

PRESIDENT MURMU

"HOLI A SYMBOL OF INDIA'S PRECIOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE": PRESIDENT MURMU

Diary Times Desk : President Droupadi Murmu extended her heartfelt greetings to the nation on the auspicious occasion of Holi, emphasising that the festival is a symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. In a message shared on the social media platform X, she highlighted Holi as a celebration of unity, love, and harmony, urging the country to come together in spreading the colours of progress and prosperity.

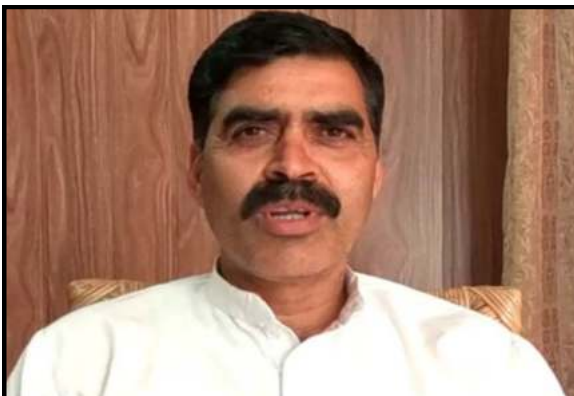
"Heartiest greetings to all countrymen on the auspicious occasion of Holi, the festival of colours. This festival of joy gives the message of unity, love and harmony. This festival is also a symbol of India's precious cultural heritage. Come, on this auspicious occasion, let us all together pledge to fill the lives of all the children of Mother India with the colours of continuous progress, prosperity and happiness," President Murmu wrote in her post.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also took to social media to wish the nation, extending his warm greetings on this vibrant occasion. Heartiest greetings to all the countrymen on the festival of joy, enthusiasm, and colours, 'Holi'. May this festival of colours bring increased prosperity, progress and affluence in the lives of all of you," Mr Shah posted on X. Similarly, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh shared his festive wishes with the nation, emphasising the joy and energy that Holi brings. "Heartiest greetings to all of you on the auspicious festival of Holi. This festival, a symbol of joy, happiness and new energy, may fill your life with the colours of happiness and good health, this is my wish. May your Holi be joyful and safe! Best wishes to you on the vibrant festival of Holi! May the colours of joy, enthusiasm & new energy fill your life with happiness and health. Have a wonderful & safe Holi!" he wrote.



HIMACHAL PRADESH

HIMACHAL PRADESH: EX-CONGRESS MLA SHOT AT HIS RESIDENCE IN BILASPUR, HOSPITALISED



Diary Times Desk : Congress leader and former MLA Bambar Thakur was injured on Friday after four unidentified assailants opened fire on him and his Personal Security Officer (PSO) outside his residence in Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur district, police sources said. A party worker, who was also present there, suffered a bullet injury to his leg, sources added.

Reports suggest that around 12 rounds were fired. Both Bambar Thakur and his PSO sustained gunshot wounds to the back and abdomen.

In the CCTV footage accessed by India Today TV, a group of armed men can be seen entering Thakur's house and firing at him before fleeing away from the scene. While two of them entered the house, the other two stood at the gate. While his security officer was rushed directly to the hospital, Thakur was initially moved to a safe location before being taken to AIIMS hospital for treatment. The police have reached the spot and a manhunt is underway to take them into custody.

The incident occurred when the former legislator was sitting in the courtyard of his residence, which had been allotted to his wife by the Himachal Pradesh government, reported news agency PTI. Following the incident, the accused ran on foot towards the main market area, PTI reported, citing police sources.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, in a video statement, confirmed that he had spoken to Thakur after the incident and took note of his condition. "I have spoken to Bambar Thakur and urged him to go to AIIMS but he wished to be treated in IGMC Shimla and the deputy Commissioner has been instructed to do the needful," he said.

