

DELHI NEXT CM

DELHI OATH CEREMONY ON THURSDAY, BJP YET TO NAME CHIEF MINISTER

Diary Times Desk : The new Delhi Chief Minister - identity as yet unknown since the Bharatiya Janata Party, which thumped the Aam Aadmi Party 48-22 in this month's election, has not named anyone - will take oath at 4.30 pm Thursday, sources told NDTV this afternoon. The venue, also not yet announced, is likely to be the city's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

The 48 newly-elected BJP Delhi MLAs are expected to meet Wednesday to select their leader, who will then likely replace the AAP's Atishi as Delhi's new Chief Minister.

Last week BJP sources told NDTV efforts to form the new Delhi government had been put on hold till Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned from his trip to France and the United States.

A decision on who will be the BJP's first Delhi Chief Minister in nearly three decades has been pending since the BJP won the election. Mr Modi, now back in India, is expected to meet Home Minister Amit Shah and party chief JP Nadda, as well as his Delhi leadership, to take these decisions.

Whenever the PM's meeting, and that of the legislative party, are held, and whomever is chosen, what is certain is the BJP is planning on a mega swearing-in ceremony for its new Delhi government.

Over 200 former and current BJP MPs, the Chief Ministers of all states ruled by the party or its allies will be present, and all major state leaders and workers are likely to be present.

Sources have told NDTV a shortlist of 15 names has been finalised; the new Chief Minister, his/her cabinet members, and the Assembly Speaker will be chosen from this list. Nine names will be chosen, sources had said, suggesting Delhi will have, for now, a total of eight ministers. The odds-on favourite for the Chief Minister' post is two-time ex-MP Parvesh Verma, who defeated AAP boss and former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to win the New Delhi constituency.



PM MODI

SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRAL PART OF INDIAN TEXTILE TRADITIONS: PM



Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India can lead the way in adopting the vision of fashion for environment and empowerment.

During his address at Bharat Tex 2025 being held in New Delhi, PM Modi said, "Sustainability has always been an integral part of Indian textile traditions, citing examples like khadi, tribal textile and the use of natural dyes."

Bharat Tex 2025, a mega global event, being held from February 14-17 at Bharat Mandapam, is unique because it brings together the entire textile value chain from raw materials to finished products, including accessories under single roof.

It is expected to attract policymakers and global CEOs, over 5,000 exhibitors and 6,000 international buyers from over 120 countries. Over 25 leading global textile bodies and associations from across the world, including International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF), International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), EURATEX, Textile Exchange, US Fashion Industry Association (USFIA) among others are also participating.

The PM underlined that India's traditional sustainable techniques were now being enhanced with cutting-edge technologies, benefiting artisans, weavers and millions of women associated with the industry. He emphasised the importance of maximising resource utilisation and minimising waste generation in textile sector.

PM Modi highlighted "fast fashion waste", where millions of garments were being discarded monthly due to changing trends, posing significant environmental and ecological threats.

He noted that by 2030, fashion waste could reach 148 million tonne, with less than a quarter of textile waste being recycled today. He remarked that India's textile industry could turn this concern into an opportunity, leveraging diverse traditional skills in textile recycling and up-cycling.

GYANESH KUMAR LIKELY TO BE NEW CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER, PM-LED PANEL CLEARS NAME

Diary Times Desk : Gyanesh Kumar, who was appointed the Election Commissioner in March 2024, is likely to succeed Rajiv Kumar as the new Chief Election Commissioner. Sources privy to developments said the name of Kumar, considered close to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, was cleared by the Selection Committee for the CEC led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and consisting of Shah and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. A 1988-batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre, Kumar is the senior-most Election Commissioner, the other being S.S. Sandhu, who was also appointed in March 2024. The final appointment would be subject to notification which is expected any time now. Rajiv Kumar demits office on February 18. Importantly, once confirmed, Gyanesh Kumar will be the first appointment of CEC under the new CEC and Other Election Commissioners Bill, 2023, which came into force in December 2023 and is currently facing a legal challenge in the Supreme Court. The apex court is to hear the case on February 19, with Rahul Gandhi attending the Selection Committee meeting today only to demand that the same be postponed for two to three weeks to enable the top court to hear the case.



POLL BODY EX-CHIEF REJECTS REPORT OF US AGENCY FUNDING FOR INDIAN ELECTIONS

Diary Times Desk : Former chief election commissioner SY Quraishi on Sunday rejected the report that a US agency funding was used for raising voter turnout in India when he headed the poll body. His reaction came after the US Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) led by Elon Musk announced a series of expenditure cuts, including USD 21 million allocated for "voter turnout in India". The DOGE in a post on X on Saturday announced cancelling many programmes costing hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars. The department said, "US taxpayer dollars were going to be spent on the following items, all (of) which have been cancelled..." The list included USD 486 million in grants to the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening including USD 21 million for "voter turnout in India". The report in a section of the media about an MoU by the ECI in 2012, when I was CEC, for funding of certain million dollars by a US agency.

BORDER GUARD BANGLADESH DELEGATION ARRIVES IN DELHI; TALKS WITH BSF BEGIN ON TUESDAY



Diary Times Desk : A high-level delegation of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), the border guarding force of the neighbouring country, reached Delhi on Monday for bi-lateral talks on issues like fencing and attacks on BSF personnel and civilians by Bangladeshi miscreants, officials said. The 55th Director General-Level Border Coordination Conference between the two forces will be held at the Border Security Force (BSF) headquarters on the Lodhi Road here. The bilateral talks will be held on Tuesday. The Bangladeshi delegation reached India on board a flight and they will be here till February 20. Apart from participating in the bi-annual talks, they may also call on some senior Union Home Ministry authorities, the officials said. This is the first top-level meeting between the two border guarding forces after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in August last year. The Indian delegation is led by BSF Director General (DG) Daljit Singh Chawdhary, while the visiting Bangladeshi team is headed by BGB DG Maj General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui.

