

**PM NARENDRA
MODI**

EUROPEAN COMMISSION SET TO VISIT INDIA TO DISCUSS TRADE WITH PM MODI

Diary Times Desk : A full delegation of the European Commission will be in India for two days (February 27-28) to hold a plenary session with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss trade, economic security and resilient supply chains.

The second meeting of the EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) will be held during this visit, with discussions covering clean technologies, digital infrastructure and the compatibility of trade systems. The Ministry of External Affairs said on Saturday that President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, will be accompanied by the European Union College of Commissioners, on an official visit to India.

This will be the first-ever visit of the EU College of Commissioners together to India and among the first such visits since the start of the mandate of the current European Commission in December 2024 after the European parliamentary elections held in June 2024. President Ursula von der Leyen follows the announcement of a new strategic agenda for EU-India relations. This will be Leyen's third visit to India. She has earlier visited India for a bilateral official visit in April 2022, and to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023.

Prime Minister Modi and President Ursula von der Leyen have also met regularly on the sidelines of multilateral meetings. India and European Union are strategic partners since 2004 and their bilateral ties have expanded and deepened across a wide range of areas. As the two sides enter the third decade of the strategic partnership, the visit of President von der Leyen and the EU College of Commissioners will pave the way for further strengthening of bilateral relations based on growing convergences. Separately, as per already announced plans, India and EU will resume negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) next month.



**DELHI
NEWS**

'WOMEN OF DELHI FEELING BETRAYED': ATISHI TO CM REKHA GUPTA OVER 'FAILED' PROMISES

Diary Times Desk : AAP leader Atishi has sought a meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to discuss the Rs 2,500 monthly aid to women and accused the BJP of failing to implement the promised scheme in its first cabinet meeting.

In a letter to Gupta on Saturday, Atishi questioned why a scheme on the financial aid to women was not approved in the new government's first cabinet meeting when the Prime Minister had promised it in an election rally. Gupta and her council of ministers took oath of office on Thursday, following a victory over the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Assembly polls held earlier in the month.

Atishi, the chief minister in the previous AAP government, sought an appointment to meet the CM on February 23, along with her party MLAs. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an election rally in Dwarka on January 31 promised Delhi's mothers and sisters that the scheme for Rs 2,500 monthly payment would be passed in the first cabinet meeting after the BJP formed the government." The first cabinet meeting of the BJP government was held on February 20 but the scheme was not passed, she said, adding that the women of Delhi who believed "Modi's guarantee" are feeling "betrayed".

BJP leaders, including the CM Gupta, have asserted that the scheme will be implemented from March as was promised by the party.



FORMER RBI GOVERNOR SHAKTIKANTA DAS APPOINTED PRINCIPAL SECRETARY-II TO PM MODI

Diary Times Desk : Former RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das who demitted office in December 2024 was on Saturday appointed the second Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet said Das' appointment will be effective from the date he takes charge and his appointment will be co-terminus with the term of Prime Minister Modi. Das will be the second Principal Secretary to Modi besides PK Mishra. A 1980-batch IAS officer, Das earlier served as Secretary, Department of Revenue and Economic Affairs. During his long tenure in the Finance Ministry, Das was involved in the preparation of eight Budgets. He also played a major role in merging the tax regimes into GST, which came into force from July 1, 2017. Later as RBI Governor, Das focused on economic stability, growth and reining inflation. He earned high praise for RBI's role in addressing the economic impact of Covid-19. Das had assumed charge as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India effective December 12, 2018. Immediately prior to his RBI assignment, he was acting as Member, 15th Finance Commission, and G20 Sherpa of India. Das has vast experience in various areas of governance in the last nearly four decades.



60 CRORE DEVOTEES HAVE TAKEN HOLY DIP AT MAHA KUMBH: UP GOVT

Diary Times Desk : The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday said an unprecedented 60 crore devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam. The Kumbh Mela which started on January 13 will continue till February 26 on the occasion of Maha Shivratri. Over half of India's 110 crore Sanatan followers have bathed in the holy confluence, and this number is expected to surpass 65 crore by the final 'amrit snan' on February 26, an official statement said. This Maha Kumbh has seen the largest participation in any religious, cultural, or social event, it said. According to the World Population Review, Pew Research, India's population is approximately 143 crore (1.43 billion), with 110 crore (1.10 billion) followers of Sanatan Dharma, the statement said. This means that over 55 per cent of the Indian population has taken part in the Maha Kumbh, it said. On a global scale, according to Pew Research 2024.

WILL NOT IMPLEMENT NEP EVEN IF RS 10,000 CRORE OFFERED TO TAMIL NADU: CM STALIN



Diary Times Desk : Continuing his tirade against the Centre over the National Education Policy (NEP), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday said he would not agree to implement it even if the Centre offered to provide Rs 10,000 crore in funds to the state. The opposition to NEP was not merely due to the attempt to impose Hindi but also because of various other factors that would have serious consequences for the future of students and the social justice system, he claimed. Apart from encouraging a screening test for admissions to even arts and science colleges, similar to NEET for medical courses, NEP would allow students to discontinue their studies. Permitting students to discontinue their studies is akin to asking them not to study," Stalin said, addressing an event organised by Parents-Teachers Association here. "We are not opposed to any language but will remain firm in opposing its imposition. We are not opposing NEP only for the attempt to thrust Hindi but for several other reasons as well. NEP is regressive. It will drive students away from schools," Stalin claimed.

