

## PM MODI USA VISIT

## PM MODI MEETS ELON MUSK, BILATERAL WITH DONALD TRUMP SOON

**Diary Times Desk :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi met billionaire businessman Elon Musk today, ahead of his bilateral with US President Donald Trump later. PM Modi's meeting with Trump comes amid the US President's moves on tariffs less than a month after he took charge.

- The latest in a series of foreign leaders beating an early path to the Oval Office door since the Republican's return to power, PM Modi shared good relations with President Trump during his first term. The prime minister met US National Security Advisor Michael Waltz. His meeting with Indian-origin entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy is also scheduled.
- India offered tariff concessions ahead of PM Modi's two-day visit to the US, with New Delhi reducing duties on high-end motorcycles -- a boost to Harley-Davidson, the iconic American manufacturer whose struggles in India irked President Trump in his previous term.
- The Trump administration has vowed reciprocal tariffs on every country that charges duties on US imports, a move that will ratchet up fears of a widening global trade war. In a post on his social media platform Truth Social, Donald Trump said that he will announce new tariffs at 11.30 pm. The US also sent back 100 illegal immigrants from India in a military flight. In response, India has vowed its own strong crackdown on illegal migration.
- The Trump administration wants to bring down the US trade deficit with India and hopes to have a fair bilateral trade deal with New Delhi in place in 2025, Trump administration officials said ahead of the meeting between President Trump and PM Modi.
- The meeting will aim to build on defence sales to ensure they are prioritising American technology, and the two sides are moving toward signing a new defence framework, one official said in a briefing for journalists ahead of the talks in Washington on Thursday afternoon.
- For nearly three decades, US presidents from both parties have prioritised building ties with India, seeing a natural partner against a rising China. But President Trump has raged against India over trade, the biggest foreign policy preoccupation of his new term.



## BENGALURU METRO

## BENGALURU METRO FARE REDUCED BY UP TO 30% AFTER BACKLASH OVER HIKE



**Diary Times Desk :** Bengaluru Metro has decided to revise the recent metro fare hike following public backlash, with reductions of up to 30 per cent to be implemented immediately. Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) Managing Director Maheshwar Rao said the board had reviewed public feedback and decided to temper down abnormal fare increases at specific points.

Speaking on the issue, Rao said, "We would just like to mention that there has been some basic feedback from the people. Both us and the board had a meeting yesterday and this morning as well, and we had a detailed discussion about the overall suggestions of the fare fixation committee. Based on these suggestions, the board has decided that they will be able to take some suggestions and make corrections for some of the prices which were jumping up abnormally in different points."

He further assured that the revision would provide relief to a significant portion of metro users. "So we will be able to temper it down, hopefully it will provide some relief for an estimate of 30-45 per cent of passengers who have complained that the jumps are abnormal," he said.

Rao noted that an approximate 30 per cent reduction in the revised fare structure would be implemented, effective from today. "We feel that up to 30 per cent reduction in the received fare revision would be there. It will be effective from today," he confirmed.

Emphasising that passenger interests remain the priority, Rao explained that the final decisions are taken as per the suggestions of the fare fixation committee. "Our board consists of a joint-hood. We do everything in the interest of the passengers. The final decisions are taken as per the suggestions of the fare fixation committee," he stated.

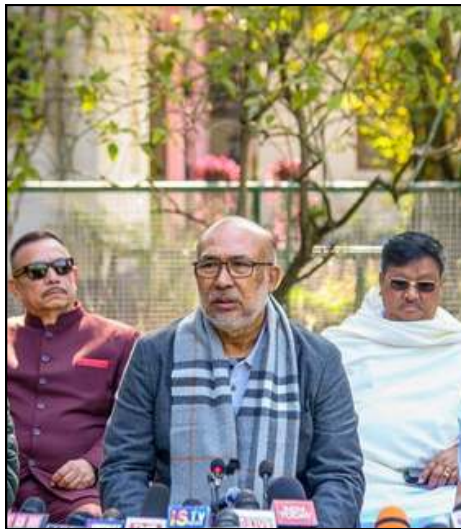
The price hike had triggered widespread backlash among Bengaluru residents, many of whom had taken to social media to express their frustration under the hashtag 'boycott metro'.

Several commuters reported noticeably reduced metro crowds, particularly during peak office hours. The hashtag #BoycottMetro had been trending on X, as passengers demanded a rollback of the fare increase. However, the price hike had provided a much-needed financial boost to BMRCL.



## DAYS AFTER CM'S RESIGNATION, PRESIDENT'S RULE IMPOSED IN MANIPUR

**Diary Times Desk :** President's rule was imposed in Manipur on Thursday, four days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his position. The assembly has also been put under suspended animation. Announcing the proclamation of the central rule, a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs said President Droupadi Murmu is of the opinion that "a situation has arisen in which the government of that state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution". Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 356 of the Constitution, and of all other powers enabling me in that behalf, I hereby proclaim that I - assume to myself as President of India all functions of the Government of the State of Manipur and all powers vested in or exercisable by the Governor of that State," the notification said.



## AADITYA THACKERAY MEETS KEJRIWAL, SLAMS ELECTION COMMISSION FOR 'BIASED APPROACH'

**Diary Times Desk :** Former Maharashtra minister Aaditya Thackeray on Thursday met AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal here days after the latter received a crushing defeat in the Assembly election. Thackeray, however, called the electoral process neither free nor fair and blamed the Election Commission for their alleged biased approach. "In this election, the Election Commission played a significant role. BJP had the blessings of the Election Commission and they should be grateful for that," Thackeray said after his meeting with Kejriwal. Notably, just a day before meeting Kejriwal, Thackeray had on Wednesday spoken to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, their key INDIA bloc ally whose party contested the Delhi election separately. "All parties must now think about their next step because our elections are no longer free and fair. We will continue to fight in the interest of the nation. We will continue to raise the voice of the people."