'ECI IS MADE SCAPEGOAT': WHAT OUTGOING CEC RAJIV KUMAR SAID ON POLL LOSERS IN FAREWELL REMARKS

Diary Times Desk : Outgoing chief election commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar, in his farewell address on Monday, said the Election Commission (ECI) is made a 'scapegoat' by those 'unwilling to accept electoral outcomes.' "The Commission, as an institution, often finds itself unfairly blamed by those unwilling to accept electoral outcomes. A pressing concern is the growing tendency to target election officials in the aftermath of electoral contests. It is perceived as a convenient scapegoat," Rajiv Kumar said. He further noted that as candidates and their parties are involved in every stage of the election process with 'full transparency,' then, without raising objections or filing appeals during the process, their attempts to create 'doubts' later are 'undesirable.' Rajiv Kumar also called for the practice of the ECI being blamed after a poll defeat, to be stopped. "Dialogue should always be the preferred approach and while the Commission reacts with sagacity, stoicism and restraint, this is a disturbing trend and should be abandoned soon," he stated.



YOUR HOROSCOPE
 18-02-2025

<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>



ED Raid: ED raids in four states including Himachal, cash worth Rs 40.62 lakh, jewelry worth 1.5 crore seized

Diary Times Desk : The Enforcement Directorate raided Delhi, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir including Himachal in the cough syrup drugs case and seized cash worth Rs 40.62 lakh, jewelry worth Rs 1.62 crore and documentary and digital evidence. During the raids, the ED also arrested two wanted accused of NCB, Garv Bhambri and Mamta Kansal (mother of Niket Kansal). According to ED officials, raids were conducted on February 13 in the case against Raees Ahmed Bhat and others. These people used to do unauthorized sale of codeine-based cough syrup (CBCS) and earned illegal money from it. The ED had started a money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). According to the ED, the cough syrup brand Cokrex was purchased 'unauthorizedly' from its manufacturer Vidit Healthcare, located in Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh. Its managing partner is Neeraj Bhatia, a resident of Panipat, Haryana. The syrup was sold through fake companies like SS Industries, Faridabad (owner Sumesh Sareen) and N K Pharmaceuticals, Kansal Pharmaceuticals, Kansal Industries and others. These are controlled by Niket Kansal and his family members.



Shimla: Himachal will export turmeric to UK, CM showed interest in discussion with British Deputy High Commission

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh is planning to export turmeric to the UK. After discussions with the British Deputy High Commission, the Chief Minister has shown keen interest in this. CM Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu also discussed the agro-industry in Kullu and the establishment of an Indian-operated Scottish distillery in the state. Apart from this, green hydrogen, electric vehicles, tourism, dairy, food processing etc. were also talked about. The Chief Minister directed the concerned officials to organize the upcoming meeting with the UK delegation, so that the proposed projects can be implemented effectively. Sukhu said that this meeting is an important step towards further strengthening UK-Himachal relations, which will create new opportunities for cooperation and exchange between the two countries in various fields. On Monday, a delegation of the British Deputy High Commission met the Chief Minister.

Himachal: Block Development Officer of Paragpur caught red handed taking a bribe of 10 thousand rupees, Vigilance took action

Diary Times Desk : The team of State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau Dharamshala has arrested BDO Paragpur Virendra Kaushal red handed while taking bribe. The vigilance team has taken this action on the complaint of Kadoa Panchayat Pradhan under development block Paragpur. It is alleged that the BDO had demanded a bribe of Rs 10,000 from the Panchayat Pradhan in lieu of releasing the amount sanctioned by the DC office. Kadoa Pradhan Reena Devi had lodged a complaint against the BDO in Vigilance Police Station Dharamshala. She had alleged that an amount of about Rs 1.5 lakh was sanctioned by the Deputy Commissioner Kangra office for some construction work in the Panchayat. A bribe of Rs 10,000 was being demanded by the BDO in lieu of releasing this amount. On the basis of the complaint, the vigilance had laid a trap to arrest the accused BDO. On Monday, when the bribe amount was being taken by the BDO, the vigilance team caught him red handed. On the other hand, SP Vigilance Dharamshala Balveer Singh said that a case has been registered against BDO Paragpur arrested with bribe.

Youth Congress leader Abdul will give 21 thousand for giving information about chitta traders, identity will be kept secret

Diary Times Desk : The campaign against chitta is gaining momentum everywhere. After the panchayats, leaders have also started joining it. State Youth Congress Vice President Abdul Khaliq has announced a reward of Rs 21,000 for giving information about chitta traders. Khaliq said that if a person gives information about those selling or using chitta, he will be given a reward of Rs 21,000. The identity of the informer will be kept secret. He said that the Youth Congress has come forward to stop the chitta trade spreading in every village. People will also be made aware of it. Let us tell you that in Bilaspur, the Panchayat and Municipal bodies are taking strict decisions against drug abuse. Gram Panchayat Dakdi, Auahar, Gatwad and Bari Manjhedwa of sub-division Ghumarvi have announced to deprive the chitta trade and drug addicts of facilities.