ALL ABOUT COMMON SENSE: JAISHANKAR'S 'HANUMAN JI' ANALOGY ON DIPLOMACY

Diary Times Desk : External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday cited the diplomatic powers of Lord Hanuman to explain the real purpose of diplomacy and said diplomacy is all about building coalitions and managing them towards an end that is in national interest. Giving the example of Lord Hanuman, Jaishankar said: "Look at Lord Hanuman. He is being sent by Lord Ram to a hostile territory. He is told to go there, figure out the lay of the land, we have no idea about this place, no idea where Ma Sita is. So, it is a kind of intelligence gathering reece, a very open-ended mission," said Jaishankar at a session with Sanjeev Sanyal at the ongoing Delhi University literature festival here. The Foreign Minister went on to explain what Lord Hanuman managed to achieve. "And what does he (Lord Hanuman) do? He goes there (to Lanka). He is actually successful in meeting and keeping up Ma Sita's morale. He is able to get into Ravana's court by surrendering himself. He is able to understand the dynamics of the court and is the only person who gets an understanding of Vibhishana, and that Vibhishana is a good guy who could be used," Jaishankar said.



YOUR HOROSCOPE 23-02-2025

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.



HRTC BOD Decisions: 700 new diesel and electric buses will be added to HRTC fleet, decision taken in the meeting

Diary Times Desk : The purchase of new buses has been approved in the meeting of the Board of Directors of Himachal Path Parivahan Nigam (HRTC). The Board of Directors meeting was held at Hotel Holiday Home on Saturday under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri. In this, other proposals including the purchase of new buses were discussed. Giving information about the decisions of the Board of Directors meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri said that it has been decided to include about 700 new diesel, Volvo and electric buses in the fleet of HRTC. It will be sent to the state cabinet for approval. The purchase of buses will cost about Rs 600 crore. HRTC has been asked to re-tender for the purchase of 100 new mini buses (Tempo Traveller). Apart from this, the purchase of 24 new super luxury, 250 diesel buses (37 seater) and 297 electric buses (Type-1) was approved. Electric buses will start running within the next four months. Purchase of 23 Type One e-buses was also approved.



Chitta smuggling case: Police personnel stationed at Himachal's borders for years will be removed, government is preparing a proposal

Diary Times Desk : Police personnel stationed for years on the borders of Himachal with neighboring states will be removed. New police personnel will be deployed in their place. The state government is preparing a proposal in this regard. Police force in plain clothes will be deployed even on secret routes. The state government is serious about the increasing Chitta case in Himachal. Himachal's borders are being sealed. CCTV cameras are being installed on the border areas to stop the smuggling of Chitta. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu has given instructions to take strict action against smugglers. The intelligence agency, STF (Special Task Force) has been given strict instructions to take strict action against the Chitta mafia. In Himachal Pradesh, the CID has caught smugglers one after the other and handed them over to the local police. The intelligence agency has information that Chitta reaches Himachal from the border area after 11 pm at night. Some officers and employees of Himachal have also been found with these smugglers. However, many employees have also been caught. Dozens of gang leaders from outside states including Himachal are on the target of the CID. Sources reveal that a CID team is raiding the neighbouring states of Himachal these days to catch the main kingpin.

Himachal: Money demanded back from departments with interest for not starting work on approved schemes

Diary Times Desk : All the departments, corporations and boards of Himachal Pradesh will have to return the budget of such schemes approved before March 31, 2022, on which work has not yet started. Taking cognizance, the Finance and Planning Department has issued letters in this regard to all the administrative secretaries. Instructions have been given to return the unused approved amount along with interest. A provision has also been made for the Planning Department to seek revised approval again after the obstacles in starting the schemes are removed. This decision has been taken to make proper use of the budget after reviewing the funds deposited in banks by the departments. The state government.

Himachal: 78 schools with low number of students, 16 colleges will be merged

Diary Times Desk : In Himachal Pradesh, 78 schools and 16 colleges with less number of students will be merged. This consensus was reached in 3 departmental meetings held in the Secretariat under the chairmanship of Education Minister Rohit Thakur. The proposal will be sent to the cabinet meeting for final approval. 49 high schools with 20 students and 29 senior secondary schools with 25 students will be merged before the new academic session. 16 degree colleges with 100 students will be closed. In the meeting, a decision was also taken to transfer surplus teachers working in schools and colleges under rationalization. The number of students in 16 colleges of the state has not been increasing for the last few years. In such a situation, now the government has decided to close the colleges with less number of students. Students studying in the colleges to be closed will be shifted to nearby institutions. Lecturers, non-teachers will be transferred.

Himachal: Tehsil welfare officer and woman lawyer were also involved in chitta smuggling

Diary Times Desk : Police have now charged a Tehsil Welfare Officer and a woman lawyer of Shimla district, arrested in connection with the Chitta case, with drug trafficking. According to this, these civilized and respected people living a white-collar life in the society are accused of drug trafficking. Police was also surprised for a moment when they found evidence of transactions of these people with the bank accounts of the Chitta smuggler, but as the investigation progressed, it started proving that they were also involved in this act. It is alleged that Tehsil Welfare Officer Mukul Chauhan had used the bank accounts of his family members. During interrogation, several youths arrested in the Sandeep Shah Chitta smuggler gang case have revealed that after getting addicted to drugs, they came in contact with accused Shah and after this, to fulfill this, they also provided drugs to other people. After the matter of continuous transactions with the kingpin in the bank accounts came to light in the initial investigation, the police have also charged them with drug trafficking. According to the police, only six months of bank account records have been scrutinized.