## BUDGET'S GOAL IS TO PROPEL GROWTH, BOOST PRIVATE INVESTMENTS: SITHARAMAN IN RAJYA SABHA

**Diary Times Desk :** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the goals of the Union Budget 2025-26 is to accelerate growth, secure inclusive development, and invigorate private sector investments. Replying to a discussion on the general Budget in Rajya Sabha, the minister also said the Budget was prepared during a challenging time, with serious external challenges beyond estimates or forecasts. Despite this, the government has tried to keep the assessment as accurate as possible, keeping India's interests paramount, Sitharaman said. "There are no models that you can build and understand how the trends will be because they are very dynamic... Despite that, we have tried keeping the assessments as close as possible, keeping India's interests as topmost... This immense uncertainty is still playing out and many Indian imports which are very critical for our economy to grow are also going to be left with uncertainty," she said. The minister also stressed that the Budget has not reduced sectoral allocations and the effective capital expenditure during the next fiscal is estimated at Rs 19.08 lakh crore.



## ALLAHBADIA ROW: MAHARASHTRA CYBER CELL, MUMBAI COPS SUMMON SAMAY RAINA

**Diary Times Desk :** The Maharashtra Cyber Department and Mumbai Police have asked comedian Samay Raina to appear before them in the next five days in connection with the controversial remarks made by Ranveer Allahbadia on a web show, officials said on Thursday. Raina is in the US and has sought more time to appear before the probing authorities, they said. The cyber cell and the Mumbai police are conducting separate investigations in connection with social media influencer Allahbadia's remarks on Raina's YouTube show "India's Got Latent". While the Mumbai police have asked Raina to record his statement before February 17, the cyber cell has summoned him on February 18, an official said. An Assam Police team, which is in Mumbai in connection with the investigation in a case registered by them against Allahbadia and some others, on Thursday met the Maharashtra cyber cell officials.



## YOUR HOROSCOPE 14-02-2025

### Aries

Today, you will meet old friends, which will refresh old memories. Employed people may be fired from the job due to heavy arguments with colleagues in the workplace. People doing business should thank God for getting financial benefits from the advice of their spouse. Due to irritation in the eyes, you should consult an ophthalmologist.

### Gemini

Today you should include yoga and meditation in your daily routine. For employed people, your responsibilities may increase due to promotion in the workplace. People doing business may suffer financial loss from any unknown person today. There may be difficulty in walking due to nerve pain problems.

### Leo

Today, you should offer water to Lord Shiva to avoid difficulties. A heated argument with HR in the workplace will spoil your whole day. Businessmen have to exercise patience, there are chances of improvement in business. Today, you may face stomach and pancreas problems due to eating too much fried food.

### Libra

Today is going to be a busy day for you. Employed people will get a chance to work with senior officers due to advancement in their professional field. People doing business should avoid exchanging money with any unknown person today. Pregnant women may have to face problems due to changing weather.

### Sagittarius

Today you should take all important decisions of your career thoughtfully. Employed people may have to face some problems due to the start of a new job in the workplace. Due to financial gain for business people, you can invest in a new business. Problems like leg pain and headache may bother you.

### Aquarius

Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employees will be suspended due to indiscipline in the workplace. People doing business should solve all the problems of their customers in time. Due to worsening weather, problems related to cold and cough may increase in the family.

### Taurus

Today you will get success as your long pending legal proceedings will come in your favor. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in the family as employed people will get progress in their workplace. People doing business should make a budget and spend the money in order to get financial benefits. Housewives should change their food according to health and season.

### Cancer

Today you will get relief from all your problems due to sudden financial gain. Employed people may have to get scolded by their boss due to being hasty in the workplace. People doing business may face increased difficulties in business due to arguments with business partners. As the problem of foot pain increases, you must consult a specialist doctor.

### Virgo

Today you should take special control over your speech and behavior. People in employment will get success in the workplace with the help of friends. People doing business will get financial gain due to some special offer, your financial condition will be strengthened. Old diseases of elders in the house may emerge.

### Scorpio

Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employed people may have to face mental problems due to extra workload in the workplace. People doing business may have to travel abroad in connection with business expansion. Diabetic patients should get themselves checked by a doctor in case of any problem today.

### Capricorn

Today you can invest especially in land and buildings. Employed people may have to travel long distances due to office work, due to which your health may deteriorate. People doing business may face difficulties in repaying business loans due to loss of money. High BP and cholesterol problems will increase the problems of your spouse.

### Pisces

Today your interest in creative work will especially increase. Employed people may be given an important project by their boss to handle important projects in the workplace. People doing business should control their speech and behavior with their customers. You should walk carefully on the road, problems may arise due to injury.



## Himachal News: Jairam, Sudhir and Ashish met Amit Shah before the decision on the president, also discussed the political situation

**Diary Times Desk :** Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur, MLA Sudhir Sharma and Ashish Sharma met Union Home Minister Amit Shah before the decision on the post of BJP state president. Both of them met Shah separately before the decision on the post of president was taken. These leaders also discussed the political situation of Himachal Pradesh. Jairam met Amit Shah in New Delhi on Thursday and congratulated him on BJP's victory in the Delhi Assembly elections. On this occasion, Jairam also honored Shah by making him wear a Himachali cap. Although this meeting was described as a courtesy visit, but both of them also discussed the political situation of Himachal on this occasion. Apart from Jairam, BJP MLA from Dharamshala Sudhir Sharma and BJP MLA from Hamirpur Ashish Sharma also met Shah. There was a discussion in the political circles about the meeting of the three leaders with Shah that something is definitely cooking in New Delhi, the effect of which can be seen in the politics of Himachal in the coming days. The elections of the BJP state president are to be held in the coming days, so naturally it is being linked to this election.



## Himachal Weather: Minimum temperature dropped after snowfall on the peaks, weather may deteriorate again from this day

**Diary Times Desk :** After snowfall in many high altitude areas of Himachal Pradesh, the minimum temperature of the state has dropped. This has increased the cold in the morning and evening. Minimum temperature has been recorded below five degree Celsius at 12 places including Shimla. At the same time, it has been recorded in minus at four places. There is a yellow alert for cold wave in some places today and tomorrow. During the next 2-3 days, the minimum temperature is likely to gradually drop by about 2-3 degree Celsius in some parts of the state, after which there will be no major change. There will be no major change in the maximum temperature in many parts of the state during the next 3-4 days. Shimla is sunny today with light clouds. At the same time, after the snowfall in Narkanda yesterday, a large number of tourists are arriving. Apart from having fun amidst the snow, tourists are also capturing beautiful views in their mobile cameras.