Jairam Thakur: Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said- Government should be serious against drugs, opposition will support at every step

Diary Times Desk : Addressing a press conference in Dharamshala, former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that drug addiction is spreading its tentacles in the state, which is very important to be crushed. The government should work seriously for the complete destruction of drug addiction in Himachal Pradesh, the opposition is committed to support the government at every level. It is the commitment of the Bharatiya Janata Party to eradicate the stigma of drug addiction from the state. The way the terror of drug addiction is spreading in Himachal Pradesh, the government does not seem serious about its eradication. In the last three weeks, news of the death of four youths due to drug overdose has been published in the newspapers. In the Assembly, the government has officially confirmed 11 deaths due to drug overdose from the formation of the Sukhu government till 31 July 2024. Due to a lot of social pressure, the real cases of drug overdose never come to the fore. I am very sorry to say that the real figure is much bigger than the figures on paper.

IPL 2025: IPL matches will be held at Dharamshala Stadium on 4th, 8th and 11th May

Diary Times Desk : International Cricket Stadium Dharamshala will again be colored in the colors of IPL in May. Punjab Kings team will play matches with Lucknow, Delhi Capitals and Mumbai Indians on 4, 8 and 11 May at HPCA Stadium Dharamshala. Two matches will be held at 7:30 pm, while one match will start at 3:30 pm. BCCI has released the schedule of the 18th season of IPL. According to the schedule, three matches are proposed at the International Cricket Stadium Dharamshala. Punjab Kings team will play three matches in Dharamshala. During this, the first match of Punjab Kings will be played between Lucknow Super Giants at 7:30 pm on May 4 at Dharamshala Stadium. After this, the second match will start at 7:30 pm with Delhi Capitals on May 8. At the same time, the third match of Punjab Kings team at Dharamshala Stadium will be played between Mumbai Indians at 3:30 pm on May 11.

Himachal News: Prices of pens, pencils and school bags have increased, parents are worried



Diary Times Desk : After notebooks and books, now stationery items have also increased the problems of parents. For pencils, erasers, colours, school bags, sketch pens, pencil boxes, parents have to pay more than last year. The price of items costing Rs 10 to Rs 20 has increased by five to ten percent. Sketch pens, colour boxes which were available for Rs 60 to Rs 80 last year, now cost Rs 80 to Rs 100. The family who came to buy a bag for their daughter in Lower Bazaar told that the school bag which they had bought for their son last year for Rs 600, this year they had to pay Rs 800 for the same bag. Apart from this, the price of pen and pencil box has also increased by Rs 10 to Rs 20. In such a situation, the entire income will be exhausted at the beginning of this new session. Parent Anil told that the pencil box which he had bought for his daughter for class 7 for Rs 100 last year, has been bought for Rs 170 this year.

"Enough Is Enough": Supreme Court Refuses New Pleas In Places Of Worship Case

Diary Times Desk : Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna has expressed his displeasure over piles of new petitions filed in the matter involving the Places of Worship Act, 1991, which stops a lawsuit from being filed to reclaim a place of worship or change its character. "Enough is enough. There has to be an end to this," he remarked during a hearing this morning and asserted that the Supreme Court will not hear any new petition in this matter. The court, however, has allowed the filing of an intervention petition with additional grounds though it refused to issue notice on the new petitions filed so far. The Supreme Court's tough remarks came as it continued hearing petitions on the validity of the Places of Worship Act, which assumes significance in view of the legal efforts to reclaim demolished Hindu temples. The law was passed in 1991 to disallow the change of religious character of a place of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947. The Ram Janmabhoomi dispute was out of its purview.

Influencer Apoorva Mukhija, YouTuber Samay Raina to appear before NCW today

Diary Times Desk : YouTuber Samay Raina and social media influencer Apoorva Mukhija are set to appear before the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Monday via video conferencing following the ongoing controversy surrounding an episode of Raina's popular show 'India's Got Latent'. The episode, featuring podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia, has sparked outrage due to inappropriate jokes made by the guest, triggering significant public backlash and legal action. The NCW summons, issued on February 11, come in the wake of a case filed by the Maharashtra Police over the controversial remarks. Allahbadia, who is best known for his YouTube channel BeerBiceps, has not yet responded to the NCW's summons. The panel's investigation follows the filing of multiple first information reports (FIRs) in Mumbai and Guwahati, where the episode has caused considerable outrage. Raina, Mukhija, Allahbadia, comedian Jaspreet Singh, and YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani are all scheduled to appear before the NCW on Monday. The producers of 'India's Got Latent', Tushar Poojari and Saurabh Bothra, have also been summoned for questioning. The issue first gained traction after Allahbadia's comments on the show sparked an outcry across social media platforms.

"Can't Operate In Ego": Congress On Meet To Select New Poll Body Chief



Diary Times Desk : The Congress has objected to the selection of a Chief Election Commissioner when the law for appointment to post has been challenged in the Supreme Court. Leader of the Opposition, Congress's Rahul Gandhi, attended a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah this evening to pick a successor to Rajiv Kumar who retires tomorrow. But after the meet, he submitted a dissent note, saying the meeting should not have been held since the matter is pending in the Supreme Court. The top court is expected to hear the matter on February 22. Sources said the government did not want to postpone the selection process as it would leave a vacancy in the poll commission. The court had not stayed the appointment and legal opinion was sought and given and the committee headed by PM was told to go ahead, sources said. The appointment orders of the new Chief Election Commissioner and the other Commission members is expected to be signed by President today.