HP BJP: BJP may get a new state president this month, the party may bet on Jairam or Bindal

Diary Times Desk : BJP may get a new state president this month. Current BJP state president Dr. Rajiv Bindal and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur have returned after meeting party national president Jagat Prakash Nadda in Delhi. BJP state president is likely to be announced between 25 and 28 February. The BJP high command will take a decision regarding the selection of the new party president keeping in mind the 2027 assembly elections. The party does not want to take the next assembly elections lightly. Therefore, the party can bet on an already experienced state president. Current president Rajiv Bindal and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur fit this criterion. Party sources also say that other leaders for the post of president are currently out of the race. The party is seriously considering handing over the responsibility of state president to either Rajiv Bindal.

Shimla: The Speaker of the Assembly directed the officers and employees to complete the work of the session on time

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania said that preparations for the budget session starting from March 10 are in full swing. He has given directions to all the officers and employees associated with the organization of the session to complete their work on time. Especially the repair and developmental work of the Assembly Secretariat complex, cleanliness and smooth arrangement of power supply rests with the Public Works Department and Public Works Department Electricity. Pathania also gave directions to the officers and employees of the Assembly Secretariat to do the work related to the session on priority basis. In view of the budget session, a meeting related to security arrangements will be held on March 7 and the meeting of the Press Gallery Committee will be held on March 8 in the main committee room of the Assembly Secretariat. Pathania said that information about the questions to be asked in the House is also being received from the honorable members.

AAP MINISTER RAN "NON-EXISTENT" DEPARTMENT FOR 20 MONTHS; "JOKE," SAYS BJP

Diary Times Desk : Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and minister in the Punjab cabinet, headed two departments; the only problem was one of them did not exist. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's government took nearly 20 months to notice and then make the necessary amendments through a gazette notification. The Punjab government admitted that the Department of Administrative Reforms, allocated to Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, was "non-existent." Mr Dhaliwal will now retain only the NRI Affairs portfolio. Mr Dhaliwal was initially in charge of the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department but was relieved of that responsibility in a Cabinet reshuffle in May 2023. He then retained the NRI Affairs portfolio while being assigned to the Administrative Reforms Department. In another Cabinet reshuffle in September 2024, Mr Dhaliwal continued to hold both departments. However, it has now emerged that the Administrative Reforms Department was non-existent.

BAJRA ROTI, GARLIC CHUTNEY: PROTESTING RAJASTHAN MLAS' BUFFET AT ASSEMBLY

Diary Times Desk : As Congress leaders continued their protest, two men carrying large tiffin boxes walked up the stairs of the Rajasthan Assembly to feed the hungry MLAs. Inside the tiffin boxes were chapatis made from Bajra, gatte ki sabzi, garlic chutney, dum aloo, fogla raita and halwa among other dishes. The protest stem from a BJP leader's remarks on former prime minister Indira Gandhi during question hour of the assembly yesterday. After a sleepover inside the premises, Congress leaders decided to fuel their resistance with a home-cooked feast. Congress MLA Anil Sharma took charge of catering duties, bringing food from his own kitchen. Mr Sharma's gesture follows a practice upheld by his family. His father, Bhanwarlal Sharma, was known for providing meals in the assembly during political standoffs. In previous instances, food had been arranged from Mr Sharma's home in similar situations. The current standoff was triggered after state minister Avinash Gehlot referred to Indira Gandhi as "aapki dadi" (your grandmother). Congress MLAs took strong objection to the statement and demanded that the comments be expunged from the assembly records. The situation escalated when multiple party leaders.

DGCA SEEKS RESPONSE FROM AIR INDIA AFTER MINISTER GETS 'BROKEN SEAT'



Diary Times Desk : The civil aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), on Saturday sought a response from Air India after Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan criticised the airline's service quality on social media, saying that he was assigned a "broken and sunken seat" on flight AI436 during his journey from Bhopal to Delhi. The minister called it "unethical" for the airline to offer broken seats to passengers and said he had hoped for improved service by Air India after its takeover by Tata. "My impression was that Air India's service would improve after Tata took over, but it turned out to be my misconception," Chouhan said in a tweet on Saturday. "I don't mind discomfort in sitting, but it is unethical to make passengers sit on bad and uncomfortable seats after charging them the full fare. Isn't this cheating the passengers?" he added. "DGCA has sought a response from Air India on the issue of broken seats highlighted by the Union minister," said an aviation ministry official.

"STRICT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN": ODISHA CHIEF MINISTER ON KIIT STUDENT DEATH

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday asserted that Nepalese students studying in Odisha are children of the state and they will continue to pursue their education with full respect and dignity, an official release said. CM Majhi made the assertion during a telephonic conversation with Nepal's Foreign Minister Dr Arzu Rana Deuba, the statement issued by the chief minister's office said. He assured Deuba that the state government will ensure strict action against those involved in the alleged suicide of a 20-year-old engineering student and subsequent attack on Nepalese pupils at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT). "The state government is keeping a close watch on the developments (at KIIT) and all steps will be taken to restore hope and confidence of the students. The Nepal foreign minister thanked CM Majhi and expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the state government," the release said.