## Himachal Cabinet meeting on Saturday, decision will be taken on the dates of the budget session



**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal Pradesh Cabinet meeting will be held on Saturday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. The dates of the budget session will be decided in this meeting. The budget session is proposed from the first week of March. Apart from this, a decision can also be taken in this meeting to merge the two education directorates formed for schools into one. Many other decisions can also be taken in this meeting. At the same time, Chief Minister Sukhu's program to visit Padhar in Mandi district on February 14 has been cancelled due to unavoidable reasons.

## Himachal News: Chief Minister Sukhu said- Landslides will be stopped by deep rooted Vetiver grass, nursery will be set up in Solan

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that to prevent incidents of landslides in Himachal Pradesh, the help of Vetiver grass with three to four meter deep roots will be taken. The State Disaster Management Authority has developed the project in collaboration with Vetiver Foundation Tamil Nadu. The 3 to 4 meter deep and dense roots of Vetiver grass bind the soil strongly, which can prevent landslides. Sukhu said that the government will take the help of bio-engineering to prevent the increasing incidents of landslides in the state. A pilot project has been started in the state for the cultivation of Vetiver grass. Before the monsoon season, the Chemical Research Society of India will provide Vetiver grass nursery to the state. The government has also established a Vetiver grass nursery at its own level in Berti of Solan district, with the help of this grass, it will help in preventing landslides at low cost and maintenance. Said that the grass is being used all over the world at landslide-prone places, highway embankments and river banks. The State Disaster Management Authority has started a project.

## Himachal Police is investigating 20 thousand bank accounts related to chitta transactions, preparing for major action

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal Police is investigating 20 thousand bank accounts related to chitta transactions. Police has sent the details of bank accounts, Aadhaar number and mobile number of the accused to several banks. Information has been sought about the big transactions done from these bank accounts in the last three years. This action is being taken as part of the plan to reach the smugglers through the accused arrested in chitta cases. Senior police officials said that till now a special campaign has been launched to investigate the bank accounts of many accused arrested on the charge of chitta. Under this, it is being ascertained with whom they have done transactions. A list of suspicious accounts is being prepared separately, on the basis of which major action will be taken in the coming days. To investigate the bank accounts of the accused arrested in chitta smuggling cases, the police has written a letter to the banks and sought the record of the accounts of the accused. Police is trying to find out how much money these accused have earned by selling drugs.

## Rafting Championship: National River Rafting Championship will be held in Kullu from March 20, 18 teams will participate

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal will host the 17th National River Rafting Championship. The championship will be organized from 20 to 25 March at Pirdi Rafting Center in Kullu. A meeting of Himachal Pradesh Rafting Association was held in Bilaspur on Wednesday regarding the preparations for the championship. The meeting was chaired by the state general secretary of the association, Imtiaz Khan. National President of Indian Rafting Foundation, Shaukat Pal Sikand was specially present. He said that the championship will be organized from 20 to 25 March at Kullu Pirdi Rafting Center by The Indian Rafting Foundation and Himachal Pradesh Rafting Association authorized by the World Rafting Federation. About 18 teams from different states will participate in it. In the championship, events of men, women and mixed category will be organized in rafting sprint, slalom, RX, down river race.

## Himachal: Everything is not well in Himachal Congress! After Chandra Kumar, Shandil said- need to focus on the organization

**Diary Times Desk :** After Agriculture Minister Chandra Kumar, Health Minister Dhaniram Shandil has also stressed the need to focus on the state Congress organization. While talking to journalists at the Secretariat on Thursday, he said that in Kaliyuga, the biggest power is in the organization. When there is a shortcoming in the organization, it is most important to pay attention to it. Whether the organization is small or big, assembly level or village panchayat level, the organization should be strong. Dhaniram Shandil said that there is also a need to give direction to the youth power in the organization. There should be training camps at the organization level, top leaders will also be talked to about this. Shandil said that even now old Congressmen remember Rajiv Gandhi, tell how training was done, the history of Congress was told, the Congress organization should also pay attention to this. Health Minister Dhaniram Shandil said that there is a need to focus on the state Congress organization. He said that even today old Congressmen remember Rajiv Gandhi, tell how training was done.



## Supreme Court Grants Bail To Ex-UP Minister Azam Khan, Son In Machinery Theft Case

**Diary Times Desk :** The Supreme Court has granted bail to former Uttar Pradesh minister Azam Khan and his son Abdullah Azam Khan, who had challenged an order of the Allahabad High Court denying them bail in a machine theft case. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and Rajesh Bindal set aside the Allahabad High Court order which rejected their bail plea. "Taking into consideration the facts and circumstances of the case which include the period of incarceration undergone by the appellants, and that the chargesheet has already been filed, we are inclined to set aside the impugned order and grant bail to the appellants. "Accordingly, the impugned order stands set aside and the appellants are granted bail, subject to the terms and conditions which are to the satisfaction of the trial court," the bench said in its February 10 order. The top court asked the trial court to impose a condition to the effect that the appellants shall cooperate with the conduct of the trial till its conclusion and shall not make any attempt to influence or win over the witnesses.

## Indian Judiciary Dominated By Elite, Hindu, Male? Ex Chief Justice Replies

**Diary Times Desk :** Higher courts in India, especially the Supreme Court, has sent a clear message that we are here to safeguard personal liberties and that's why the judiciary has the faith of the people, former Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has said. The former Chief Justice faced tough questions from veteran journalist Stephen Sackur on BBC's HARDtalk. The questions ranged from the gender ratio in the judiciary to key judgments such as the Ram Janmabhoomi case and the Article 370 case. To a question on whether there is a dynasty problem in Indian judiciary and whether it is dominated by elite, male, Hindu upper caste men like him, Justice (retd) Chandrachud disagreed. "If you look at the lowest levels of recruitment to the Indian judiciary, the district judiciary, which is the base of the pyramid, over 50 per cent of the new recruits coming into our states are women. There are states where the recruitment of women goes up to 60 or 70 per cent." He said the higher judiciary now reflects the status of the legal profession 10 years ago. "What's happening now, as the reach of education, particularly legal education, has reached women, that gender balance you find in law schools is now reflected in the low.