Delhi Residents Report A Loud "Boom" During Earthquake: What Was It?

Diary Times Desk : A strong earthquake of magnitude 4.0 hit Delhi this morning and the tremors were felt in several adjoining areas of the national capital. According to the National Centre of Seismology, the quake hit at a depth of about 5 km. While there have been no casualties or injuries, residents reported a loud sound for a few seconds when the earthquake hit Delhi. The loud grumbling sounds during the tremors usually occur during a shallow-focus earthquake. According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), high-frequency vibrations from shallow earthquakes generate a booming sound as the ground vibrates and creates a short-period seismic wave motion that reaches the air and becomes sound waves. The shallower the epicentre, the more energy and sound can be produced. Sometimes earthquakes can create booming sounds even when no vibrations are felt.

In Rare Gesture, PM Modi Receives "Brother" Emir Of Qatar At Airport

Diary Times Desk : Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, who arrived here on Monday on a two-day state visit to India, will meet President Droupadi Murmu and hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 18. Extending a rare gesture of hospitality, PM Modi went to the airport to receive the Emir of Qatar, who arrived in Delhi in the evening. "Went to the airport to welcome my brother, Amir of Qatar H H Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani. Wishing him a fruitful stay in India and looking forward to our meeting tomorrow," the prime minister said in a post on X. The Emir of Qatar's visit will provide "further momentum to our growing multifaceted partnership," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on Saturday. The Emir of Qatar will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including ministers, senior officials and business leaders, it said. According to a media advisory issued by the MEA on Monday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will call on the Emir of Qatar later in the evening.



Delhi Chief Minister Not Named, Sources Say Venue For Oath Fixed

Diary Times Desk : The new Chief Minister of Delhi will take oath at the iconic Ramlika Maidan on Thursday in a grand ceremony that will be attended by BJP leaders and ministers and all the allies. Sources said plans are in progress to make the party's return to power in the national capital after 26 years a truly memorable event. The ceremony will begin at 4.30 pm. There, however, is no word on who is going to get the top job. Initially it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France and the US that had delayed a decision. But now, even two days after his return, there has been no announcement, ratcheting up the suspense. While Parvesh Verma -- the son of former Chief Minister Saheb Singh Verma -- is seen as the front-runner in the race, sources said the list of probables has no less than 15 names that also include candidates for cabinet and the Assembly Speaker. Nine names will be chosen, sources said, and Delhi will have eight ministers including the Chief Minister.

Sam Pitroda's 'China not India's enemy' remark slammed by BJP: 'Insult to Galwan martyrs'

Diary Times Desk : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday slammed Congress leader Sam Pitroda's comments questioning the degree of China's threat to India and said his statements reflect the party's mindset. Sam Pitroda, the Congress' overseas unit head, said that threat from China, India's nuclear armed neighbour, is often blown out of proportion and suggested that New Delhi should stop considering Beijing as an enemy. "I don't understand the threat from China. I think this issue is often blown out of proportion because the US has a tendency to define an enemy. I believe the time has come for all nations to collaborate, not confront. Our approach has been confrontational from the very beginning, and this attitude creates enemies, which in turn garners support within the country. We need to change this mindset and stop assuming that China is the enemy from day one," Sam Pitroda told news agency IANS in an interview.

S Korea removes Deepseek from app stores over privacy concerns

Diary Times Desk : South Korea has banned new downloads of China's DeepSeek artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, according to the country's personal data protection watchdog. The government agency said the AI model will become available again to South Korean users when "improvements and remedies" are made to ensure it complies with the country's personal data protection laws. In the week after it made global headlines, DeepSeek became hugely popular in South Korea leaping to the top of app stores with over a million weekly users. But its rise in popularity also attracted scrutiny from countries around the world which have imposed restrictions on the app over privacy and national security concerns. South Korea's Personal Information Protection Commission said the DeepSeek app became unavailable on Apple's App Store and Google Play on Saturday evening. It came after several South Korean government agencies banned their employees from downloading the chatbot to their work devices.

Report challenges China's military readiness amid rapid buildup

Diary Times Desk : A new US think tank report questions whether China is truly prepared for war, arguing that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) prioritizes political control over military effectiveness, according to CNN. Under President Xi Jinping, China has undergone an extensive military modernization effort, with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) now rivaling, or in some cases surpassing, the US military. However, the RAND Corporation report suggests that the CCP's focus on controlling both the military and Chinese society may impair combat readiness. "The PLA remains fundamentally focused on upholding CCP rule rather than preparing for war," wrote Timothy Heath, a longtime China analyst. His report highlights that up to 40% of PLA training time is spent on political indoctrination, raising concerns about combat effectiveness. The report also criticizes the PLA's command structure, which includes both military commanders and political commissars.

Israel Army Says Killed Hamas Commander In Lebanon Air Strike

Diary Times Desk : The Israeli military said it killed a Hamas commander in an air strike in southern Lebanon on Monday, accusing him of planning attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory. "Mohammed Shahine was eliminated after recently planning terror attacks, directed and funded by Iran, from Lebanese territory against the citizens of the state of Israel," the military said in a statement, adding that he was killed in the Sidon area. "Shahine was a significant source of knowledge within the terrorist organisation and was responsible throughout the war for various terror attacks, and rocket launchers aimed at Israeli civilians." The strike on Lebanon comes on the eve of a deadline in a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun urged sponsors of the deal to pressure Israel into withdrawing troops by Tuesday's deadline.