"WOMEN OF DELHI CHEATED": ATISHI TO REKHA GUPTA OVER "FAILED" PROMISES

Diary Times Desk : Former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi today wrote a letter to newly sworn-in Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, questioning the BJP government's failure to pass a promised financial assistance scheme for women in its first cabinet meeting on Thursday. In her letter, Atishi sought time to meet Ms Gupta along with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Legislature Party on Sunday to discuss the implementation of the scheme that would provide Rs 2,500 per month to women in Delhi. "First of all, heartiest congratulations to you on assuming the charge of the post of Chief Minister of Delhi," Atishi's letter reads. "Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Prime Minister of the country, Shri Narendra Modi ji, had promised the mothers and sisters of Delhi in a rally organized on January 31, 2025, during the election campaign that after the formation of the BJP government, a scheme of Rs 2,500 per month would be passed for them in the very first cabinet meeting. He said - this is Modi's guarantee." She further said that the BJP-led Delhi government held its first cabinet meeting on February 20, but the scheme was not passed. "The mothers and sisters of Delhi had believed in Modi ji's guarantee, and now they feel cheated," she added.

TRUMP QUESTIONS INDIA VOTER TURNOUT FUND AGAIN, BJP SEEKS "DEEP STATE" PROBE

Diary Times Desk : The BJP has sought an investigation into alleged US funding of \$21 million for voter turnout in India and "kickbacks". The BJP's call for a probe came after US President Donald Trump first raised the issue of the alleged funding, after he took over from former President Joe Biden. The BJP alleged the money was used to sustain "deep state assets" in India. President Trump on Thursday repeated his questioning of the US government's allocation of \$21 million for voter turnout in India, calling it a "kickback scheme". He also spoke about \$21 million for strengthening the political landscape in Bangladesh and \$19 million for biodiversity in Nepal. "And \$21 million for voter turnout in India. Why are we caring about India's turnout? We got enough problems. We want our own turnout, don't we? Can you imagine all that money going to India? I wonder what they think when they get it," President Trump said at the Republican Governors Association meeting. "Now, it's a kickback scheme."

WON'T ACCEPT EDUCATION POLICY EVEN IF CENTRE OFFERS RS 10,000 CRORE: MK STALIN

Diary Times Desk : MK Stalin has said he is firm on his stance of not implementing the National Education Policy in Tamil Nadu even if the Centre offered to provide Rs 10,000 crore in funds to the state. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has said the opposition to the National Education Policy (NEP) is not merely over the "imposition of Hindi" but there are several other factors that would have serious consequences on the future of students and the social justice system. Addressing a Parent-Teachers Association event in Tamil Nadu's Cuddalore, Mr Stalin said, "We are not opposed to any language but will remain firm in opposing its imposition. We are not opposing the NEP only for the attempt to thrust Hindi but for several other reasons as well. The NEP is regressive. It will drive students away from schools." Apart from 'denying' financial aid to SC/ST and BC students, which is now being provided, the NEP proposed.



Billionaire Pankaj Oswal's daughter speaks out about Ugandan arrest ordeal

Diary Times Desk : Vasundhara Oswal, daughter of Indian billionaire Pankaj Oswal, has spoken out about her experience in Uganda, where she was allegedly detained for five days and subsequently arrested for two weeks after being accused of kidnapping and murdering her father's employee. Talking to news agency PTI, Vasundhara stated that her human rights were violated by Ugandan authorities. She was accused of kidnapping and murdering Mukesh Menaria, an employee of her father. However, Menaria was later found alive in Tanzania. "My human rights were grossly violated. For example, when they proceeded to raid the site, they did not have a search warrant," Vasundhara said. "When I asked them to present a search warrant, they said, 'We're in Uganda. We can do anything. You're not in Europe anymore,' and they basically proceeded to raid," she added. She recounted that Ugandan police forced her to accompany them to the Interpol office under the pretext of meeting a senior official. "I did not want to do [this] that same day," Vasundhara said. A male officer then allegedly forced her into a police van, telling her, "No, you have to come today only. It's not going to happen tomorrow anytime otherwise."

US judge blocks Donald Trump's executive order ending federal aid for DEI programmes

Diary Times Desk : A federal judge has blocked a sweeping executive order from President Donald Trump that sought to end government support for programmes promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. Judge Adam Abelson in Baltimore on Friday found it likely violates free-speech rights and granted an injunction blocking the funding withdrawal as a lawsuit plays out. Trump signed an order his first day in office directing federal agencies to terminate all "equity-related" grants or contracts. He signed a follow-up order requiring federal contractors to certify that they don't promote DEI. The plaintiffs — including the city of Baltimore and higher education groups — sued the Trump administration earlier this month, arguing the executive orders are unconstitutional and a blatant overreach.

Donald Trump says 'not forcing' Gaza takeover plan, questions Israel's 'bad real estate deal' in 2005

Diary Times Desk : US President Donald Trump told Fox News in an interview on Friday that he is not "forcing" his plan to depopulate, take over and redevelop the Gaza Strip as a solution to tensions between Israel and the Palestinians. However, the Republican continued to assert that his idea was the "best approach" and wondered why Israel had abandoned the same idea. Speaking to Fox News, Trump said, "I'll tell you the way to do it is my plan. I think that's the plan that works. But I'm not forcing it. I'm just going to sit back and recommend it. And then the US would own the site, there'd be no Hamas. And they'd be developed and you'd start all over again with a clean slate." Arab states, including Egypt and Jordan, have rejected Trump's idea to displace the Palestinians completely and redevelop the war-torn territory. The US President also mooted cutting off foreign aid to Egypt and Jordan if they do not agree to his proposal to accept displaced Palestinians. Later, Jordan agreed to take 2,000 sick children.



