER (ASER 2024) report released by Pratham Education Foundation. This report was submitted to Education Minister Rohit Thakur by Pratham Sansthan. During this, State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Rajesh Sharma was specially present. The Education Minister said that due to the efforts of the state government, a major improvement has been seen in the quality of education. He described the findings of the ASER report as commendable and emphasized on taking corrective steps in the next academic session. Samagra Shiksha Director Rajesh Sharma assured the Education Minister that a comprehensive action plan would be prepared under Samagra Shiksha to further improve the learning level of children. The report also revealed that there has been a significant improvement in the reading ability of students in government schools of Himachal Pradesh. In the year 2022, while only 23.0 percent of the children of class III could read the text of class II level in the language, now in 2024 this number has doubled to 46.6 percent. With this achievement, Himachal is at the top in the whole country.



Himachal: Six colleges have less than 50 students, 12 have less than 100 students, Directorate of Education has prepared a proposal to close them

Diary Times Desk : Six colleges in Himachal Pradesh have less than 50 students and 12 have less than 100 students. On the instructions of the government, the Directorate of Higher Education has prepared a proposal to close colleges with less students. The decision to close these colleges will be taken in the state cabinet meeting. There are 11 colleges with a student strength of 150. The directorate has also sent a proposal regarding whether to close them or not. It will be decided in the cabinet meeting how many colleges with how many students will be closed. Students studying in the closed colleges will be shifted to nearby institutions. Lecturers, non-teachers will be transferred to colleges in need. Departmental officials said that the number of students in colleges in headquarters and cities is better than colleges in remote areas. In such a situation, the government is going to close such colleges to provide quality education where the enrollment of students has not been increasing for the last few years. It is worth noting that in March 2023, the state government had also closed 17 degree and two Sanskrit colleges opened after April 1, 2022 during the BJP government. On the request of former Chief Minister Jairam Thakur, Chhattri College of Saraj Assembly was saved from closure.

Himachal Weather: Weather changed in Himachal, snowfall in high altitude areas including Rohtang, rain in many parts

Diary Times Desk : The weather has changed in many parts of Himachal Pradesh. Snowfall has started in the high altitude areas of tribal areas Lahaul-Spiti, Chamba, Kinnaur including Atal Tunnel Rohtang from Tuesday morning. Due to snowfall at both ends of the Atal Tunnel, the police administration has instructed tourists and common people not to travel in this direction. At the same time, the farmers and gardeners of the state, troubled by the drought-like conditions, are also eagerly waiting for rain. There was drizzle in Shimla as well. At the same time, tourists had a lot of fun near the South Portal of Atal Tunnel Rohtang amidst the snow. Snowfall is occurring in the upper areas of Kinnaur district and rain in the lower area. Heavy rain was recorded in Sansarpur Terrace and surrounding villages of Kangra district. According to the Meteorological Center Shimla.

Himachal : Ruckus over recruitment in Himachal Assembly, Randhir Sharma said- jobs were given to favourites, recruitment should be cancelled

Diary Times Desk : BJP has made a big allegation of rigging in the jobs in the state assembly. Randhir Sharma, MLA from Srinayana Devi, accusing the state Congress government, said that on January 31, the Assembly Secretariat issued two notifications and appointed 14 people. Five of these appointments were made from the Assembly Speaker's constituency Chamba, five from Hamirpur, the Chief Minister's constituency and two each from the Assembly Deputy Speaker's constituency and Sirmaur. The MLA said that BJP strongly opposes the distribution of jobs and demands that these recruitments be cancelled and made on merit basis. In a press conference on Tuesday, Randhir asked the government whether transparency was maintained in the jobs. Were qualifications and reservation rights kept. If kept, were the eligible people in these three assembly constituencies? BJP alleges that by rigging, jobs were given to the favourites of the Chief Minister, Assembly Speaker and Deputy Speaker on these posts. Someone's driver's son was given a job.

Himachal Pradesh: Development work will not be delayed unnecessarily in Panchayats, Himachal government has taken a big decision

Diary Times Desk : Taking another step towards system change, the state government has taken an important decision to bring the development works being done through panchayats on the ground as soon as possible and to give them momentum. To curb the tendency of hanging development works in panchayats without any solid reason, the state government has given powers to the BDO to start construction work. The department has issued a notification and made it clear that if the panchayat fails to start the development work within a month, then the BDO starts the development work at his own level. For this, the BDO can start the work through the JE and Assistant Engineer of his department under Rule 93 (3) of the Panchayati Raj Act, so that there is no delay in them. According to sources, the Chief Minister has given instructions.