WOMAN KILLED, 4 INJURED AS LAW STUDENT RAMS CAR INTO TWO-WHEELERS IN GUJARAT'S VADODARA

Diary Times Desk : A woman was killed on the spot and four others sustained injuries when a speeding car driven by a 20-year-old law student crashed into their two-wheelers in Gujarat's Vadodara city in the early hours of Friday, police said. The accident occurred around 12.30 am near the Muktanand circle in the Karelbaug area, following which the driver, Rakshit Chaurasiya, was arrested, said Deputy Commissioner of Police Panna Momaya. It could be a case of drunk driving as eyewitnesses, who caught Chaurasiya at the scene, told the police that he appeared intoxicated and was screaming "another round, another round" after coming out of the car, the official said. The deceased woman has been identified as Hemali Patel, who was riding her scooter at the time of the accident. Chaurasiya, who originally hails from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, is a law student and lives in a PG accommodation here, Momaya told reporters. "The car belonged to his friend Mit Chauhan, who was sitting in the co-driver's seat when Chaurasiya rammed the car into some two-wheelers at full speed while going towards Muktanand circle," she said.



3 KILLED, ONE INJURED IN FIRE AT RESIDENTIAL TOWER IN RAJKOT CITY; 40 RESCUED

Diary Times Desk : Three people were killed and one was injured as a fire broke out in a 12-storey residential building in Gujarat's Rajkot city on Friday morning, officials said. About 40 residents stuck in the tower located in the 150 feet ring road area were rescued, they said. "The fire broke out in a flat on the sixth floor of Atlantis Apartment around 9.30 am. It was caused due to a short circuit. Three persons have lost their lives in the fire while one injured person has been hospitalised," said Assistant Commissioner of Police BJ Chaudhary. The fire was brought under control around noon, said the official. Two of the three deceased victims have been identified as Kalpesh Leuva and Mayur Leuva. The identity of the third person is yet to be ascertained. Two of the victims were outsiders and had come to the building for some work, the official said. "We have rescued nearly 40 people stranded on upper floors due to thick smoke. Of these, five were brought down using the hydraulic crane."

PUTIN THANKS MODI, TRUMP FOR 'NOBLE MISSION' TO RESOLVE UKRAINE CONFLICT



Diary Times Desk : Russian President Vladimir Putin has thanked world leaders, including US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for their "noble mission" to end the fighting between Ukraine and Russia. Putin said this on Thursday while making his first public remarks on Ukraine's ceasefire proposal. Putin confirmed on Thursday that Russia is ready to discuss a ceasefire but that the terms of such an arrangement should be clarified. Putin has said as far back as July 2024 that Moscow is not interested in short-term pauses but is ready to engage on addressing the causes of the conflict, RT News reported. Washington and Ukraine both endorsed a 30-day temporary truce following a meeting between their respective delegations in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. "Before I assess how I view Ukraine's readiness for a ceasefire, I would first like to begin by thanking the President of the United States, Trump, for paying so much attention to resolving the conflict in Ukraine," he said.

INDIA ADDS SIX PROPERTIES TO TENTATIVE LIST FOR UNESCO RECOGNITION

Diary Times Desk : A set of six properties—including some considered serially, such as Ashokan Edict Sites and Chausath Yogini Temples spread across multiple states—have been added to India's tentative list by the UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. These sites were added to the list on March 7, the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO said in a statement. India at UNESCO shared the statement on microblogging site X, late on Thursday. Addition to the World Heritage Centre's tentative list is mandatory if a property is to be nominated for inscription to the World Heritage List in future, it said. The six properties added to the tentative list include Kanger Valley National Park in Chhattisgarh; Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs in Telangana; serial nomination of Ashokan Edict Sites along the Mauryan Routes (multiple states); serial nomination of Chausath Yogini Temples (multiple states); serial nomination of Gupta Temples in north India (multiple states), and the palace-fortresses of the Bundelas in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the statement said.