Trump Removes Office Desk After Musk's Son Seen Picking His Nose, Wiping Fingers



Diary Times Desk : Remember when billionaire Elon Musk brought his son X Æ A-Xii, whom he calls X, to the Oval Office? From making weird noises to picking his nose, the 4-year-old, who was standing close to the President's Resolute Desk, grabbed headlines. Now, President Donald Trump has replaced the iconic 145-year-old desk with a C&O desk. He has called it a "temporary change." Donald Trump, who has in the past labelled himself as a germophobe, shared a picture of the Oval Office with the new desk on his social media platform Truth Social. It was not clear if the change was brought in due to the nose-picking incident. The note attached to the post read, "A President, after the election, gets a choice of 1 in 7 desks. This desk, the "C&O," which is also very well known and was used by President George H.W. Bush and others, has been temporarily installed in the White House while the Resolute Desk is being lightly refinished—a very important job. This is a beautiful, but temporary replacement!"

Zelensky 'Not Ready' To Sign Minerals Deal With US: Report

Diary Times Desk : Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is "not ready" to sign a deal that would give the United States preferential access to his country's rare earth minerals, a Ukrainian source told AFP. US President Donald Trump wants Ukraine to give US companies access as compensation for the tens of billions of dollars of aid delivered under his predecessor Joe Biden. Mike Waltz, Trump's national security adviser on Friday predicted that Zelensky would sign the deal soon, but the contours of the proposed agreement have not been made public. "In the form in which the draft is now, the president is not ready to accept, we are still trying to make changes and add constructiveness," a Ukrainian source close to the matter told AFP Saturday. "There are no American obligations in the agreement regarding guarantees or investments, everything about them is very vague, and they want to extract \$500 billion.

Trans US actor Hunter Schafer says passport lists her as male, slams Trump

Diary Times Desk : Hunter Schafer, a transgender actor who gained fame following her role in the HBO hit show 'Euphoria', claimed that her new passport listed her sex as "male" due to a recent change in policy under the Donald Trump administration. In a viral TikTok video, Schafer asserted that she was "never going to stop being trans" while blasting the new policy that recognises a person's gender as either male or female. The 'Euphoria' star claimed she had selected 'female' as her gender while filling out the passport paperwork. She also said her previous passport and driving licence mentioned her sex as 'female'. "I am not making this post to fear-monger, or to create drama, or receive consolation, I don't need it... I was shocked. I just didn't think it was actually going to happen," the 26-year-old actor said while showing her new passport that lists her as "male". Schafer, however, said she was unruffled by the gender change on her passport even though she expected challenges at the airport while travelling abroad. "This is real, and it's happening and no-one -- no matter their circumstances, no matter how wealthy or white or pretty or whatever -- is excluded.

Iran's "Raze Tel Aviv To The Ground" Threat, Israel's "We Are Ready" Reply

Diary Times Desk : A series of threats exchanged between senior military and political officials of Iran and Israel has threatened to destabilise the Middle East further. The latest warning came from Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) general Ebrahim Jabbari, who declared that Iran would destroy Israel as part of Operation True Promise 3. Major General Jbbari warned that "Operation True Promise 3 will be carried out at the right time, with precision, and on a scale sufficient to destroy Israel and raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground." Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar responded, saying, "If the Jewish people have learned anything from history, it is this: if your enemy says his goal is to annihilate you - believe him. We are ready." Jabbari's comments mark the third such threat in a week from high-ranking IRGC officials. Brigadier General Ali Fadavi, deputy commander of the IRGC, and Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Force, have also issued similar statements vowing to destroy Israel as part of Operation True Promise 3.

For 20 months, Punjab minister headed dept that never existed

Diary Times Desk : It took the Punjab Government nearly 20 months to realise that a department assigned to one of its prominent ministers never actually existed. In a notification issued today, the Punjab Government acknowledged that the Department of Administrative Reforms, allocated to Minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, was "non-existent". As a result, Dhaliwal will now hold the charge of only the NRI Affairs Department. The gazette notification states that the "Punjab Governor, on the advice of the Chief Minister, is pleased to make an amendment to the earlier notification regarding the portfolios of ministers with effect from February 7, 2025". Dhaliwal initially also held the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare portfolio, a charge he was relieved of during the Cabinet reshuffle in May 2023. He retained the NRI Affairs Ministry, while also being allocated the Administrative Reforms Department.



Union Agriculture Minister announces national committee to promote natural farming

Diary Times Desk : Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that a national-level committee will soon be established to promote natural farming across the country. Through this committee, farmers will be made aware about adopting natural farming practices and provided necessary training. He said if farmers adopt natural farming correctly, it will not only boost their income but also preserve soil fertility. In addition, citizens will benefit from access to chemical- and pesticide-free vegetables, grains and fruits. The Union Minister visited Kainthla village in Kurukshetra district today to observe natural farming practices. During the visit, the minister witnessed the jaggery-making process and even tasted the fresh produce. The minister emphasised the detrimental effects of excessive chemical and fertiliser use, citing significant soil fertility loss and the decline of beneficial insects. He also highlighted the rise of diseases linked to produce grown using these harmful practices. The minister advocated for embracing natural farming, stating that a gradual transition to this method can yield substantial profits for farmers.

RWAs raise flag on corruption, poor sanitation ahead of mayoral election

Diary Times Desk : As Gurugram gears up for its first-ever direct mayoral election, the city's Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have taken the lead in setting the agenda, releasing an "expectation letter" even before the contesting candidates could unveil their manifestos. United under the banner of United Gurugram RWAs, the associations have flagged sanitation, sewerage, roads and corruption as the four pressing issues crippling the city's civic infrastructure. They are demanding concrete, on-ground solutions rather than hollow political promises. "This election is not about politics but about Gurugram," said Praveen Yadav, president of the United Gurugram RWAs. "There is rampant corruption in civic agencies — whether it's maintaining infrastructure, hiring contractors or addressing complaints. Corruption at every level of the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) has turned the city into a civic mess. We expect our public representatives to bring accountability, efficiency and transparency to the system."