Sukhu said- 50 percent of BJP MLAs wanted to come to the meeting, but did not come due to Jairam's stubborn attitude

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Tuesday discussed the priorities of the MLAs of Shimla and Mandi districts in the first session of the second day of the MLA priority meetings. During this, CM Sukhu while talking to journalists said that 50 percent of the BJP MLAs contacted me and said that they want to come (for the MLA priority meeting) and they also told Jairam Thakur that he should come, put his point in front of the officials. I think that due to the stubborn attitude of Jairam Thakur, the MLAs boycotted the meeting and did not attend... They will not be able to raise the issues of their constituencies now. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu discussed the priorities of the MLAs of Shimla and Mandi districts in the first session of the second day of the MLA priority meetings. The Chief Minister said that the MLAs should give suggestions in accordance with the future challenges, so that Himachal Pradesh can be made self-reliant. He said that the suggestions of the MLAs will be given priority in the budget. The public elects the MLAs, so they are aware of the public problems. Sukhu said that the present state government has Focus.

Himachal: The Deputy Commissioner will decide the weather based holidays in Himachal schools, the Education Department has decided the schedule

Diary Times Desk : The right to give weather based holidays in the schools of Himachal Pradesh will remain with the District Deputy Commissioners. The new schedule made by the Education Department to decide the holidays of schools is almost finalized. Now only the approval of the government is left for this. Under the new system, the District Deputy Commissioner will decide 20 holidays in the summer schools of Himachal during rainy and summer. It will not have much impact on the holidays of winter schools. The new schedule of holidays will be notified this month. Departmental officials said that suggestions and objections have been taken from all stakeholders for the new schedule. Under the possible schedule of summer.

"2,000 Died": Team Uddhav MP's Kumbh Stampede Remark Sparks Row

Agencies : Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Tuesday triggered an uproar in the Rajya Sabha by claiming that "2,000 people died" in the January 29 Maha Kumbh stampede, prompting Deputy Chairman Harivansh to ask him to authenticate the figure. During the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, Sanjay Raut questioned the official death count of 30 in the stampede. "When the stampede happened 4-5 days back, it was told (that) it was not stampede but a rumour...30 people died. Whether the figure is true? Don't hide it... We are responsible even if one person died...The figures that we have seen with our eyes is 2,000 people were dead," he said. The Shiv Sena leader blamed "poor management" for the tragedy, terming the Kumbh a "political event for political marketing". He said that in other countries, such an incident would have led to demands for the resignation of the prime minister and chief minister. As treasury bench members protested, the Deputy Chairman told Mr Raut, "if you mention any figure, you have to substantiate".

US Air Force confirms participation in Aero India 2025 in Bengaluru: Sources

Agencies : Amid speculation that the US Air Force could withdraw from Aero India 2025, official sources have confirmed that Washington will participate in the global defence event, which is set to take place in Bengaluru from February 10-14. The confirmation came after concerns arose following the Trump 2.0 administration taking office in January this year. The US Air Force is expected to send two F-16 and two F-35 fighter jets to India for the event. However, unlike the previous edition in 2023, these jets will be part of the static display and not participate in the aerial demonstrations at Yelahanka Air Force Station. While the US presence remains significant, it marks a shift in the country's approach to the air show this year. Meanwhile, Russia is set to make a strong impression at Aero India 2025, with its Su-57 fifth-generation fighter making its flying debut at the event. The Su-57's participation in the air display is expected to be a key highlight, especially as India continues to evaluate fighter jet procurements for the coming years. The Russian aircraft's presence signals deeper engagement between India and Russia in the defence sector, a relationship that has remained crucial despite shifting geopolitical dynamics.

'Urban Naxals language; photo sessions in huts': How PM Narendra Modi hit back at Rahul Gandhi in Parliament



Agencies : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders while replying to the Motion of Thanks to President Droupadi Murmu's Address in the Lok Sabha. PM Narendra Modi accused some leaders of speaking the "language of urban Naxals" and misleading the youth with false promises. "It is unfortunate that today some people are speaking the language of urban Naxals openly, challenging the Indian state and declaring a fight against it. Those who speak this language neither understand the Constitution nor the unity of the nation," Narendra Modi said. On January 15, Rahul Gandhi had stated that "the BJP and RSS have captured every single institution, and we are now fighting the BJP, the RSS, and the Indian State itself". An FIR was registered against him at the Pan Bazar Police Station in Guwahati. Rahul Gandhi made the statement during the inauguration of the Congress Party's new headquarters at Kotla Road in Delhi.