YOUR HOROSCOPE
 15-03-2025

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



BUMBER THAKUR: FORMER MLA BUMBER THAKUR WAS SHOT IN BILASPUR, TREATMENT IS GOING ON IN IGMC SHIMLA

Diary Times Desk : In Bilaspur, some unknown people opened fire on Congress leader and former MLA Bamber Thakur. The incident took place when he was present at his residence in Bilaspur. During this, some unknown people came there and opened fire on him with a gun. The former MLA and his PSO were injured due to the bullets. Both have been admitted to the hospital. The condition of the PSO is said to be critical, while the former MLA has been referred to IGMC Shimla. Let us tell you that after being shot, Bamber was first taken to a safe place, later Bamber was also taken to the district hospital. Now Bamber Thakur has been referred to IGMC Shimla, because Bamber Thakur said that he should be referred to IGMC or PGI and not to AIIMS. Bamber Thakur has been shot in the leg. Deputy Commissioner Abid Hussain Sadiq has reached the district hospital. At the same time, the PSO has been referred to AIIMS Bilaspur. The condition of the PSO is said to be critical. It is being told that about 12 rounds of bullets have been fired. On the other hand, CCTV footage of the attack on Bamber Thakur has also surfaced. The faces of the attackers are also visible in it.



HP ASSEMBLY: CM SUKHU SAID- PROPERTY WORTH 25.42 CRORES OF DRUG SMUGGLERS ATTACHED, ACTION TAKEN AGAINST 300

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu, in response to the discussion on the Governor's address, said that the previous government did not implement the PC and NDPS Act seriously despite having legal provisions. The state government has taken action against drug abuse. Property worth Rs 25 crore 42 lakh has been attached. Action is being taken against 300 smugglers. Eight employees of the police department have been found involved in drug trafficking. Two of them have been dismissed. The government will take action against ten employees who are involved in drug abuse. 75 percent of the jails are filled with drug smugglers. The Chief Minister said that the previous BJP government gave 50 percent subsidy to women on travel in Transport Corporation buses in the election year to gain political advantage, a delegation of women met him. He said that the salary is Rs 1.5 lakh, there is no problem in paying the fare.

HIMACHAL PRADESH: 'THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE GOOD JOBS TO THE PLAYERS WHO PERFORM WELL, IF WE ALSO GO OUT THEN...'

Diary Times Desk : Indian Kabaddi team vice-captain Pushpa Rana said that the governments should provide jobs to the players who perform well for the country. So that the morale of the players remains high. She said that many players of the state have been given jobs by the governments of other states and now these players are playing for the same states. If we also go out, then who will play for Himachal. Our thinking is that we should play for our state and country. Earlier, Indian women's Kabaddi team vice-captain Pushpa Rana, Jyoti Thakur and Bhavana, who won the gold medal for the country in the Asian Kabaddi Championship, were welcomed in Dharamshala. The players were brought to the Sai Center from Kachhari Adda in Dharamshala by playing drums. During this, the players of the center also expressed their happiness by dancing. Pushpa said that she has participated in the Asian Games thrice and has won medals with the team.

HP EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: TEACHERS WILL NOT BE TRANSFERRED WITHIN A DISTANCE OF LESS THAN 30 KM, GUIDELINES ISSUED

Diary Times Desk : Now, teachers will not be transferred in Himachal Pradesh schools at a distance of less than 30 km. It will also be mandatory to serve in a school for two years. The education department has issued guidelines regarding the transfer of school teachers to be done in April. Transfers will not be done from schools running with the support of only one teacher. In these cases, consideration will be given only if there is an option. Transfer applications on the basis of mutual consent will not be accepted in schools in urban areas. Applications for transfer on vacant posts in other places and applications received on mutual basis will be accepted. The government has given relief here by reducing the tenure at one place from three years to two years. In the application for transfer, it will have to be kept in mind that the school should not be left without a teacher. The education minister has asked the directorate to observe such cases itself. The proposals for transfers that will be sent from the directorate to the secretariat will have to mention the student-teacher ratio. Recommendations will also have to be attached with the transfer proposal.