## President's Rule Imposed In Manipur Days After Biren Singh's Resignation



**Diary Times Desk :** The northeastern hill state of Manipur – rocked by violence for around two years and staring at a constitutional crisis -- was brought under President's Rule this evening, days after its Chief Minister, N Biren Singh, stepped down ahead of a Congress threat of a no-confidence motion and floor test. This is the 11th time President's Rule has been declared in the state since 1951. A communique from the office of President Droupadi Murmu said after receiving a report from Governor Ajay Bhalla and "after considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of that State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India". The move by the Centre came as the state BJP failed to come to a consensus on the Chief Ministerial candidate and the assembly could not be convened. Biren Singh had stepped down amid massive dissidence.

## Harshwardhan Sapkal Appointed As New Maharashtra Congress Chief

**Diary Times Desk :** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Thursday appointed Harshwardhan Sapkal as the new chief of the party's Maharashtra unit with immediate effect, replacing Nana Patole. The Congress chief also approved the appointment of Vijay Namdevrao Wadettiwar as the leader of the Congress Legislative Party in Maharashtra with immediate effect. Mr Sapkal was an MLA from 2014 to 2019 representing the Buldhana Assembly Constituency in Maharashtra. "The Congress president has appointed Harshwardhan Sapkal as the president of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect. "The party appreciates the contributions of the outgoing president Nana Patole," a statement from AICC general secretary, Organisation, K C Venugopal said. Nana Patole had tendered his resignation after the party's rout in the Maharashtra assembly election where the Maha Vikas Aghadi failed to form its government.

## 'Encouraging anti-national activities': JP Nadda on Opposition's Rajya Sabha walkout

**Diary Times Desk :** Rajya Sabha's Leader of the House, Union minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, on Thursday, described the opposition's walkout from the House as a "medium to encourage anti-national activities." Nadda remarked at the start of the Question Hour, and shortly after the Congress-led opposition walked out of the Rajya Sabha. "Their behaviour was unfortunate and irresponsible and needs to be condemned. This is their politics of appeasement and this is being done to waken the country," the union health minister charged. "Some people are trying to fight the Indian state and break the country," the ruling BJP's national president added, referring to a statement from Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Further, Nadda suggested that the opposition's walkout be put on record, and called it an 'expression and promotion of anti-national activities.'

## Comedian Samay Raina Summoned By Maharashtra Cyber Cell Again, He Says He's In US

**Diary Times Desk :** YouTuber Samay Raina has been summoned by the Maharashtra cyber cell for the second time this week amid a row over podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia's comment on the former's YouTube show "India's Got Latent". While informing that he will return from the US on March 17, Mr Raina has sought more time to respond to the summons. Mr Allahbadia, who had over 16 million followers across social media platforms before the row, drew ire after a video of his controversial comments on intimacy between parents led to a massive debate on freedom of speech and what constitutes decency. A short clip from the show, which is now viral, shows Mr Allahbadia asking a contestant, "Would you rather watch your parents have sex every day for the rest of your life or join in once and stop it forever." Though he issued a video apology, calling his comment a "lapse in judgement".

## New Income Tax Bill introduced by Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, Opposition stages walkout

**Diary Times Desk :** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has tabled the Income Tax Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha. The new bill aims to simplify the terminology used in tax laws in India, thereby making it easier for taxpayers to pay taxes and file returns. As soon as Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the bill amid a ruckus in the Parliament, several Opposition MPs were seen staging a walkout. It is not clear how many MPs walked out of the session in total. Speaking on objection raised by Opposition MP from Kerala's Kollam, NK Premachandran, on the new bill having more sections than the previous Income Tax Act from 1961, Sitharaman said, "He should understand where the law is today and where it is being reduced." "The Income Tax Act was originally enacted in 1961 and come into effect in 1962. At that time, they had only 298 sections...but as time went by... many more sections were added. As it stands today, there are 819 sections," Sitharaman said. "From that 819, we're bringing it down to 536. So he should look at what it is today," she added.



## As Trump, Putin agree to talks on ending Ukraine war, global oil and food markets eye supply relief

**Diary Times Desk :** US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin have agreed to begin negotiations to end the war in Ukraine, a move that could ease geopolitical risks to Russian crude oil supply, impact global agricultural trade, and drive a rally in financial markets. Trump said both Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed a willingness for peace in separate phone calls with him on Wednesday, prompting him to instruct top US officials to initiate talks on ending the war. The development has already had an impact on global markets, with US and European stock futures rising on optimism over a potential peace deal. Nasdaq futures rose 0.4 percent today, and S&P 500 futures gained 0.2 percent. Japan's Nikkei climbed 1.4 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index extended its bullish run with a 2.5 percent gain. At the same time, the euro strengthened, and oil prices dropped as traders anticipated easing supply constraints. With Russia being a major crude oil supplier, the prospect of an end to the war in Ukraine has raised hopes of stabilising global crude prices and reducing geopolitical risks to Russian oil supply. Brent crude fell below \$75 per barrel, declining 2.4 percent -- the steepest drop in more than two months -- while West Texas Intermediate was near \$71.

## US federal judge approves Donald Trump's plan to downsize workforce

**Diary Times Desk :** United States President Donald Trump's plan of downsizing the federal workforce through a deferred resignation programme got a go-ahead from a US federal judge on Wednesday, reported news agency Associated Press. This comes amid widening friction between the judiciary and the government in the USA after a series of judicial setbacks for the Trump administration. Reacting to this, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said, "This goes to show that lawfare will not ultimately prevail over the will of 77 million Americans who supported President Trump and his priorities." The decision was made by Judge George O'Toole Jr. in Boston, who stated that the unions that had sued the programme by the Trump administration that offered them to take a sum.