PM Modi To Visit Maha Kumbh, Take Holy Dip At Sangam Today

Agencies : Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Wednesday and at around 11 am, he will take a holy dip at the Sangam, his office said. Maha Kumbh 2025, which commenced on Paush Purnima (January 13, 2025), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. The Maha Kumbh will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said. Prime Minister Modi will visit Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj on February 5, it said. At around 11 am, he will take a holy dip at the Sangam.

"Engines Colliding?" Akhilesh Yadav Uses BJP Slogan To Jab Yogi Adityanath

Agencies : Those claiming to have organised a digital Kumbh could not give digits to the casualties in the Prayagraj stampede, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said in Lok Sabha today as he launched a scathing attack on the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh. Addressing the House during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, Mr Yadav said the Centre had quoted big numbers in the Union Budget. "They gave a lot of numbers in the Budget, they should also give the numbers of the dead."

BJP Moves Privilege Notice Against Rahul Gandhi Over Lok Sabha Speech

Agencies : BJP MP Nisikant Dubey has requested the Lok Sabha Chairman to initiate a breach of privilege motion against Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi after he claimed on the floor of the parliament that Chinese troops were present on Indian soil. This triggered an uproar in Lok Sabha yesterday with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju accusing the Congress leader of lying. Mr Dubey, in a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, said that Mr Gandhi "not only shamelessly distorted the historical and substantive facts in his speech but also made an attempt to ridicule our country and lowering the prestige of our Republic". Replying to the President's address during the Budget Session, Mr Gandhi had launched an all-out attack on the government. The Modi government, he alleged in his Lok Sabha speech, had failed to boost the manufacturing sector through the 'Make in India' initiative. This was responsible for the presence of Chinese troops on Indian soil, he claimed.

"Tactics To Malign": Poll Body Hits Back At AAP A Day Before Delhi Votes

Agencies : The Election Commission responded Tuesday afternoon to what it called "repeated pressure tactics" by "political parties and candidates" to malign and question its authority a day before the Delhi election. In a post on X the poll body said it had noted such attempts, but opted for "restraint, absorbing such outbursts with sagacity, stoicism" and said it would "not be swayed by such insinuations". It also noted that "issues raised" ahead of the Delhi poll were investigated and acted on "by over 1.5 lakh officials."

PM Modi Likely To Visit US On February 12, Hold Talks With Trump: Sources

Agencies : Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit the US on February 12, sources in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. This would be PM Modi's first visit to the US after President Donald Trump's historic comeback to the White House. According to the travel plan, PM Modi will fly to Washington DC after his two-day visit to Paris, sources said, adding there is no official announcement yet. PM Modi will be among a handful of foreign leaders to travel to Washington DC on a bilateral visit within weeks after the Trump administration came to power. PM Modi is travelling to Paris to attend the Artificial Intelligence Action summit on February 10 and 11. If PM Modi goes to the US, it would be amid concerns in India over Donald Trump's approach on immigration and tariffs. Donald Trump on Sunday announced imposing a 25 per cent tariff on Canadian and Mexican imports as well as an additional 10 per cent tax on Chinese goods. Later, he put a hold tariff on Mexican imports, but did not announce any relief for the other two.



Israel's Netanyahu to discuss fragile Gaza ceasefire with Trump

Agencies : Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to meet United States President Donald Trump with the agenda to focus on the paused war in Gaza, as well as Iran. The two leaders are due to meet in the early afternoon on Tuesday, sources told news agencies. The meeting takes place as indirect negotiations between Israel and Iran-backed Hamas on the second phase of the fragile Gaza ceasefire agreement are due. Ahead of the meeting, Trump said that discussions with Israel and other countries on the Middle East were "progressing" but offered no details. The US leader admitted, however, that the ceasefire is uncertain. "I have no guarantees that the peace is going to hold," he told reporters. His Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, who met with the Israeli leader on Monday, added: "We're certainly hopeful." Netanyahu's office announced on Tuesday that an Israeli negotiating team is preparing to travel to Qatar this weekend for talks on the second phase. The team will discuss "technical details related to continuing to carry out" the agreement, it said in a statement.

Canada's Ontario bans US firms from contracts, scraps Elon Musk's Starlink deal

Agencies : Ontario, Canada's most populous province, announced on Monday that it was banning US companies from provincial contracts and cancelling a 100 million Canadian dollar contract with Elon Musk's Starlink in response to tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump on Canada. Beginning Tuesday, Trump said on February 1 that the US will impose 25 per cent tariffs on virtually all Canadian imports excepting oil, which has a 10 per cent surcharge. If the measures are prolonged, the Canadian economy will go into recession. Ontario Premier Doug Ford, one of the more hard-line premiers on the question of retaliation, said the province will not do business with "people hellbent on destroying our economy". He also said that US-based businesses will now lose out on tens of billions of dollars due to Trump. "Starting today and until US tariffs are removed, Ontario is banning American companies from provincial contracts. Every year, the Ontario government and its agencies spend USD 30 billion.