China says US has 'gravely backpedaled' on Taiwan



Diary Times Desk : China's Foreign Ministry took issue Monday with a revised U.S. government fact sheet that removed a line on American opposition to independence for Taiwan. The United States has "gravely backpedaled" on its position on Taiwan and sent the wrong message to "separatist forces" on the island, ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said. Taiwan and China split in 1949 during the civil war that brought the communists to power in China. The defeated Nationalists fled to Taiwan and set up a rival government there. Taiwan has its own government and military but has never declared formal independence from China. "We urge the U.S. to ... stop emboldening and supporting Taiwan independence and avoid further damaging China-U.S. relations and the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait," Guo said when asked about the revision at a daily media briefing. The Taiwan Strait is a narrow waterway that separates the island of Taiwan from China's east coast.

Macron calls Trump before European emergency meeting on Ukraine in Paris

Diary Times Desk : French President Emmanuel Macron had a phone call with Donald Trump ahead of European emergency meeting on Ukraine in Paris, but Macron's office would not disclose details about the discussion. Macron called leaders from key European Union nations and the United Kingdom to the Elysee Palace on Monday for talks on how to react to the US diplomatic blitz on Ukraine, which left the once rock-solid partner as a potential political liability. Last week, top US officials from the Trump administration made their first visit to Europe, leaving the impression that Washington was ready to embrace the Kremlin while it cold-shouldered many of its age-old European allies. Macron holds phone call with Trump ahead of European emergency meeting on Ukraine.

'Be the first man on Mars': Salman Rushdie slams Elon Musk

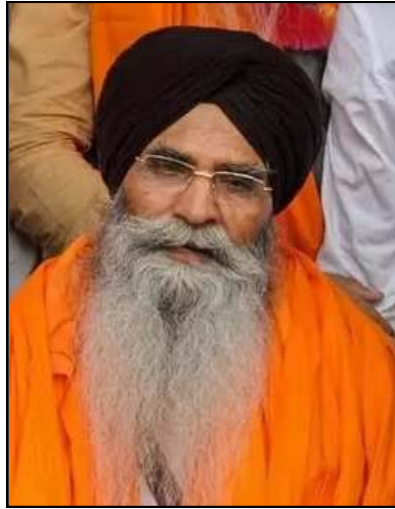
Diary Times Desk : British-Indian author Salman Rushdie expressed his discontent and dislike for billionaire Elon Musk while attending Hay Festival in Cartagena, Colombia. He said that he is not a fan of Elon Musk and would love the billionaire to be the first man on Mars. Salman Rushdie, 77, made the remarks while talking to El Pais at the Hay festival. When asked about freedom of speech and whether he thinks Elon Musk defends it by allowing all kinds of speeches on his social media platform X, the writer said what the Tesla chief does is the opposite. He also said that Elon Musk's X curates "the discourse of the extreme-right". "Elon Musk doesn't defend free expression. His social network curates the discourse of the extreme-right. Appropriating a noble cause — such as freedom of expression — when what you really do is the opposite is very dishonest. I'm not a fan of Mr. Musk. And I would love for him to be the first man on Mars," Rushdie said.

Autopsy Confirms OpenAI Whistleblower Suchir Balaji Died By Suicide, Cops Close Case

Diary Times Desk : OpenAI whistleblower Suchir Balaji died by suicide, San Francisco Police have confirmed citing an autopsy report. Following weeks of investigation and repeated inquiries, officials have confirmed their initial findings, concluding that there is no evidence of homicide, as per a Fortune report. When the 26-year-old Indian-American was found dead under suspicious circumstances last month, it caused a stir among the public, with Mr Balaji's parents frequently alleging he was murdered. In a 13-page report from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) and a four-page joint response to the lawsuit, the San Francisco Police and medical examiners announced on Friday that the investigation into Balaji's death was officially closed. They confirmed their initial conclusion that he died by suicide. "The OCME found no evidence or information to establish a cause and manner of death for Mr Balaji other than a suicide by self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head," read the medical examiner's report. "SFPD conducted an independent investigation and based on the information SFPD reviewed, there is insufficient evidence to find Mr. Balaji's death was the result of a homicide."

Harjinder Singh Dhami resigns as SGPC chief on 'moral grounds'

Diary Times Desk : Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhami has resigned from his post. Dhami's resignation came days after Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh strongly condemned the dismissal of services of Giani Harpreet Singh as the jathedar of Damdama Sahib by the SGPC. In a hurriedly called media briefing, Dhami said he is committed to the Akal Takht. Dhami has demanded that he also be removed from the seven-member committee formed by the Shiromani Akali Dal. He has submitted his resignation to the SGPC executive committee. Referring to a February 13 Facebook post of Jathedar Raghbir Singh on the termination of services of Giani Harpreet Singh, Dhami said he wrote that his removal was "highly condemnable" and "unfortunate". "I being 'pardhan' (president of SGPC) take responsibility and resign from the post on moral grounds with immediate effect," he said while addressing the media in Amritsar. Dhami said he had written to the Akal Takht Jathedar to relieve him from his position in the seven-member committee formed to supervise the new membership drive of the SAD.



Arijit Singh mesmerises audience

Diary Times Desk : Arijit Singh captivated fans with his hit songs such as "Tum Hi Ho", "Channa Mereya" and "Kesariya" during his live concert at the Shalimar Ground in Sector 5 here today. Thousands of his fans gathered at the venue to see their favourite singer perform live. The event was part of Arijit's multi-city India tour. Over 10,000 tickets were sold. A liquor counter was set up at the venue, which saw a steady rush. Though security personnel were deployed there, managing the massive turnout remained a challenge for them. Fans sang along and cheered through the evening, making for a charged atmosphere. Some struggled with long queues at the entrances and parking woes. However, the energy inside the venue remained high as the singer's voice echoed through the jam-packed ground. Residents living in the vicinity faced inconvenience due to road closures and diversions put in place for the concert. They had to take long detours to reach home. Residents, who planned to visit to markets in Sector 8 and 9, which are located near the venue, were held up in snarl-ups.