## Elon Musk agrees to pay Donald Trump \$10 million to settle lawsuit against Twitter

**Diary Times Desk :** Elon Musk's social media platform X has agreed to pay US President Donald Trump \$10 million to settle an old lawsuit against Twitter, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal. The lawsuit was filed by Trump against then-Twitter and its co-founder Jack Dorsey for banning him from the platform -- after Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol -- in January 2021. Reportedly, the \$10 million settlement would be in addition to the estimated \$250 million that Musk apparently spent on supporting Trump's election campaign last year. As Elon Musk took over Twitter in 2022, he unbanned Trump and restored his account. Trump returned to Twitter in August 2023 after a two-year ban, posting a mug shot of himself. Before reinstating Trump's account, Elon Musk had conducted a poll asking users to vote on whether Trump should return. "The people have spoken. Trump will be reinstated," Musk had announced, adding, "Vox Populi, Vox Dei"—a Latin phrase that means "the voice of the people is the voice of God." The poll had drawn 15 million votes and had ended with a narrow result with 51.8 per cent in favor of reinstating Trump, while 48.2 per cent had opposed the move.



## Donald Trump To Announce New Reciprocal Tariffs Tonight



**Diary Times Desk :** Donald Trump's 'reciprocal tariffs' Truth Social post early Thursday (6.46am EST, 5.16pm IST) - hours before he meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington, D.C. - has reconfirmed, if confirmation were necessary, that much, if not all, of the conversation between them will focus on import duties, and underscored the US President's continuing fondness to weaponise trade tariffs. In a brief post, with the trademark self-congratulation, Trump wrote, "THREE GREAT WEEKS, PERHAPS THE BEST EVER, BUT TODAY IS THE BIG ONE: RECIPROCAL TARIFFS!!!" "MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!!!" The 'reciprocal tariffs' post was an echo from Wednesday, when he committed to orders that could open new fronts in a fast-growing trade war with other nations, including allies. Donald Trump said he would hold a news conference on reciprocal tariffs at the White House at 1:00 pm local time (which means 11:30 pm IST).

## "Hindus Subject To Violent Mob Attacks": UN Body's Report On Bangladesh Violence

**Diary Times Desk :** A United Nations report into the violence that roiled Bangladesh in mid-2024 - student protests over job quotas forced Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to quit and flee Dhaka (to India) - has said Hindus were among members of minority communities "subject to violent attacks by mobs". Hindus make up an estimated eight per cent of Bangladesh's 17 crore-population. These attacks, the report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said, included burning of homes and some attacks on places of worship. The attacks, the report said, came as Ms Hasina's government "lost control" and mobs in Dhaka and other parts, including Chittagong, "engaged in retaliatory killings and other serious revenge violence targeting". The UN agency said officials from Ms Hasina's Awami League.

## Western Australia braces for 'dangerous' Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Zelia

**Diary Times Desk :** A Category 5 tropical cyclone - the strongest on the scale with the capacity to cause widespread destruction - is bearing down on the Pilbara coastal region in Western Australia, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology warned, as seaports shut and emergency services braced for potential damage. According to the bureau, Zelia is moving slowly and is due to make landfall late on Friday in the region that is home to major ports used for the export of commodities, including iron ore, and is also a processing hub for oil and gas supplies. "The intensity of Tropical Cyclone Zelia means there is significant threat to lives and property and I urge people to follow the directions of emergency services in the Pilbara," Darren Klemm, head of Western Australia's Department of Fire and Emergency Services, told a news conference on Thursday. The Bureau of Meteorology said the cyclone is likely to land near Port Hedland, the world's biggest export point for iron ore, which has been forced to close. Port Hedland is at particular risk from cyclone damage because its buildings are quite older, Klemm said.

## India expects \$200 million missile deal with Philippines this year: Report

**Diary Times Desk :** India expects to sell short-range missiles to the Philippines this year in a deal worth more than \$200 million, Indian sources told Reuters, for New Delhi's second major defence export contract with Manila as tension grows with China. The Akash missile system developed by India's defence research body has drawn interest from the Philippines, which has told New Delhi it would make an order in the fiscal year that begins in April, said three sources. All the sources spoke on condition of anonymity as the matter is a sensitive one. The surface-to-air missile system with a range of up to 25 km (16 miles) was exported to Armenia last year in a \$230-million deal, the sources said, adding that the Philippine sale is expected to be bigger than the Armenian deal. However, they did not reveal the number of missiles and accompanying systems, including radars, involved. India's Bharat Dynamics Ltd, the manufacturer of the missiles, was one of the exhibitors at last year's Asian Defense and Security Exhibition in Manila. The company and India's defence ministry did not immediately respond to requests.



## Punjab approves disbursal of Rs 14,000 crore arrears of employees, pensioners

**Diary Times Desk** : The Punjab cabinet on Thursday approved disbursal of pending arrears of government employees and pensioners of Rs 14,000 crore. The decision was taken in the meeting of the Council of Ministers held here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, said an official release. A spokesperson of the Chief Minister's Office said the cabinet approved the release of arrears of revised pay and pensions and leave encashment from January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2022 and of dearness allowance from July 1, 2021 to March 31, 2024 for pensioners and employees. This sum of Rs 14,000 crore will be released in stages and will give relief to the employees and pensioners. Three lakh government employees and three lakh pensioners would benefit from the move, said the release. To provide houses to the economically weaker section, the cabinet gave the nod to a policy for 'Optimum utilisation of land reserved for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)'. According to this, scattered land pockets falling in various colonies would be monetised and the funds utilised for the benefit of EWS, said the release. For this, 1,500 acres of land would be acquired across the state, it said. The cabinet also gave the nod to create new posts in the Punjab State Legal Services Authority for setting up 22 new lok adalats in the state. To check the pilferage of taxes in the state by proper utilisation of the human resources in the taxation.