Hidden Mud Volcano Under The Arctic Ocean Full Of Life, Say Scientists

Agencies : A mud volcano, deep beneath the icy waters of the Barents Sea, is flourishing with marine life, scientists have confirmed. The Borealis Mud Volcano, 400 metres below the surface, continuously releases methane-rich fluids, creating a unique deep-sea ecosystem that researchers now believe serves as a sanctuary for vulnerable species. The Barents Sea is in the Arctic Ocean, north of Norway and Russia. The Borealis Mud Volcano was discovered in 2023 by scientists from UiT – The Arctic University of Norway using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) called Aurora. The ROV captured high-resolution footage and collected samples, showing the seafloor around the volcano covered with carbonate deposits. This suggests that methane has been seeping from the site for thousands of years. Unlike regular volcanoes that erupt with lava, mud volcanoes release mud, gases, and water from beneath the Earth's crust. The methane-rich environment at Borealis has created a unique ecosystem where marine life has adapted and is thriving.



China Counters Trump, Imposes 15% Tariff On Coal, Gas Imports From US



Agencies : China slapped tariffs on a range of US products and announced a probe into Google moments after President Donald Trump imposed a 10% tariff on goods from Beijing, reigniting a trade war between the world's largest economies. China will investigate the US tech giant for alleged antitrust violations, according to a Tuesday statement from the State Administration for Market Regulation. Beijing hit US coal and liquefied natural gas exports with a 15% levy, and targeted its oil and agricultural equipment with a 10% fee. Authorities also put Calvin Klein owner PVH Corp. and US gene sequencing company Illumina Inc. onto a so-called blacklist of entities, as well as imposing new export control on tungsten-related materials. "The US's unilateral imposition of tariffs seriously violates the rules of the World Trade Organization," China's Finance Ministry said in a statement announcing tariffs. "It is not only unhelpful in solving its own problems, but also undermines the normal economic and trade cooperation between China and the US."

5 Injured In Shooting At School In Sweden's Orebro

Agencies : Five people were shot and wounded at a school in the central Swedish city of Orebro on Tuesday, police said, urging the public to stay away from the area as a large operation was underway. Images from the scene showed a large police presence with multiple ambulances and emergency vehicles outside the school. School attacks are relatively rare in Sweden, which has in recent years grown more accustomed to shootings and bombings linked to gang violence that kill dozens of people each year. The extent of the injuries is unclear. The operation is ongoing," police said in a statement, adding later that no officers had been wounded during the operation. Police initially said that four people had been shot, but updated the tally minutes later to five. The crime was being investigated as "attempted murder, arson.

NASA Astronaut Shares Magical Picture Of Burj Khalifa From Space

Agencies : NASA astronaut Donald Roy Pettit has shared a breathtaking picture of Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the tallest structure in the world, from space. Captured from the International Space Station (ISS), the photograph featured the Burj Khalifa shining brightly against Dubai's well-lit skyline. Donald shared the picture on X (formerly Twitter) and wrote, "Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building from space." Mr Pettit's photograph of Burj Khalifa went viral in no time, with people marvelling at the beauty of the structure. "An incredible photo!" said a person. Don Pettit's space shot of the Burj Khalifa came days after NASA's space photograph of Dubai's dazzling city lights was made public by the Dubai Government Media Office. The image showed Dubai's dazzling network of connectivity including major roads and highways. It also highlighted the city's strategically located coastline and artificial islands. Mr Pettit is a 70-year-old chemical engineer and an experienced American astronaut known for his work in orbital astrophotography. Since being chosen by NASA in 1996, he has completed more than 13 hours of spacewalks and over 500 days in space on several ISS missions.

Govt gets another shot at PIA sale

Agencies : The government is making another attempt to privatise PIA after the previous effort in which a sole investor submitted a bid of Rs10 billion, significantly lower than officials' expectations. The lack of interest shown by the buyers during the first round of privatisation was due to multiple reasons, including the 18 per cent GST on the purchase of new aircraft and the national carrier's liabilities. The National Assembly Standing Committee on Privatisation was informed on Monday that the government had removed 18pc GST on the purchase of new aircraft in a bid to spur investors' interest. The Privatisation Commission chairman informed the committee that the IMF agreed to remove the tax after the government presented its concerns. According to information provided to the standing committee, PIA's liabilities amounted to Rs45bn. Of this amount, Rs 26bn is owed to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) under various taxation charges, Rs10bn to the Civil Aviation Authority, and the remaining is pension liabilities. The committee was informed that a mechanism would be devised to address outstanding issues, ensuring that financial burdens do not hinder potential.