MBBS exam scam: Police seek students' record from varsity

Diary Times Desk : In a significant development in the MBBS annual/supplementary exam scam, district police have sought the academic records of 24 MBBS students from Pt BD Sharma University of Health Sciences, Rohtak (UHSR), as the investigation into exam malpractices deepens. These students, along with 17 university employees, have been named in the FIR. Confirming the move, DSP Dalip Singh said, "The examination records are crucial for verifying the extent of answer sheet tampering and related irregularities before we begin formal interrogations of the accused students." He, however, refrained from revealing further details, citing the ongoing investigation. Singh added that UHSR employees Roshan Lal, Rohit and Deepak — who admitted to their roles during questioning — are now in judicial custody. The scam, first exposed by The Tribune last month, uncovered a network where students colluded with UHSR officials to rewrite their answer sheets post-examination using erasable ink pens, with the tampering taking place outside the university premises.

SYL canal won't be reality, state has no water to share, says Punjab CM Mann

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday said the Sutlej Yamuna Link canal will never become a reality and his government is duty-bound to safeguard the interests of the Punjab while reiterating that the state has no water to share with others. His remarks came a day after Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said the Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal issue remains critical for the state and alleged that the Punjab government has made no progress in the matter. For decades, Punjab and Haryana have been at loggerheads over the construction of the canal to effectively allocate water from the Ravi and Beas rivers. The project envisaged a 214 km canal, of which 122 km was to be constructed in Punjab and 92 km in Haryana. Haryana has completed the project in its territory.

Centre-farmer talks cordial, next round on March 19: Agriculture Minister Shivraj Chouhan

Diary Times Desk : The second round of talks between a three-member Central Government delegation, led by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi, and farmer forums ended here after three hours. Punjab Farmer Minister Harpal Cheema, Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian, and Food and Supplies Minister Lal Chand Kataruchak led the state government delegation. The talks with protesting Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) representatives were held in a conducive atmosphere, Agriculture Minister Chouhan said after the end of the meeting. Chouhan said the next meeting would be held on March 19. Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Cheema stated that discussions were held on the quantity of crops purchased at MSP, but a difference of opinion arose. Cheema added that three central ministers urged Jagjit Singh Dallewal to end his fast, but he refused.

Bring civic body out of financial mess: Kataria

Diary Times Desk : Punjab Governor and UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria today issued directions to bring the cash-strapped Municipal Corporation (MC) out of financial crisis. The direction came as Mayor Harpreet Kaur Babla along with other 34 elected councillors and nine nominated councillors met him and raised various key issues pertaining to the larger public interest and welfare of MC employees. They urged him to strengthen the financial position of the civic body. Kataria assured them of full support of the UT Administration. During the meeting, the Mayor informed the Administrator that the MC had been playing a crucial role in maintaining and developing the city's infrastructure, ensuring sanitation, and providing essential public services on a no profit-no loss basis. The Mayor said in an effort to improve its financial position, the MC undertook various measures, including providing temporary water connections outside lal dora/Phirni limits in 22 villages (estimated revenue Rs 25-30 crore), e-auction of advertisement rights on public utilities and connecting passages (estimated revenue Rs 25-30 crore), zoning and layout plan development in Mani Majra (estimated revenue Rs 150-200 crore), advertisement rights of roundabouts across the city (estimated revenue Rs 4-5 crore), increase in annual ground rent of municipal land used by cable operators.

INDUSTRIALISTS AWAIT CAPITAL SUBSIDY FROM UNION GOVT

Diary Times Desk : Many industrialists and hotel owners in Himachal, who had applied for capital subsidy under a scheme of the Union Government after 2021, are in trouble. The Union Ministry of Commerce has not released the capital subsidy to the industries and hotels in the state after 2021. The affected industrialists allege that they had planned their projects keeping in view the subsidy to be received from the Union Government. Sources say that the Union Government had launched a scheme for the industrial units of Himachal during the stint of the previous BJP government. Under the scheme, the industrialists were eligible for capital subsidy up to a maximum limit of Rs 5 crore or 30 per cent of their capital expenditure on raising new units. The scheme was to last till March 2022. The Union Ministry of Commerce closed the window for the scheme in March 2021 but the state Industries Department officials accepted applications under the scheme till March 2022 and processed them at their end. However, the Union Commerce Ministry did not accept the claims of the applicants, who had applied after March 2021.

FRESH WESTERN DISTURBANCE FROM FEBRUARY 25

Diary Times Desk : The two-day wet spell in the state has reduced the winter precipitation deficiency from 80 per cent to 66 per cent. The deficiency in February has reduced to 44 per cent. As per the weather department, the deficiency in precipitation will reduce further as a fresh active Western Disturbance will hit the region from February 25. "Over the past two days, we have recorded snowfall and rainfall in almost every district. We have recorded the highest snowfall of 42 cm in Lahaul and Spiti while the highest rain of 56 mm has been recorded in Nagrota Suriyan of Kangra," said a weather official. Following the wet spell, the maximum temperatures have plummeted by nine to 11 degree Celsius in a couple of districts. The two-day wet spell in the state has reduced the winter precipitation deficiency from 80 per cent to 66 per cent. The deficiency in February has reduced to 44 per cent.