Paid Rs 80 lakh to Haryana-based agent, claim kin of US deportees

Diary Times Desk : A couple from Jaulan Khurd village, who reached here after being deported from the US, had paid Rs 80 lakh to a Haryana-based immigration agent, members of their family claimed. Gurpreet Singh and his wife Amanpreet Kaur, both aged around 25, were among the 67 Punjab deportees who arrived at Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport in Amritsar by a special flight on Saturday night. Gurpreet has done bachelors in agriculture, while Amanpreet is a Class XII pass-out. Gurpreet's father, a Punjab Police ASI posted in Mohali, said the couple had last called him on February 5 when they entered the US territory from Mexico. The couple first left for Dubai around nine months ago. "We have suffered a great financial loss. We appeal to the government to compensate for our loss to some extent.

Punjab Government suspends Muktsar DC Rajesh Tripathi, orders Vigilance inquiry

Diary Times Desk : The AAP Government in Punjab on Monday suspended Muktsar Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Tripathi following "serious complaints of corruption", said officials. This is the major action of the Bhagwant Mann Government against corruption in the state, said a Punjab government spokesman. Abhijit Kaplish has been appointed as the new Deputy Commissioner of Muktsar. The spokesperson said the state government had received "serious complaints of corruption" against the Deputy Commissioner after which a thorough inquiry was conducted against the IAS officer. "Based on the preliminary inquiry, the state government has suspended Deputy Commissioner Sri Muktsar Sahib with immediate effect," said the spokesperson. The spokesman further said "the Deputy Commissioner has been removed from his post and a vigilance inquiry has been marked against him". "This reflects the unwavering commitment of the Punjab Government to ensure full transparency, accountability and integrity in public service delivery. As corrupt practices undermine public trust, weaken institutions and hinder state's growth, hence top priority is being accorded to check this menace," he added.

Deportees allowed to go 7 hours after plane landed in Amritsar



Diary Times Desk : Around seven hours after a US military plane carrying 112 deportees landed at Amritsar's Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport on Sunday night, they were taken out in security-escorted buses from two different gates at the airport in the wee hours of Monday. They were not allowed to speak to media. Neither their families were permitted to receive them. The deportees who arrived at 10.03 pm were allowed to move out in small batches only after 4.30 am. Then it took half an hour for the authorities to take them out of the airport. Among the deportees, 31 were from Punjab, 44 from Haryana and one from Himachal Pradesh. Arrangements were made for the transportation of deportees to their destination by the respective states, the officials said.

CM Saini announces provision of Rs 2,100 for women in Budget, Congress cries foul

Diary Times Desk : Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has stated that a provision for grant of Rs 2,100 per head to the state's women would be made in the upcoming Budget of the state, and they would start getting the said amount from the coming year. "A provision to give Rs 2,100 to the state women will be made in the upcoming budget of the state. They will start getting the said amount from the coming year," the Chief Minister said while addressing a public gathering in support of BJP's mayoral candidate Ram Avtar Balmiki at Rohtak on Monday. The Congress has taken a strong exception to the Chief Minister's statement, alleging that it amounted to violation of the Model Code of Conduct. It is a clear violation of the Model Code of Conduct and we will write to the State Election Commission for appropriate action in this regard," said Congress MLA from Rohtak Bharat Bhushan Batra. Meanwhile, in his address, Saini said efforts were being made to fulfil the dream of all poor persons of having their own home, maintaining that all eligible applicants from Haryana would get financial support under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

8 students injured as school bus falls into canal in Haryana's Kaithal



Diary Times Desk : Eight students, the driver and a woman attendant were injured as a private school bus plunged into the SYL canal near Noch village in this district on Monday morning. The driver lost control over the vehicle due to a steering wheel malfunction. Panic gripped the area as students screamed for help. Passersby rushed to the spot to rescue them. They pulled the injured out of the submerged bus and rushed them to hospital. Police officials from the Keorak police post and the 112 emergency team arrived on the spot. The police started an investigation. According to initial reports, the accident occurred when the bus of Guru Nanak Academy, Pehowa, was moving along the canal embankment after picking up the students. ASI Rajinder Kumar, in-charge of the Keorak police post, said all injured were out of danger.

LIGHT SNOW, RAIN LIKELY ON FEBRUARY 19, 20

Diary Times Desk : Weather is likely to remain largely dry on February 17 and 18, but there is a possibility of light to moderate rain or snow at a few places in the state on February 19 and many places on February 20. The fresh spell of precipitation will be triggered by a fresh western disturbance hitting the region on February 19. While the precipitation will reduce after February 20, there is still a possibility of light rain or snow at isolated places in the districts of Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur and the higher reaches of Chamba, Kangra and Kullu on February 21 and 23. There is a yellow alert for thunderstorms with lightning at isolated places on February 19 and 20. Very light rain and snow have been recorded in some parts of the state in the last 24 hours, but there has been no significant change in the average minimum and maximum temperatures in the state.