HPBOSE: EVALUATION OF ANSWER SHEETS OF CLASS 10TH AND 12TH WILL BE DONE AT 52 CENTERS IN THE STATE

Diary Times Desk : Himachal Pradesh School Education Board is conducting examinations for regular and SOS candidates of class 10th and 12th. Around 1.95 lakh students are appearing for the examination in 2300 examination centers across the state. The board management has also started preparations so that the education board can release the result in record time. This time the education board will get the answer sheets evaluated at 52 examination centers, whereas during the board examinations held in March 2024, the number of these centers was around 60. The annual examinations of the board have started from March 4. The board management has also made a plan to end the postponed examinations soon and has released the schedule for conducting the postponed examinations in the second session. On the other hand, the School Education Board has also started the work of making an action plan for the evaluation of these answer sheets. This time the board management will inspect the answer sheets at 52 evaluation centers. Last time the number of these evaluation centers was 60. It is noteworthy that in the academic session 2023-24.

HIMACHAL: HINDI QUESTION PAPER DISTRIBUTED AMONG ENGLISH PAPERS, CASE OF NEGLIGENCE COMES TO LIGHT IN BILASPUR DISTRICT

Diary Times Desk : A case of distribution of Hindi question paper instead of English in the board examination of class V has come to light in a private school of Ghandalvi in Bilaspur district. After this, the education department swung into action and immediately sent education officers to the school and started investigating the matter. The board had scheduled the English paper for class V on March 13. The teachers posted at the examination centre distributed the question papers. It was found that the Hindi question paper was distributed instead of English. As soon as the mistake was realized, the question papers were taken back from the children. After this, the matter reached the Deputy Education Director Bilaspur. Deputy Education Director Naresh Kumari said that as soon as the matter came to light, officers were sent to the school. The question papers were taken back from the children in time and sealed. After this, the English question paper was given to the children. An investigation is being conducted in this entire matter. A notice has been issued to the posted staff and a reply has been sought.

HIMACHAL PRADESH: INDUSTRY MINISTER HARSH VARDHAN CHAUHAN SAID- SECTION 118 WILL HAVE TO BE SIMPLIFIED TO INCREASE INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT

Diary Times Desk : Industry Minister Harsh Vardhan Chauhan said that Section 118 will have to be simplified to increase industrial investment in Himachal. It is taking up to two years to get approvals related to Section 118. In such a situation, there is a need to plan for the future. For this, BJP and Congress will have to sit together and work in the interest of the state. The Industry Minister gave this reply when BJP MLAs Sukhram Chaudhary and Jeetram Katwal raised matters related to industries during the Question Hour. The Industry Minister said that in the last three years, till 20 February 2025, a total of 1854 industrial units have been established in the state. Information regarding how much these units are producing is not compiled by the department. He said that no industry has been closed in the state. No unit has been shifted to other states either. Industrialists have expanded units in other states. The Industry Minister said that the closure of industries is a normal process.

5 INJURED AS MAN ATTACKS PEOPLE WITH IRON PIPE AT GOLDEN TEMPLE IN AMRITSAR

Diary Times Desk : Five people were injured when they were attacked by a man with an iron rod at Amritsar's Golden Temple complex, the police said. The man was arrested and the situation was brought under control, news agency IANS reported. Panic gripped as the man began the attack near the community kitchen, or Guru Ram Das langar, where devotees and locals were present. Two sewadars (volunteers) of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) were among the injured people. One of the injured has been admitted to Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences and Research in Amritsar, IANS reported. The attacker and his accomplice were overpowered by people inside the temple complex, before they were arrested. The police said the accused surveyed the area before the attack. The second accused allegedly conducted reconnaissance along with the one who attacked devotees," a police officer told reporters. The key accused went out and returned with an iron rod before he began attacking the SGPC staff and the devotees who tried to intervene.