SNOW DOWN TO INCHES IN SHIMLA'S APPLE BELT, GROWERS URGE GOVT TO INTERVENE

Diary Times Desk : Pratap Chauhan is a worried man. The 67-year-old apple grower is witnessing a situation that he has never seen in his life before. "We have had five snowfalls this winter, starting from December, but not even once the snowfall has been more than an inch or two. It's really worrisome," he says. Just until three winters ago, one foot to two feet of snowfall in one occurrence was a routine in his village located at an altitude of 7,800 feet in the Kotkhai area of Shimla district. "In the wet spell for two days, we received only an inch of snowfall and about 5 mm of rainfall. Now, clouds come, precipitation starts, but it's over in no time," says Chauhan. "Only places above 8,000 feet to 8,500 feet are receiving around two to three inch of snowfall," he adds. The situation is more or less the same in other parts of the apple belt. To make the matters worse, the winter rain is also eluding the lower altitudes of the apple belt. Lokinder Bisht, an apple grower in Rohru, says that only 4 mm to 5 mm of rainfall was recorded in the area in the past two days. "Normally, we get 15 mm to 20 mm of rainfall in a day or so, and around five to six inches of snow when it snows in the higher reaches. Now, the snow is not reaching us and rainfall has also reduced considerably," he says. Rohru is located at an altitude of around 5,000 feet.



CID DOCUMENTS LEAKED, FIR LODGED AGAINST UNKNOWN PERSONS IN HP

Diary Times Desk : An FIR has been lodged against unknown persons for allegedly leaking Himachal Pradesh CID's information and documents. Sources said the Superintendent of Police (SP), State CID, had filed a complaint in the police station at Chotta Shimla in which it was alleged that someone had unlawfully leaked CID's confidential information that was being used to defame the state CID as well as the state government. On the basis of the complaint, an FIR has been registered under Sections 59 (Public servant concealing design to commit offence which it is his duty to prevent), 60 (concealing plans to commit a crime), 61 (criminal conspiracy), 305 (theft of a government property), 336(4) (forgery with the intent to harm someone's reputation) and 353(2) (punishing individuals who make, publish, or circulate false information, rumors, or statements) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS), 2023. The action came after a confidential information and documents of CID department were leaked and were widely published in the media at state and national levels a few months ago. The Superintendent of Police of the state CID had filed a complaint in the police station at Chotta Shimla.

HIMACHAL PRADESH GOVT AMENDS PRISON RULES, ENDS CASTE-BASED WORK ALLOTMENT

Diary Times Desk : The Himachal Pradesh government has amended all caste-based provisions in the HP Prison Manual 2021 to ensure equality and eliminate caste-based work allocation among prisoners, an official said on Saturday. The state government has inserted a paragraph in the manual prohibiting caste-based discrimination in prisons and correctional institutions. The newly added provision (para 5.66) ensures that no discrimination, classification, or segregation of prisoners will occur on the basis of caste, a government spokesperson said. Further, para 5.67 mandates that there will be no discrimination of prisoners in the allotment of any duty or work in prisons on the basis of their caste, he added. Para 5.68 invokes the provision that prisoners will not be engaged in manual scavenging, sewer system maintenance, and septic tank cleaning. Earlier, a provision in the Jail Manual allowed the employment of paid sweepers in the absence of female prisoners for cleaning tasks. This clause, previously under paragraph 214, has now been completely deleted.

DALAI LAMA BACK IN DHARAMSALA AFTER MEETING TIBETANS IN KARNATAKA

Diary Times Desk : The 14th Dalai Lama returned to Dharamsala today morning to an enthusiastic reception from local Tibetans, devotees and well-wishers, after a nearly six-week stay at Bylakuppe town in Karnataka, followed by a couple of days in Hunsur. At the Kangra airport, the Dalai Lama was welcomed by Speaker of Tibetan parliament-in-exile Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, officiating Sikyong Tharlam Dolma Changra (Kalon of the Department of Education), Dharamsala Tibetan Settlement Officer Kunchok Migmar and representatives of various Tibetan NGOs based in Dharamsala. A large crowd of Tibetans had gathered along the motorcade route at designated points, dressed in traditional robes and holding ceremonial scarves and incense to catch a glimpse of the Dalai Lama as his vehicle passed by. Upon entering his official residence in Tsuglagkhang, another group of Tibetan leaders, including Deputy Speaker Dolma Tsering Teykhang, Kalon Norzin Dolma, Election Commissioner Lobsang Yeshe, Public Service Commissioner Karma Yeshe, members of Tibetan parliament-in-exile and secretaries of the Central Tibetan Administration had lined up to receive him.



INDIA START FAVOURITES AGAINST RATTLED PAKISTAN

Diary Times Desk : The common refrain among teams ahead of Sunday's expected high-voltage clash between India and Pakistan in the Champions Trophy is, "It's just another game." Players from both sides have sought to downplay the pressure factor that typically accompanies a match between these traditional rivals. "It doesn't change anything for us, honestly. We play every match to win the match and this is no different for us. And that is how we are going to prepare for this one as well," India vice-captain Shubman Gill said on the eve of the game. "There is no extra pressure; we are relaxed. We will treat it as just another match," Haris Rauf remarked on the contest. It is unlikely the players are entirely honest about their mindset and mental approach, particularly the Pakistan players. With their survival on the line, Pakistan's players are feeling the pressure from all sides. Their bowling and batting floundered in the tournament opener against New Zealand, leaving the Mohammad Rizwan side teetering on the cliff. The bowlers were way off the mark and the batters struggled to accelerate. During their net sessions at the ICC Academy on Friday night, the bowlers focused on swinging the ball in, something that was invisible in their performance against New Zealand. The batters, on the other hand, were consistently attempting big shots and aiming to clear the boundary - something they had struggled to do in their previous match.