TEACHING HOURS TO GO UP IN HIMACHAL GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Diary Times Desk : Teaching hours will increase in government schools of the state for the academic session 2025-26, according to the Annual Academic Calendar. According to it, schools will have to complete 240 working days in an academic session. In addition to fixing the number of working days, house exams and sports activities will be held simultaneously in all schools. "The calendar has brought uniformity in hosting sports and other activities, which is a good move. Also, an increase in the number of teaching hours will help the students," said Sandeep Sharma, principal, Government Senior Secondary School, Cheog. Another highlight of the calendar is the emphasis on bag-free days on the last Saturdays of the month, with a variety of activities planned for students on these days. Some of the activities prescribed for bag-free days include awareness on cybercrime, drug abuse, and safety, exposure visits and excursions, awareness on waterborne diseases, events on road safety, health hygiene and mock drills on disaster management, storytelling and career counseling, visits to post offices and banks, etc.

SC REINSTATES SOLAN MAYOR, TERMS HER DISQUALIFICATION 'POLITICAL GOONDAISM'

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court on Monday reinstated Solan Mayor Usha Sharma in her post for the remainder of her tenure while terming her disqualification a case of "political goondaism". A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh made its August 20, 2024 order absolute by which it had stayed her disqualification while terming her removal "a case of male bias". "The interim order of August 20, 2024 is made absolute. Any interference with the order will invite consequences," the Bench said, as it adjourned the matter after a year. When senior advocate Devadatt Kamat, appearing for the respondents, tried to interject, the Bench said it does not want to pass any strictures in the order at present, as it is a case of "political goondaism". Sharma's counsel submitted that her tenure will get completed next year and urged the court to make its interim order of last year absolute. On August 20, last year, the top court while issuing notice on the plea of Sharma and former mayor Poonam Grover against the June.



ED RAIDS BJP LEADER'S PREMISES, SEIZES RS 2 CRORE IN CASH AND JEWELLERY

Diary Times Desk : The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized unexplained cash of Rs 40.62 lakh and jewellery worth Rs 1.61 crore during raids conducted at multiple locations, including the residence and business establishments of BJP leader Niti Sen Bhatia and his son in Panipat and Paonta Sahib (Himachal Pradesh). The ED raids were carried out under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, in connection with a case involving Raees Ahmed Bhat and others, who are allegedly involved in the unauthorised sale and diversion of a codeine-based cough syrup (CBCS), Cocrex, and associated illicit monetary gains. The investigation revealed that Vidit Healthcare, owned by Neeraj Bhatia, manufactured CBCS, which was then procured and diverted by shell companies, including M/s SS Industries, NK Pharmaceuticals, and Kansal Pharmaceuticals. During the searches, ED seized unexplained cash, jewellery, and various documentary and digital evidence. Two accused persons, Garv Bhambhari and Mamta Kansal, who were absconding in a Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) case, were also traced during the search operations.

PANCHAYATS JOIN WAR AGAINST 'CHITTA', DEMAND STRICT ACTION ON SUPPLIERS

Diary Times Desk : Gram panchayats are gradually joining the fight against 'chitta.' Over the past few weeks, several panchayats across different districts have passed resolutions to socially boycott both the sellers and consumers of 'chitta' and deny them access to panchayat services. The latest panchayat to take this step is Ghoond Gram Panchayat in the Theog block of Shimla district. "Anyone found consuming or selling chitta will be excluded from the BPL scheme, their ration cards will be revoked and they will not receive certificates issued by the panchayat," said CR Chandel, up-pradhan of Ghoond Gram Panchayat. Chandel said they were forced to take this initiative following the frightening spread of this vice. "People are scared for their children. A few days back there was a report that children made their own parents addicted to 'chitta'. Such developments are very disturbing and now, people want to take action at their level as well," said Chandel. Palchan Gram Panchayat of Kullu district also passed a similar resolution on Saturday.

HIMACHAL PRADESH CONGRESS WILL SUFFER SAME FATE AS IN DELHI ELECTIONS, SAYS BINDAL

Diary Times Desk : BJP state president Dr Rajeev Bindal today lashed out at the Congress-led state government and said that Congress in Himachal Pradesh would suffer the same fate as it suffered in Delhi Legislative Assembly elections due to its misgovernance and negligence of people. While addressing a press conference here today, Bindal said that just as the people of Delhi rejected Congress, the people of Himachal Pradesh would also give a strong reply to the Congress government for its failures, corruption and mismanagement in the upcoming elections. He said the mafia is flourishing in the state, particularly the illegal mining mafia. He alleged that Haryana's crusher owners were exploiting the rivers of Himachal Pradesh, and the state government was turning a blind eye to the issue. He cited drone footage showing illegal mining activities in the Balad river, where several JCBs, poiclains and trucks were operating and suggested that similar aerial surveillance should be conducted over the Markanda river also. He further accused the Congress government of presenting fake employment figures and said that one minister claimed of providing 42,000 jobs, while the Chief Minister mentioned providing 13,704 jobs which shows how the government is misleading the people.



Vidarbha cross 300, take early advantage against Mumbai

Diary Times Desk : Vidarbha made a strong start to their Ranji Trophy semifinal clash against Mumbai in Nagpur as Danish Malewar and Dhruv Shorey hit half-centuries. Shivam Dube and Shams Mulani picked two wickets each while Vidarbha finished the day on 308 for 5. Shorey made a brisk start in the first hour before left-arm pacer Royston Dias dismissed Atharva Taide. No.3 batter Parth Rekhade kick-started a stand with Shorey during which the former scored his half-century. Shivam Dube broke through, getting Rekhade to nick to Suryakumar Yadav at second slip. Shorey and Malewar proceeded to stitch the next partnership that powered Vidarbha ahead. Mulani put an end to that with the wicket of Shorey, who fell for a 109-ball 74. Vidarbha kept their innings going with stand after stand as Karun Nair entered the scene to put on 78 runs with Malewar. However, Malewar became Mulani's second wicket but Yash Rathod and Karun scored 40s - while the former remained unbeaten at stumps - to take the team past the 300-mark.