UP MAN, LURED BY PAK AGENT 'NEHA', ARRESTED FOR LEAKING DEFENCE INFO

Diary Times Desk : Uttar Pradesh's Anti-Terrorism Squad has arrested a man working in an ordnance factory in Firozabad on suspicion of spying for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI. The man - Ravindra Kumar - shared confidential data, including information the Gangayaan space project and the trial of a military logistics-delivery drone, UP ATS chief Nilabja Choudhary said Friday. An associate of Ravindra Kumar has also been arrested. Mr Choudhary said UP ATS and other law enforcement agencies had been alerted to Ravindra Kumar possibly leaking data to a female handler - code name Neha Sharma - working for the ISI. So, our Agra unit did a preliminary interrogation of Ravindra Kumar and then he was called to ATS headquarters for more detailed questioning, where it was revealed that he shared very sensitive information through a handler called 'Neha,' the senior cop told reporters. The handler's contact, Mr Choudhary said, had been saved in Ravindra Kumar's phone under the name 'Chandan Store Keeper 2'. Sharma had initiated contact with Kumar via Facebook. And once that contact was established, Kumar shared information via WhatsApp. This ISI model has been around a long time," he said, referring to the 'honey-trap', in which female agents.

BAIL PLEA OF ACTOR RANYA RAO, ARRESTED IN GOLD SMUGGLING CASE, REJECTED



Diary Times Desk : A special court today denied bail to actor Ranya Rao, who was caught smuggling a large amount of gold. A second accused, Tarun Raju, has been sent to judicial custody for 15 days. Gold bars worth Rs 12.56 crore were seized from Ranya Rao at Bengaluru airport. Following this, officials searched her properties and recovered gold jewellery worth Rs 2.06 crore and Rs 2.67 crore in cash. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) began investigation yesterday into the case involving the actor and step daughter of Karnataka Director General of Police K Ramachandra Rao. Ranya Rao booked round trip tickets from Bengaluru to Dubai using her husband Jatin Hukkeri's credit card, raising suspicion about his alleged involvement in the gold smuggling case. The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) also searched nine locations in Bengaluru belonging to Mr Hukkeri, who got an interim order from the Karnataka High Court restraining the DRI from arresting him. DRI investigators said Ranya Rao claimed she received calls from unknown numbers instructing her.

PUNJAB LEADER SEEN SCALING GATE TO EVADE SHOOTERS, WAS KILLED MINUTES LATER

Diary Times Desk : A Shiv Sena leader was chased and shot dead by the three bike-borne men in Punjab's Moga late Thursday night. A chilling CCTV video shows how he tried to evade the shooters just minutes before he was killed. Mangat Rai alias Manga, who was the Moga district president of Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, had stepped out of his house on a scooter to buy milk when he was attacked. He dodged several bullets fired at him before ultimately being killed. The first shot was fired around 10 pm, but it missed him and hit an 11-year-old boy who was crossing the area. Manga immediately fled the area on a two-wheeler. In the CCTV footage, the Shiv Sena leader was seen trying to climb a locked gate to elude his attackers. The men, however, find him, and one of them fires at him, but the bullet misses him. He was then fired at by another man. The next frame shows the men appearing to flee the scene.