VIRAT NEEDS TO PLAY WITH RELAXED MIND AGAINST PAKISTAN, SAYS MANJREKAR

Diary Times Desk : One of cricket's greatest rivalries is set to unfold as India takes on Pakistan in a high-pressure International Cricket Council Champions Trophy 2025 encounter in Dubai. With India aiming to secure a semifinal berth and Pakistan fighting to remain in the tournament, the stakes are high. India enters the match with confidence after a dominant win over Bangladesh, while Pakistan is under pressure following a disappointing loss to New Zealand. Before the match, cricket experts Sanjay Manjrekar and Wahab Riaz addressed the media via the JioHotstar press room, discussing key aspects of the India-Pakistan clash and the players who could change the game for their teams. Former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar advised Virat Kohli to avoid overthinking and unnecessary pressure ahead of India's crucial match against Pakistan. He noted that Kohli, who has recently struggled against spin, arrived early for practice and spent extra time in the nets facing spinners. Manjrekar observed that a player slightly out of form tends to overanalyse and overpractise. He suggested that Kohli's challenge was more mental than technical and advised him to enter the game with a relaxed mindset rather than trying too hard to correct his game.

'HE WILL SCORE A CENTURY IN 60 BALLS': YUVRAJ SINGH'S PREDICTION FOR INDIA CAPTAIN ROHIT SHARMA AHEAD OF PAKISTAN MATCH

Diary Times Desk : Change of format has brought a change in luck for India captain Rohit Sharma. After a horrific Test tour of Australia, Rohit got back amongst runs by smashing a breathtaking century against England in the second ODI at home. He started his Champions Trophy campaign positively with a quickfire 41 off 36 balls against Bangladesh. He could not carry on to get a big score, but his innings provided the much-needed impetus for India's run chase. "If he's in form, he will score a century in 60 balls. That's his quality—once he gets going, he's not just hitting fours; he's clearing the ropes with sixes. He is also one of the best players of the short ball. Even if someone bowls at 145-150 kmph, Rohit has the ability to hook it effortlessly. His strike rate is always between 120-140, and on his day, he can single-handedly win you the game, Yuvraj said on a special episode of JioHotstar's Greatest Rivalry Returns.

PCB EMBARRASSED AFTER INDIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM PLAYED DURING AUS VS ENG MATCH

Diary Times Desk : The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) suffered an embarrassing moment on Saturday when India's national anthem was accidentally played during the pre-match ceremony for the Group B match between Ashes rivals Australia and England at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. Players and spectators were left surprised until officials quickly intervened to rectify the mistake. Order was restored when Australia's official anthem, Advance Australia Fair, was eventually played. The incident was particularly unusual, as India is not scheduled to play any matches in Lahore. Due to India's refusal to travel to Pakistan for the tournament, a hybrid model was adopted, with all of India's fixtures being hosted in Dubai instead. The incident became even more bizarre as it took place only a day after the PCB lodged a complaint with the ICC against the official broadcasters of the tournament in India. The PCB has asked the ICC for an explanation after Pakistan's name was omitted from the Champions Trophy 2025 branding during the India vs Bangladesh match broadcast in Dubai. Unlike previous matches, where Pakistan was mentioned as the official host.

BEN DUCKETT SLAMS HIGHEST SCORE IN CT HISTORY

Diary Times Desk : Ben Duckett became the sixth centurion of the Champions Trophy 2025 with the highest score in the tournament history (165), setting England up against Australia at the Gaddafi stadium in Lahore. England showed better middle-overs batting smarts than they'd done in the lead-up to the tournament in India as Duckett and Joe Root added 158 runs from the sixth to the 31st over that paved the way for their eventual total of 351/8. Steve Smith put his opposition in, in anticipation of dew later in the evening. Phil Salt took four balls to size up left-arm quick Spencer Johnson before driving through mid-off for the first four and following it up with a straight six. Ben Dwarshuis, the other left-arm quick, arrived from the other end and sent Salt packing in just the second over. The dismissal however, was to the credit of a flying Alex Carey at mid-on. Salt flicked a full delivery in the air and Carey took a couple of steps to his right and dived with an outstretched right hand to complete a sensational take. England's new No.3 Jamie Smith made a promising start but lasted only 13 balls for his 15 before he too hit one to Carey at mid-on off Dwarshuis. Root and Duckett then settled in on fairly comfortable batting conditions to patiently.

UNDER-FIRE BABAR IN THE SPOTLIGHT AHEAD OF BIG GAME AGAINST INDIA

Diary Times Desk : Sunday could well be a moment of truth for the Pakistan team and Babar Azam. The match against India at Dubai International Cricket Stadium (DICS) will test the team's general character, particularly Babar's. After waiting for three decades to host a global competition, the country is now potentially staring at the prospect of premature elimination. A loss on Sunday could lead to dangerous mud-slinging, with much of the blame likely directed at Babar, the country's star cricketer. "There is a possibility that the campaign could end even before the team completes its league engagements. It would be like the Champions Trophy starting on February 19 and ending on February 23," Rashid Latif lamented while speaking to Cricbuzz. He emphasized the importance of Sunday's contest from Pakistan's point of view. "Everyone knows how important the India-Pakistan fixture is for both countries. Whether or not you reach the final or play in the semifinal, winning this game is crucial. There is no other option. For Pakistan, it is a do-or-die situation." Kamran Akmal was even more harsh on the team stating that they did not deserve to be playing in the Champions Trophy.