Police to be friendly with those deported from US: Punjab DGP

Agencies : Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav on Tuesday said the government would be friendly with the immigrants who would land at the Amritsar airport on Wednesday after being deported from the US. "However, criminal antecedents, if any, would be checked and due action taken," he said. Police officials said teams had been deputed to take details from each deportee on the history of their illegal immigration. "These people can provide real inputs about the illegal immigration, including donkey routes and how travel agents fleece people," said an official. The DGP was answering media queries about how the police would deal with more than 200 illegal immigrants deported from the US and sent to India on a special flight. "We don't know yet about the identity and their cases but are in touch with central agencies," Yadav said. Besides police, central agencies are also likely to question and record statements of the immigrants when they land in Amritsar at 8 am.



Haryana to conduct civic body elections on March 2

Agencies : The State Election Commissioner Dhanpat Singh on Tuesday announced civic body elections for 8 municipal corporations, four municipal councils and 21 Municipal Committees. The Model Code of Conduct has been implemented in the jurisdiction of these civic bodies. Polling for municipal corporations of Faridabad, Gurugram, Manesar, Hisar, Karnal, Rohtak and Yamunanagar, and four municipal councils of Ambala Sadar, Pataudi Jatauli Mandi, Thanesar and Sirsa will take place on March 2. Polling for 21 municipal committees—Barara, Bawani Khera, Loharu, Siwan, Jakhhal Mandi, Farukh Nagar, Narnaunda, Beri, Julana, Kalayat, Siwan, Pundri, Indri, Nilokheri, Ateli Mandi, Kanina, Taoru, Hathin, Kalanaur, Kharkhoda and Radaur—will also be held on March 2. In case of Panipat, the polling will take place on March 9.

Anil Vij not upset with me, he's our senior leader: Haryana CM

Agencies : Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini on Tuesday claimed that Energy and Transport Minister Anil Vij is not upset with him, adding that he is a senior party leader and has the right to have his say. Saini's reaction came amid Vij consistently taking swipes at him in the past few days. Vij earlier claimed that no action was taken against those who played a "role" in trying to defeat him in the 2024 assembly elections from Ambala Cantt. He had alleged that an attempt was made to defeat him in the assembly polls last year. Asked whether Vij is upset, Saini said there is no 'narazgi'. "We were together in the cabinet (meeting on Tuesday). We also held a review meeting of a department," Saini told reporters after the cabinet meeting. On Vij's statements indicating he is upset, Saini said, "He is our senior leader. There is no narazgi... He has the right to have his say," said Saini.

Vij sharpens attack on party, Saini; vents ire on X

Agencies : Haryana Cabinet minister Anil Vij today launched a fresh attack against his party and Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, and accused some party leaders of working against him during the last Assembly elections. Vij, who has been constantly venting his ire in public and on social media platforms, in a post on X wrote, "Ashish Tayal, who calls himself a friend of Nayab Saini.

Chandigarh not designated World Heritage City: Centre to Parliament

Agencies : The Centre today informed Parliament that the Union Territory of Chandigarh had not been designated as a World Heritage City, while the Chandigarh Capitol Complex was inscribed as a Transnational World Heritage Property in 2016 under the title "The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement." This information was given by Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Shekhawat in response to a starred question posed by Congress' Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha. Though Tewari did not ask the question during Question Hour, as all Opposition members were protesting in the well of the House on the issue of Maha Kumbh stampede in Prayagraj, the printed reply submitted by the ministry to his question said, "The Union Territory of Chandigarh City has not been designated as a World Heritage City. However, the Chandigarh Capitol Complex has been inscribed as a Transnational World Heritage Property in 2016 under the title 'The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement'. This Transnational World Heritage Property includes seven countries.

Beant Singh murder: Punjab opposes Hawara's plea for jail transfer in SC

Agencies : The Punjab Government on Tuesday opposed Beant Singh murder case convict Jagtar Singh Hawara's petition seeking his transfer from Tihar Jail in the national capital to a jail in Punjab, saying he can't be shifted to Punjab as he was tried in Chandigarh. "In Punjab, he has no claim. If at all he is to be transferred, it is to the UT of Chandigarh," Punjab Advocate General Gurminder Singh told a Bench led by Justice BR Gavai, adding a similar petition filed by Hawara was dismissed by the Delhi High Court in 2018. The Advocate General submitted that Hawara was tried in Chandigarh where he did a jail-break and the Punjab prison rules would not be applicable to Chandigarh. Singh said Delhi had taken a stand that Hawara can't be transferred to Punjab as it was a border state and that he can go back to Chandigarh. The Bench asked the Centre and Delhi Government and Chandigarh Administration to respond in four weeks to Hawara's petition seeking his transfer from Tihar Jail in the national capital to a jail in Punjab and posted the matter for hearing after four weeks. Hawara (54) has sought his transfer to a Punjab jail on the grounds that he demonstrated good conduct in jail.