MADRAS HIGH COURT UPHOLDS CONVICTION OF TAMIL NADU MLA IN CHEATING CASE

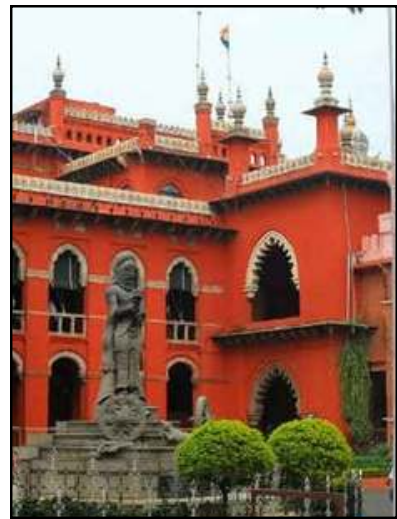
Diary Times Desk : The Madras High Court on Friday upheld the order of a trial court, which convicted and sentenced Papanasam MLA M H Jawahirullah and four others in connection with a cheating case. Justice P Velmurugan dismissed the criminal revision petitions filed by Jawahirullah, S Hyder Ali and G M Sheik, which challenged the order of the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Egmore, passed in 2011. On a request made by the counsel for the petitioners, the judge kept in abeyance, the operation of his order to enable the petitioners to file an appeal, seeking either stay or suspension of the order. Jawahirullah is a leader of Manithaneyya Makkal Katchi (MMK). According to the CBI, which probed the matter, it registered a case against Jawahirullah, Hyder Ali, Nizar Ahmed, Sheik and Kalanjim in 2003. It alleged that during the period between December 15, 1997 and June 20, 2000, the accused had hatched a conspiracy and formed an association in the name of Coimbatore Muslim Relief Fund to accept foreign contributions, without following the mandatory motion of registering their association and without seeking prior permission of the Government of India.

FRIDAY PRAYERS CONCLUDE IN SAMBHAL'S SHAHI JAMA MASJID AMID TIGHT SECURITY

Diary Times Desk : Holi and Friday prayers passed peacefully in this Uttar Pradesh district amid tight security, officials said. District Magistrate Rajender Pensiya said tight security arrangements were made in view of Holi and the second Friday prayers in the Islamic holy month of Ramzan falling on the same day. Personnel from the Rapid Action Force, Provincial Armed Constabulary and the local police remained fully alert. Surveillance was also conducted through drones, he said. Both Holi and the Namaz concluded peacefully, he added. Friday prayers were held in the Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid amid tight security. Ulemas and mutawallis had fixed the time for 'Jumma Namaz', extending it by about an hour to 2:30 pm, because of Holi. Earlier, the festival of colours was celebrated peacefully with traditional fervour. The traditional 'chaupaai kaa juloos (procession)' was also taken out in Sambhal city, the officials said. Sambhal has been tense after riots broke out on November 24.

'DUE TO HINDI ROW, DELIMITATION...': TAMIL MINISTER ON LIQUOR CORRUPTION CLAIMS

Diary Times Desk : Tamil Nadu Excise Minister V Senthil Balaji on Friday afternoon strongly denied the Enforcement Directorate's claims of "irregularities" in tender processes, and a possible fraud of Rs 1,000 crore, within the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation or TASMAR, the state-run liquor sales agency. Mr Balaji told said the report by the ED - which opposition leaders claim is used by the centre to target rival parties and leaders, particularly before an election, which Tamil Nadu will hold next year - had also been released because of the DMK vs BJP battle over 'Hindi imposition' and delimitation. "ED has given no details of the FIRs on basis of which it has acted. There is no corruption in transfer or transportation (of cash) ... the alleged irregularities are by bottling firms outside TASMAR... Tamil Nadu government has no role in this," Mr Balaji told reporters. The ED is motivated... it released its statement to defame.



MORE STUDENT VISAS TO BE REVOKED IN COMING DAYS: US SECRETARY OF STATE

Diary Times Desk : The United States will likely revoke visas of more students in the coming days, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Friday, following the arrest and detention of Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil, whom the Trump administration aims to deport over his pro-Palestinian activism. In the days to come, you should expect more visas will be revoked as we identify people that we should have never allowed in," Rubio told reporters following a meeting of G7 foreign ministers.