## HC imposes Rs 50,000 cost on Haryana pollution control board for delay in compliance

**Diary Times Desk** : Expressing displeasure over inordinate delay by the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) in complying with an order, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has imposed Rs 50,000 costs after describing the situation as "unfortunate". The ruling by the Bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sumet Goel came on a petition filed by a factory and another petitioner against Haryana and other respondents. The Bench during the course of hearing observed that the petitioners had approached the court after the HSPCB failed to act on an order dated May 16, 2024, passed by an appellate authority. Among other things, the authority had observed that the petitioners possessed a valid consent to operate (CTO) until December 31, 2030, and directed the removal of seals on the factory and restoration of electricity supply. Yet the HSPCB took nearly six to seven months to comply with the direction despite the clear directive, forcing the petitioners to file the present writ petition.

## ED team raids BJP leader Niti Sen Bhatia's residence in Panipat

**Diary Times Desk** : A team of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided the residence of senior BJP leader Niti Sen Bhatia at Model Town in Panipat on Thursday morning. The raid is purportedly being conducted in connection with a money laundering issue. An ED raid was simultaneously conducted at the Paonta Sahib-based pharmaceutical firm Vidit Health Care, which is owned by BJP leader's son Neeraj Bhatia. Former Karnal MP Sanjay Bhatia, who is a close relative of Niti Sen Bhatia, also reached the house on getting information about the raid. Navin Bhatia, the elder son of Niti Sen Bhatia, has applied for the Mayoral post from Panipat from the BJP in the civic polls. His claim for the mayoral post was being considered to be very strong among the aspirants. The tickets for the mayoral posts are yet to be finalised. Notably, Neeraj Bhatia, the younger son of Niti Sen Bhatia, who is one of the owners of Vidit Healthcare, Paonta Sahib, was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Jammu, in August last year in a case registered in January 14 for the alleged illegal sale of codeine syrup. The NCB had seized 33.98 kg of codeine-based cough syrup, 900 tablets of alprazolam, 56 capsules of tramadol, 210 tablets of lorazepam.

## CBI files chargesheet in 2-year-old graft case involving Army men and IDAS officers

**Diary Times Desk** : The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a chargesheet against eight individuals, including two Army men and two Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAF) officers, in a two-year-old graft case. The accused have been booked for offences punishable under Sections 7, 7A, 8, 12, and 120 B of the IPC. The chargesheet names IDAS officer Uma Shankar Prasad Kushwaha, Integrated Financial Advisor; Vijay Nama, a junior translator; Army soldiers Sandeep Rajput and Dev Kumar Sharma; Rajendra Singh, owner of M/s Tanushree Services in Jaipur; and JS Bedi, a supplier of security gadgets in Chandigarh. According to CBI, the case involves allegations of bribery and corruption. The Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) in Chandigarh had registered a case on June 21, 2023, based on secret information that JS Bedi had been obtaining contracts for supplying goods to an Army unit in Bikaner by bypassing GeM regulations and bribing Uma Shankar Prasad Kushwaha.

## Haryana Energy Minister Anil Vij suspends chief engineer over power outage



**Diary Times Desk** : Haryana's Energy Minister Anil Vij has suspended Chief Engineer Anil Kumar of Haryana Vidyut Prasaran Nigam Limited (HVPNL) with immediate effect. The suspension comes after a fire incident at a 220 kV substation in Sector 107, Gurugram, on February 9, which disrupted power supply to 22 societies and other areas. According to Vij, Anil Kumar failed to inform his higher authorities about the fire incident, prompting the Energy Minister to take strict action. During the suspension period, Anil Kumar's headquarters will be at Panchkula.

## 2-day special session of Punjab Assembly to be held on Feb 24, 25

**Diary Times Desk** : A two-day special session of the Punjab Assembly will be convened on February 24 and 25, Finance Minister Harpal Cheema said on Thursday. He said the budget session would be held in March. Speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann here, Cheema said the special session of the Punjab Assembly would be held on February 24 and 25 "for some pending bills and legislative businesses". Among several cabinet decisions, Cheema said, the Cabinet approved increasing the monthly pension to acid attack victims from Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000. He said transgenders would also be covered under it. The cabinet also approved raising the monthly allowance for watchmen deployed in villages from Rs 1,250 to Rs 1,500, Cheema added.

## Rs 75 lakh liquor smuggling attempt from Punjab to Gujarat foiled

**Diary Times Desk** : The police have foiled an attempt to smuggle liquor worth approximately Rs 75 lakh from Punjab to Gujarat. The smuggling attempt was thwarted when a truck with Rajasthan registration was stopped and searched near Jakhranwali village on the Amritsar-Jamnagar Bharatmala highway. According to Hanumangarh SP Arshad Ali, the truck was carrying English liquor hidden under stubble. The driver, Vijayinder Singh alias Vijay Jat (21), was arrested and 845 boxes of Royal Challenge, Royal Stag, McDowell Number One, and Thunderbird beer were seized. Preliminary investigations suggest that the consignment was loaded in Punjab, and the police are interrogating the driver to identify those involved in loading the illicit liquor and its intended destination in Gujarat.

## High court slams Punjab for failing to curb drug menace

**Diary Times Desk** : The Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear that a startling surge in bail pleas particularly in heroin-related cases during the past month indicated the state's inability to address the critical issue. Rapping the state for its failure to effectively combat drug-trafficking and addiction, Justice Sandeep Moudgil dismissed an anticipatory bail plea after asserting that the drug crisis was "eating the future of the country like a termite" and posing a significant threat to the nation's youth and socio-economic fabric. "This court would note that in the past one month there is unexpected surge in the petitions for the grant of bail particularly involving.