Team Australia Arrives In Pakistan For Champions Trophy 2025

Diary Times Desk : The Australian cricket team arrived in Pakistan on Monday to participate in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy. The tournament begins with a match between hosts Pakistan and New Zealand in Karachi on Wednesday. Pakistan are also the defending champions having won the last edition of the tournament in 2017 in the UK where they beat India in the title clash. "The Australian cricket team has arrived in Lahore for the @ICC #ChampionsTrophy 2025! They will play their first match of the tournament on 22 February against England at the Gaddafi Stadium," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) posted on X. The team landed in two separate groups. The first batch, which included captain Steve Smith, coaches, and support staff, arrived from Colombo via Dubai. The second group, comprising 15 players and two additional members of the support staff, followed the same route and reached Lahore later the same day. Like India, who will be playing all their matches in Dubai as per the hybrid model agreement, the Australian team will also not feature in any warm-up matches, as they were very recently involved in a two-match ODI series against Sri Lanka, which they lost 2-0. After their opener against traditional rivals England, Australia will play their second match against South Africa.

"I Don't Have PR Team": Ajinkya Rahane Exposes BCCI Selectors, Shares Test Exit Story

Diary Times Desk : One of the few Indian batters who have consistently delivered for the country on overseas assignments, Ajinkya Rahane hasn't just been another victim to the talent pool the country has. Once the most reliable No. 4 batter in Test cricket, Rahane's stocks have fallen so hard over the last 2 years that he is no longer in the national team's scheme of things in any of the three formats. Though not the most outspoken cricketers India have produced, Rahane did expose a flaw in the current selection committee, saying no communication took place from the bosses over his exit from the Test team after the 2023 World Test Championship final. "When I was dropped a few years ago, I made runs and was picked for the World Test Championship final and then was dropped again. But what is in my control? To play. I did well in domestic cricket and in the IPL and was called again. Whenever an experienced player makes a comeback, one knows that he will get 2-3 series. I knew that South Africa was a challenging series and I was expecting a call, but I wasn't picked. I felt bad because I have been serving for so long," Rahane said in an interview with Indian Express.

PCB breaks silence on missing Indian flag in Karachi, says ICC responsible for no tri-colour ahead of Champions Trophy

Diary Times Desk : The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has come up with an explanation after outrage erupted over the absence of the Indian flag at the National Stadium in Karachi, just days ahead of the Champions Trophy 2025. A video went viral on social media on Sunday, showcasing the flags of all competing nations but one being hoisted on the stadium's roof. The Indian flag was nowhere to be seen. It is important to state that India will be playing their ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 matches in Dubai after the team did not get permission from the concerned authorities to travel across the border. Many believed that this was PCB's retaliatory move. However, PCB has confirmed to The Hindustan Times that the directive has come from the International Cricket Council (ICC), and only four flags will be hoisted on match days. In all likelihood, India's flag will not be seen at the three venues in Pakistan as Rohit Sharma and co. are not playing a single match in Karachi, Lahore or Rawalpindi.

India Hockey Team Face Germany Test At FIH Pro League, Eye Back-To-Back Wins

Diary Times Desk : Their campaign back on track after a jittery start, India will look to continue the winning momentum when they take on Paris Olympics silver medallist Germany in their next men's FIH Pro League match here on Tuesday. India had a woeful start to their home leg matches of the Pro League, losing 1-3 to Spain in their opener. But the hosts bounced back strongly to tame Spain 2-0 in the return match on Sunday. With three points from two games, India are currently sitting in eighth place in the standings and will be desperate to climb up the table. After a relatively off day on Saturday, the Indians looked a completely different side on Sunday, dominating for most part of the match and scoring two field goals through Mandeep Singh (32nd minute) and Dilpreet Singh (39th) to pocket all three points. While the strikers shone bright in the second game, India's chief coach Craig Fulton would be a bit concerned about penalty corner conversions. Despite winning seven penalty corners across their two games, India failed to convert a single chance. In the absence of India captain Harmanpreet Singh, who was rested for the second match, Hockey India League star performer Jugraj Singh.

Rohit Sharma is way better than Virat Kohli and Babar: Former Pakistan bowler

Diary Times Desk : Former Pakistan fast bowler Abdur Rauf Khan has rated India captain Rohit Sharma a better batter than his teammate Virat Kohli and Pakistan star Babar Azam. Ever since Babar's rise in international cricket, Pakistan fans have often compared him with the star India batter Virat Kohli for his batting exploits. Recently, Abdur Rauf Khan shared his views on the competition between the two batters and admitted that there's no comparison for Virat Kohli. However, he also mentioned Rohit Sharma's name, calling him the current best batter in the world, even better than Kohli and Babar. "Both are great players, but in my opinion, Virat Kohli has no comparison. His class, consistency, and ability to perform under pressure set him apart. Babar Azam, when in form, is exceptional. But personally, my favourite batsman [batter] is Rohit Sharma. I believe Rohit is currently the best batsman [batter] in world cricket. He is way better than Virat and Babar," Khan told Times of India.