Mayor discusses development, Swachh ranking at first meet

Agencies : Mayor Harpreet Kaur Babla today discussed various issues pertaining to the city's development during an interaction with councillors and officers of the Municipal Corporation (MC) here today. While AAP councillors attended the meeting, those of the Congress gave it a miss. Municipal Commissioner Amit Kumar, Joint Commissioners Gurinder Singh Sodhi, Sumit Sihag and Shashi Vasundhara, and Superintending Engineer, Horticulture and Electricity, KP Singh, were also present in the meeting. In her brief speech, the Mayor expressed the need for a time-bound work by the Municipal Corporation. She requested all councillors and officers to call her for any kind of issues related to the MC and development works in their respective wards and departments. She said overall development was her priority and the pending works would be completed soon with the co-operation of the councillors and officials. Public participation to ensure the beautification of the city is necessary, she added.



CM to lay stone of green hydrogen plant today

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu will lay the foundation stone of the state's first 1 MW capacity green hydrogen plant in the Dabhota area of Nalagarh on February 5. With a proposed investment of Rs 8 crore, the plant is a joint venture of HP Power Corporation Limited and Government of India's Public Sector Undertaking, Oil India Limited. The HP Power Corporation Limited is providing land as its equity share. The project will produce high purity green hydrogen which will be used as an industrial fuel. It will be a crucial step in state government's mission of making Himachal a green energy state by March 31, 2026. The demand for green hydrogen is rising across industries as it offers a clean alternative to fossil fuels, particularly in sectors like transportation, manufacturing and energy storage. By producing green hydrogen with zero carbon emissions, the project will play a crucial role in de-carbonising industries and energy systems, thereby contributing to environmental conservation. Notably, green hydrogen significantly reduces the emission of pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and particulate matter, which improves air quality and protects ecosystems. The plant is expected to assume operations by the year end.

Court allows for voice samples of accused in scholarship scam

Diary Times Desk : CBI's Public Prosecutor Narender Singh claimed that during the investigation and trap proceedings, the voices of the accused, including Vishal Deep and Balbir Singh, were recorded. To verify the identity of the voices in these recordings, the accused's specimen voices are needed for forensic analysis. The prosecutor further stated that the accused had been informed of the need to provide their voice samples for a fair investigation, but they had refused to cooperate. Balbir Singh had been the investigating officer in the scholarship scam case, which is now under CBI inquiry. However, the defence counsels of Vishal Deep contended that voice recordings should not be considered as evidence in this case.

CM, LoP in war of words as BJP skips MLAs Priority Meeting



Diary Times Desk : A war of words broke out between Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur after the BJP boycotted the MLA Priority Meeting, alleging that the priority projects submitted by the Opposition were not being considered at all by the government. "When the priority projects submitted by our MLAs are not being considered and no DPRs are being prepared, there's no point in attending the priority meeting. So, the BJP has decided to boycott it," Thakur said while addressing a press conference here today. Rejecting the allegations, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu hit back saying that "much of the NABARD funds had gone to the constituencies of the BJP MLAs in the last two years", and spelt out the amount given to various BJP constituencies. He said the BJP leaders were desperate and fighting a battle for survival, and BJP's boycott was driven by political considerations. "The BJP should have at least come to the meeting and highlighted the problems and concerns of their constituencies. But instead of discussing things, the BJP chooses to stage a walkout."

Government secured approval for Rs 903 crore projects from NABARD, says Sukhu

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the state government secured the approval for 127 projects worth Rs 903.21 crore from NABARD in the current financial year. The CM said this while chairing a meeting with MLAs from Kangra, Kullu and Kinnaur districts to discuss their priorities for the 2025-26 Budget here today. The CM said these projects included 50 MLA priority schemes under the Public Works Department worth Rs 412.75 crore and 23 schemes under the Jal Shakti Vibhag amounting to Rs 179.07 crore. "These schemes include two major initiatives of the state, including the establishment of a 1.5 lakh litre per day (LLPD) capacity dairy processing plant at Dagwar in Kangra district and 96 electric bus charging stations," he said. The Chief Minister stated that efforts were being made to secure approval for more MLA-priority projects from NABARD by March, 2025. "Apart from this, the government has allocated Rs 1087.77 crore under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for 2024-25, with 5.28 per cent increase as compared to previous year," he said. Sukhu said the state government was working with the motto.