'AMONG MOST DANGEROUS TERRORISTS': IRAQ PM SAYS SENIOR ISLAMIC STATE LEADER KILLED

Diary Times Desk : The leader of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has been killed, Iraq's prime minister said on Friday, describing him as "one of the most dangerous terrorists in Iraq and the world." Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rufay'i, also known as Abu Khadija, had been killed by Iraqi security forces, with the support of the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State. Islamic State imposed hardline Islamist rule over millions of people in Syria and Iraq for years, and has been trying to stage a comeback in the Middle East, the West and Asia. Former Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate over a quarter of Iraq and Syria in 2014 before he was killed in a raid by US special forces in northwest Syria in 2019 as the group collapsed. The leader of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has been killed, Iraq's prime minister said on Friday, describing him as "one of the most dangerous terrorists in Iraq and the world." Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said Abdallah Makki Muslih al-Rufay'i, also known as Abu Khadija, had been killed by Iraqi security forces, with the support of the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State. Islamic State imposed hardline Islamist rule over millions of people in Syria and Iraq for years, and has been trying to stage a comeback in the Middle East, the West and Asia. Former Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a caliphate over a quarter of Iraq and Syria in 2014 before he was killed in a raid by US special forces in northwest Syria in 2019 as the group collapsed.

BLAST AT PAKISTAN MOSQUE, LOCAL ISLAMIST LEADER AMONG 4 INJURED

Diary Times Desk : A local Islamist leader and three others, including children, were injured after a blast ripped through a mosque in Pakistan's Waziristan region during Friday prayers, police said. Officials believe the blast targeted Abdullah Nadeem, a local leader of the Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) political party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the northwestern part of the country. Nadeem has been hospitalized, and according to local media, his condition remains serious. Two children were also among the injured in the blast at the Maulana Abdul Aziz Mosque, the South Waziristan district police chief said. It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the explosion that took place in Pakistan's border region with Afghanistan. The attack occurred a month after another blast killed JUI-S leader Maulana Hamidul Haq Haqqani and five others, injuring 15, when a suicide bomber targeted the Darul Uloom Haqqania seminary in Pakistan's Nowshera district, a historic training ground for the Afghan Taliban. This blast comes just days after Balochistan separatist militants hijacked a train and held passengers hostage in a day-long bloody standoff with security forces. Balochistan also borders Afghanistan, and the Pakistan government has alleged Kabul's complicity in the attack.

"GLOBAL TERRORISM EPICENTRE": INDIA RIPS INTO PAKISTAN OVER TRAIN HIJACK REMARK



Diary Times Desk : India has rejected Pakistan's allegations that New Delhi is behind the violence in the neighbouring country where the latest in a series of bloodshed is a train hijacking by the Baloch rebels. In strong remarks, India has snubbed Pakistan after it hinted at its role in fomenting trouble in the restive area of Balochistan where a freedom movement has been brewing for decades. Pakistan must look inwards instead of blaming others, the Indian government has said, echoing its previous stance that Islamabad harboured a terror hotbed. "We strongly reject the baseless allegations made by Pakistan. The whole world knows where the epicenter of global terrorism lies. Pakistan should look inwards instead of pointing fingers and shifting the blame for its own internal problems and failures on to others," read a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs. The government's response came after a senior Pakistani official accused India of "sponsoring terrorism" and trying to destabilise its neighbouring countries.

GUARANTEE TO SAVE LIVES OF UKRAINIAN TROOPS IF...: PUTIN ON TRUMP'S APPEAL

Diary Times Desk : Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday said that he will spare the lives of Ukrainian troops if they surrender. His remarks came after US President Donald Trump said he had asked Putin to ensure their safety. In case they surrender, we guarantee we will save their lives," Putin was quoted as saying by news agency Reuters in its report. Trump said on Friday that there was a "very good chance" the war between Russia and Ukraine could end following "productive" discussions with Putin the day before. "We had very good and productive discussions with President Vladimir Putin of Russia yesterday, and there is a very good chance that this horrible, bloody war can finally come to an end," Trump said in a Truth Social post. He added that he had requested Putin to spare the lives of "completely surrounded" Ukrainian troops.