## With water coming once in 10-15 days, Theog residents storm SDM office

**Diary Times Desk :** Residents of Theog and surrounding areas stormed the SDM Office in Theog on Thursday, demanding a regular water supply. Theog and neighbouring villages have been experiencing water problems for some time now – in several areas, people are complaining that they receive water only every 10-15 days. Under the banner of the Theog Jal Bachao Sangharsh Morcha, numerous people, including women, entered the SDM office and complained that the water supply remained erratic in several villages of the area. Chanting slogans against officials from the Jal Shakti Vibhag (JSV), the SDM, and the local MLA inside the SDM office, the protesters alleged that JSV officials were not even answering calls from local residents. A few days ago, Pooja Kanwar, a resident of the Jais panchayat, said that some villages in her panchayat were receiving water only every 15-20 days. "It's difficult to imagine how women manage their households with such a scarce water supply. In one of the villages in my panchayat, people have to walk around 2 km to get water from a hand pump," she said.

## Maximum temperatures higher than normal at most places in Himachal

**Diary Times Desk :** The maximum temperatures at most places in the state are three to six degrees Celsius above normal. Una recorded the highest maximum temperature in the last 24 hours at 28.6 degrees Celsius, with a deviation of 6.3 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperatures at most places are normal or close to normal. Tabo recorded the lowest minimum temperature today at minus 9.9 degrees Celsius. Hill stations like Shimla, Dharamshala and Manali also have higher-than-normal maximum temperatures. At isolated places, cold wave conditions are likely to prevail on Thursday and Friday. As per the weather department, the weather is likely to be largely dry over the next few days. There is a possibility of some rain or snow at isolated places in the higher reaches from February 16.

## Centre grants Z-category security cover to Dalai Lama



**Diary Times Desk :** The Centre has provided a Z-category armed protection cover to Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama in view of potential security threats to him, official sources said on Thursday. The Union home ministry has directed the VIP security wing of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to take charge of the 89-year-old leader. Sources said the Dalai Lama would be secured by a Z-category protection cover of CRPF commandos in all parts of the country. He had a small protection cover of the Himachal Pradesh Police and was extended security when he travelled to Delhi or any other place by the local police. The government has now granted him a uniform security cover after a review by central intelligence agencies, a senior officer said. A team of about 30 CRPF commandos would work in shifts to secure the Dalai Lama, he said. In a similar move, the home ministry has provided a Z-category cover to BJP leader Sambit Patra in Manipur, sources said. The 50-year-old Puri MP is in charge of the party's affairs in the state, which has been witnessing ethnic violence for almost two years.

## IIT Mandi receives record donation from US-based philanthropist

**Diary Times Desk :** The Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (IIT Mandi) received a donation of US\$ 85,000 from Mohinder L. Nayyar, a prominent US-based philanthropist and an alumnus of IIT Roorkee. This generous contribution represents the largest donation ever received from a US-based philanthropist by the IIT Mandi/DORA Office, setting a new benchmark in support of IIT's mission. An IIT Mandi spokesperson stated, "This donation will establish the IIT Mandi Endowment Fund to promote and recognize excellence. It is expected to significantly enhance the overall quality of research at IIT Mandi, support students in need, and foster academic excellence in higher education." "To ensure the effective utilisation of these funds, a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Nayyar, IIT Mandi, and the IIT Roorkee Foundation. This MoU aims to promote academic growth and nurture talent in alignment with the institute's long-term vision," the spokesperson added. Prof Laxmidhar Behera, Director of IIT Mandi, and Prof. Varun Dutt, Dean of Resource Generation and Alumni Relations, highlighted the importance of philanthropic contributions in strengthening the academic and research ecosystem.

## Paonta Sahib's pharma firm under scrutiny for illicit codeine syrup sales raided by ED

**Diary Times Desk :** A team from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday raided a Paonta Sahib-based pharmaceutical firm and a printing press for their alleged involvement in a money laundering case. Vidit Healthcare, located in Paonta Sahib, is under scrutiny by the central agency for allegedly selling codeine syrup illegally. A police officer confirmed the ED raid. The ED had previously requested details of properties owned by the firm and five other individuals from the district administration in December 2024. The Sirmour Deputy Commissioner was instructed to provide property details of Vidit Healthcare, Paonta Sahib, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, as per a December 7, 2024, communication. The ED sought details of properties owned by Vidit Healthcare, a partnership firm, at Kishenpura village. This included properties owned by Neeraj Bhatia and his wife Mehak Bhatia; Naveen Bhatia; and Neti Seain Bhatia and his wife Nirmal Bhatia. According to inquiries conducted by revenue officials.

## PM Modi adorns Kullu cap in France; Vikramaditya says 'political ideology aside, matter of pride for every Himachali'

**Diary Times Desk :** Pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi adorning the colorful Kulluvi Himachali cap are winning hearts in Himachal, with people from all sections lauding him. PM Modi was seen wearing the Kulluvi cap during his meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron during his visit to France. While many BJP leaders, including Dharamshala MLA Sudhir Sharma, have heaped praises on the PM for showcasing Himachali culture by choosing to wear the Kullu cap, it is the social media post of Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh that is grabbing all attention. While posting a picture of the PM with the French President, he wrote that seeing him wear the cap makes him proud, like every other Himachali. He wrote that, political ideology aside, it is a matter of pride for every Himachali. However, he also urged that he hopes the Centre will not treat Himachal with step-motherly treatment and will provide financial assistance to the state for the restoration of the damages suffered in the disaster. PM Modi has worn the Himachali cap at major events in the past. He has chosen Himachali handicrafts as gifts for heads of state during his foreign visits.





## Virat Kohli "Was An Option": RCB Director Mega Revelation On Rajat Patidar Being Named As Skipper

**Diary Times Desk :** Virat Kohli does not require the "captaincy title" to be in charge because of his natural penchant for leadership and it will benefit new skipper Rajat Patidar, reckons Mo Bobat, the team director of Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Patidar was on Thursday unveiled as the RCB captain ahead of IPL 2025. "Virat was an option (for captaincy). I know that the fans would have probably leaned towards Virat in the first instance. But my point on Virat would be that Virat doesn't need a captaincy title to lead," Bobat said in a media interaction. "Leadership, as we've all seen, is one of his strongest instincts. I think it just comes naturally to him. He leads regardless. But we've seen a lot of love for Rajat too," Bobat added. The former England high performance coach said Kohli has always set an example on the field with his performance. "He leads, as an example. The volume of runs and the strike rate that he scored last year was so important for us. Everyone in the field knows that they've got to be up to their standards because of him. Everyone's seen how much he likes a fight and a scrap," he said. Bobat said it is an excellent opportunity for Patidar to learn from Kohli. "He's an example. (Head coach) Andy (Flower) and I lean on him quite a lot. (Former captain) Faf (Du Plessis) had leaned on him quite a lot. We're pretty sure that Rajat will also be leaning on him too," he said.