Govt committed to strengthen administrative services: CM

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the state government was committed to strengthening the administrative services and implement necessary reforms to enhance efficiency and governance. The Chief Minister was presiding over the annual function 'Abhivyakti' of the Himachal Pradesh Administrative Services (HPAS) Officers Association. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister lauded the dedication and contribution of HPAS officers, particularly those serving in remote areas. Underscoring their crucial role in the execution of government policies and programmes, the CM said the officers were the backbone of the administration and called upon them to actively participate in decision-making for the welfare of the people. Sukhu said the government was working with the motto of 'Vyavastha Parivartan' and was making all possible reforms to uplift every section of society. He reiterated the government's unwavering resolve to eradicate 'delayed corruption' and introduced forward-thinking policies to ensuring transparency, efficiency and ease of governance. The Chief Minister further stated.

Simplified registration form for natural farming introduced

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu today launched a simplified registration form to enroll farmers in natural farming in the state during the MLAs Priority Meeting and said that the forms could be filled online or offline by the farmers. The CM said the interested farmers could now connect with the natural farming easily by filling this form. "The registration forms, which will generate specific information about the land, crops grown, breed of animals kept by the farmers and some other details regarding training in natural farming will be distributed amongst farmers in all panchayats in the state. This will give further impetus to natural farming in the state in 2025-26," he said. He said that the state government recently procured 398.976 MT naturally grown maize from 1508 farmers at Rs 30 per Kg, which is the highest Minimum Support Price (MSP) in the country. "Similar procedure would be adopted to procure naturally produced wheat in the ensuing season at a MSP of Rs 40 per Kg. One kilogram and five kilogram packets of the naturally produced maize flour are available under the brand name 'Him Bhog'," said the CM.



Varun Chakravarthy added to India's ODI squad for series against England



Agencies : India spinner Varun Chakravarthy has been added to the ODI squad for the three-match series against England on the back of his outstanding performance in the five T20Is. Varun travelled with the squad to Nagpur, the venue for the first ODI, and trained on Tuesday ahead of the series opener on Thursday. He was the highest wicket-taker in India's 4-1 victory in the T20I series that ended on Sunday, taking 14 wickets at an average of 9.86 with an economy of 7.66. Varun is uncapped in ODIs and this is his first inclusion in the squad. He has played only 23 List A games and was the second highest wicket-taker in this season's Vijay Hazare Trophy with 18 wickets in six matches for Tamil Nadu. His presence in the ODI squad strengthens a spin-attack that already included Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar. Varun's inclusion is a significant development considering these ODIs against England are the first 50-over games India are playing since August last year and the only series before the upcoming Champions Trophy. A number of specialist bowlers in the Champions Trophy squad - Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah - are on the comeback trail from injuries.

"Will You Resign?": Magnus Carlsen Accuses FIDE Chief Of Coercion, Broken Promises

Agencies : World number one Magnus Carlsen has demanded that International Chess Federation President Arkady Dvorkovich resign for "coercion of players, misuse of power and broken promises" after talks to thrash out an agreement between the world body and the Freestyle Tour co-founded by him collapsed. The 34-year-old Norwegian superstar was reacting to FIDE's statement on Monday in which it declared that efforts to work out a consensus with the Freestyle Chess Tour, co-founded by Carlsen and German entrepreneur Jan Henric Buettner, had failed over the use of the term world championship. FIDE also asked players wanting to participate in the Tour's events to sign a waiver to remain eligible for the official World Championship cycle. The Freestyle Tour reacted by lambasting FIDE but at the same time, agreed to postpone the use of term world championship for its grand finale this year. The decision means that players will not be required to sign a FIDE waiver anymore.

Tickets for all India matches in Champions Trophy 2025 sold out within minutes of online sale

Agencies : Tickets for all matches of India in the Champions Trophy 2025 were sold out within minutes. On February 3 (Monday), the International Cricket Council announced online general ticket sales of all Champions Trophy matches. Fans queued up well before the official sale went live at 16h00 Gulf Standard Time (GST). On the expected lines, the biggest rush was for the India vs Pakistan match on February 23 (Sunday). That was the first match to be completely sold out. Some fans were left disheartened as they waited in the queue but their turn never came. India play all its matches at the Dubai International Stadium in the UAE. The ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 promises a thrilling 19-day spectacle featuring the world's top eight teams competing in 15 high-stakes matches over 19 days.

Sanju Samson "Trying To Show His Ego": India's World Cup Winner Gives Brutal 'Missed The Bus' Verdict On Star

Agencies : With 51 runs in five innings against England in the five-match T20 series, Indian opener Sanju Samson is facing the heat over his lack of form, with former teammate Ravichandran Ashwin and ex-captain Kris Srikkanth criticising the wicketkeeper batter for the similar manner of his dismissals. India's 4-1 win over England in the recent five-match T20I series has proven that the team is doing well, but it could not hide some of the issues plaguing it -- like the poor form of opening batter Samson. Samson, who scored three centuries across two series against Bangladesh and South Africa in October-November 2024, managed only 51 runs in five innings against England, with a 26 in the first match at Eden Gardens being his highest. In a post on his YouTube channel, Ashwin said, "If Sanju keeps getting dismissed like this, as a batter, the mind will be playing tricks. (It will force you to think) The bowler is bowling a certain way and I am getting dismissed like this, is the bowler bowling well or do I have a shortcoming? Will I be able to adapt? Once so many questions arise, then it becomes difficult," he added.

Mumbai pick Suryakumar and Dube for Ranji quarter-final against Haryana

Agencies : Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube have returned to Mumbai's 18-man Ranji Trophy squad after long gaps for their quarter-final fixture against Haryana, to be played from February 8 to 12 in Lahli. Suryakumar, India's T20I captain who led the team to a 4-1 series win over England recently, played against Maharashtra earlier in the season, one of only two first-class games he has played since the final of the 2023 Duleep Trophy in July 2023. Dube has also stayed away from the format in recent times. He played the game against Jammu & Kashmir in late January - the same one that featured Rohit Sharma and Yashasvi Jaiswal at the top of the order - but that was his only Ranji game of the season. Both Suryakumar and Dube were in action against England in the five-match T20I series, but while Dube had a good time of it in the two matches he played - 53 in 34 balls in the fourth T20I and 30 in 13 to go with 2 for 11 with the ball in the fifth - Suryakumar was off the boil, totalling 28 runs in five innings with two ducks. Defending champions Mumbai, led by Ajinkya Rahane, qualified for the quarter-finals after demolishing Meghalaya by an innings and 456 runs in their last Elite Group A game. It was a game they had to win after going down to Jammu & Kashmir by five wickets in the previous fixture.

Rohit Sharma should continue aggressive batting in Champions Trophy: Suresh Raina

Agencies : Former batter Suresh Raina said that Rohit Sharma should continue batting aggressively in the Champions Trophy. Last year, although India could not win a single game out of the three ODIs they played, Rohit looked fluent at the top of the order. The Indian captain scored 157 runs on the tour of Sri Lanka at an average of 52.33 and a strike-rate of 141.44. With scores of 58, 64 and 35, Rohit showed his incredible power-hitting skills. Rohit carried on with his attacking approach from the ODI World Cup 2023 where India finished as the runner-up after losing to Pat Cummins' Australia. Rohit also took the attack to the opposition bowlers in the Men's T20 World Cup last year in the West Indies and USA. "I think Rohit should play aggressively. You saw how he batted in the ODI World Cup -- he was attacking even in the final. So, I believe his approach will remain the same. As Rohit's opening partner for the Champions Trophy, Raina backed Shubman Gill. Raina said, "The key question is who will be open alongside him -- will it be Shubman (Gill)? I remember, whenever they play together, they maintain an aggressive intent."

Karunaratne to retire from Test cricket after making his 100th appearance

Agencies : Dimuth Karunaratne is set to retire from Test cricket after playing his 100th game this week, against Australia in Galle. Three factors have played into the decision. With Sri Lanka set to play only two further Tests until May 2026, there is barely any cricket for a long-format specialist such as Karunaratne to focus on. Karunaratne, 36, has also struggled for runs over the past 14 months, averaging 27.05 since the start of 2024. This is also Sri Lanka's final Test of this World Test Championship cycle. "It was the right time to go, considering there are three or four younger players who could come in for the next WTC cycle," Karunaratne told ESPNcricinfo. "Plus, this match was in Galle, where I made my debut, so it will be nice to finish things there. "After the first Test against Australia ended, I told SLC that the next Test would be my last." Karunaratne had made his Test debut in November 2012 against New Zealand, at the same ground where he is now set to retire. He was dropped from the team briefly in 2014, but struck his first Test hundred towards the end of that year. He has hit 15 centuries since, more or less enjoying a consistent place.