## Pooja Vastrakar, Asha Sobhana ruled out of WPL 2025 with injuries

**Diary Times Desk :** Mumbai Indians (MI) seam-bowling allrounder Pooja Vastrakar and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) legspinner Asha Sobhana have been sidelined from the entire WPL 2025 with injuries. Parunika Sisodia, fresh off winning the Under-19 World Cup in Malaysia, and Railways wicketkeeper-batter Nuzhat Parween, will replace them at MI and RCB respectively. Vastrakar has been a "big player" for MI, as their head coach Charlotte Edwards alluded to during the pre-season press-conference, so filling the void created by her absence could be a challenge. Sisodia, the left-arm fingerspinner isn't a like-for-like replacement for Vastrakar, but her recent form is encouraging for MI: she took five wickets across the semi-final and the final of the Under-19 World Cup, helping India become back-to-back champions. Akshita Maheshwari, the Rajasthan seam-bowling allrounder, is more of a like-for-like replacement for Vastrakar. In the Under-23 Women's One Day Trophy last season, Maheshwari had finished with 23 wickets, the second-most in the competition, and picked up two hat-tricks: against Mizoram and Odisha. Asha's unavailability, meanwhile, compounds RCB's troubles.

## "Such Rubbish": Kevin Pietersen Furious After Report Rejects His And Ravi Shastri's England Training Claims

**Diary Times Desk :** England suffered a disappointing 3-0 ODI series sweep at the hands of India on Wednesday. The side failed to challenge the Rohit Sharma-led side in any of the games and its batters looked clueless against the Indian spinners. While talking about the struggle of England batters, former India player Ravi Shastri pointed out that the players have had just one training session during the entire ODI series. Ex-England player Kevin Pietersen also slammed the players of his nation for taking 'disrespecting Indian conditions'. "From what I've heard, England have had just one net session this entire trip, if not any. If you're not prepared to do the hard yards, you're not going to improve," said Shastri during commentary in third ODI. Meanwhile, England great Pietersen said, "The 2-hour flight from Dubai across here. He (Tom Banton) was on the golf course yesterday. He wasn't batting, and where have the issues come? The start, 1 for 60, 2 for 80. And then, what happens? None of them can play spin. And how do you improve playing spin?" After the game, Pietersen revealed that he read an article where a journalist claimed that the England players could not have sufficient training.

## "India Was Nothing We...": Sarfaraz Ahmed's Blunt Take On Pakistan's Win Over Virat Kohli's Men In CT 2017

**Diary Times Desk :** Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed, who secured the ICC Champions Trophy for his country in the 2017 edition, recalled how the Men in Green regrouped with the help of seniors after a shock start to their campaign eight years back and the message that was communicated to the group ahead of the high-profile final against arch-rivals India. Pakistan delivered India one of its biggest cricketing jolts when they defeated the Men in Blue in the title clash at The Oval in 2017 by a thumping margin of 180 runs while defending 339 runs. This was Pakistan's third major title in white-ball cricket, after the 50-over World Cup triumph in 1992 and the T20 World Cup win in 2009. Unlike in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup or the Men's T20 World Cup, where India has a significant advantage over Pakistan, the Men in Green have a 3-2 advantage against the latter in the Champions Trophy. However, their 2017 campaign got off to a shocking start when they lost to a strong India side by 124 runs. Rohit Sharma (91), Shikhar Dhawan (68), and Virat Kohli (81) starred with the willow before the bowling attack finished the job.



## Afridi fined and handed demerit point for on-field clash with Breetzke

**Diary Times Desk :** Shaheen Shah Afridi, Saud Shakeel and Kamran Ghulam have all been slapped with fines and a demerit point each for separate Level 1 breaches of the ICC's code of conduct, after their tri-series game against South Africa in Karachi on Wednesday. Afridi was fined 25% of his match fee for breaching Article 2.12 of the code of conduct, which pertains to "inappropriate physical contact" with a player or someone else during a match. In the 28th over of South Africa's innings, Afridi was seen stepping into the path of batter Matthew Breetzke as he attempted a run. This, as the ICC put it, led to "physical contact and a heated exchange between the two players". That was off the last ball of the over. Just the ball before, Breetzke, after defending the ball, made a gesture with his bat, which Afridi reacted to by walking down the pitch and saying something. Breetzke didn't back down, and the umpires were quickly at the scene. Off the last ball, Breetzke took off for a run after playing the ball away to the leg side and Afridi moved towards the batter. Breetzke bumped into him before completing his run.

## "You Can't Play...": Gautam Gambhir Makes Rishabh Pant's Champions Trophy Playing XI Chances Crystal Clear

**Diary Times Desk :** India's head coach Gautam Gambhir made it clear that KL Rahul is team's first-choice wicketkeeper going into the Champions Trophy and the flamboyant Rishabh Pant is not being considered as an option in the playing eleven in the immediate future. Among all the players that were chosen for the England ODIs, only Pant wasn't given a start by the head coach as all the others got at least one game if not three. Rahul, who initially batted at No. 6 in the first two games, didn't look comfortable and fared far better at the familiar No. 5 position with a useful 40 off 29 balls in India's one-sided 142-run victory in the third ODI here. "Ultimately, it is very difficult to talk about individuals. But all I can say is that if he is part of the squad, when time comes, he might get an opportunity. But at the moment, obviously, KL is the No 1 wicketkeeper and he has delivered for us," Gambhir told media persons at the series-ending press conference. "When you've got two wicket keepers in the squad, you can't play both the wicketkeepers with the kind of quality we've got. Hopefully, whenever he (Pant) gets that opportunity.