TIMELINE OF POPE FRANCIS' HOSPITALIZATION FOR PNEUMONIA AT THE 1-MONTH MARK

Diary Times Desk : Pope Francis was hospitalized on Feb. 14, after suffering a bout of bronchitis for weeks and after increasingly finding it hard to speak publicly. His condition soon developed into double pneumonia. The 88-year-old pope, who had part of a lung removed as a young man, is overweight and sedentary, creating a complex health picture that has resulted in the longest hospitalization of his 12-year papacy. Doctors this week lifted the guarded prognosis, indicating Francis is no longer in danger of immediate death from the lung infection. Caution remains due to his frailty, and doctors have given no indication of when he might be released.

FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER CALLS TRADE WAR "IDIOTIC", PLANS TRIP TO US

Diary Times Desk : France's Finance Minister Eric Lombard called the escalating US-EU trade war "idiotic" on Friday and said he would soon travel to the United States after Washington threatened huge tariffs against French wine and champagne. "We need to talk to the Americans to bring the tension back down," Lombard told the France 2 television channel. US President Donald Trump has launched trade wars against competitors and partners alike since taking office, wielding tariffs as a tool to pressure countries on commerce and other policy issues. On Thursday, the billionaire Republican president threatened to impose 200-percent tariffs on wine, champagne and other alcoholic beverages from France and other European Union countries. His threat was a response to the EU's unveiling on Wednesday of tariffs on \$28 billion in US goods, starting in stages from April, which include bourbon, boats and motorbikes. That followed US tariffs on steel and aluminium imports taking effect the same day. By doing this, the United States is hurting itself," Lombard said, describing what he called an "idiotic war". He said he would travel to the United States "in the coming days" to meet with US counterparts. Lombard and French Foreign Trade Minister Laurent Saint-Martin had a "frank and clear" phone conversation with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick on Thursday, the French finance ministry said. Europe exported nearly \$5.2 billion worth of wine and champagne to the United States in 2023, according to the World Trade Organization. "We need to talk to the Americans to bring the tension back down," Eric Lombard told the France 2 television channel.

BAMBIHA GANG SHOOTER ARRESTED IN FARIDKOT AFTER ENCOUNTER WITH POLICE

Diary Times Desk : In a joint operation conducted by the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) and CIA Jaito, a shooter of the Davinder Bambiha gang was arrested following an encounter here on Friday. Manpreet Singh alias Mani, a resident of Talwandi Bhangeria village in Moga, was arrested after an encounter near Ghugiana village of Faridkot, said Faridkot SSP Pragya Jain. She said the accused, who had multiple cases registered against him under murder- and arms-related offences, was reportedly moving around in the Faridkot area. Acting on a tip-off, the AGTF and CIA Jaito set up a checkpoint. When the accused, riding a motorcycle, was signalled to stop, he opened fire at the police team. His motorcycle slipped as he tried to escape, leading to a brief exchange of gunfire. In the retaliatory action by the police, the accused was injured. The police have recovered a .30-bore pistol along with four live cartridges from the accused.



IN 3-HOUR 'MONOLOGUE', SAINI MOCKS CONG, LISTS GOVT'S TRIUMPH

Diary Times Desk : A beleaguered Congress was at the receiving end of wit, sarcasm and barbs of CM Nayab Singh Saini, who chose the reply to the Governor's address to score brownie points over the Congress, and pat his government on the back for 'unprecedented' development, in the Assembly today. However, the Congress members were not physically present in the House to listen to Saini's almost three-hour 'monologue' as they had already staged a walkout under ex-CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda, protesting that Saini was not restricting himself to giving a reply on the Governor's address, but was delivering a speech on the government's achievements. With no disruptions, an elated Saini had a field day tom-tomming double-engine government's 'pro-poor' initiatives over the past 10 years. "The Congress has collapsed due to its flawed policies and people have lost faith in the party. Congress ke paas na neeti hai, na niyat hai, aur na netratar hai (Congress lacks policy, intent, and leadership)," he alleged.

HOLI UNITES SOCIETY, FOSTERS PEACE, HARMONY: CM SAINI

Diary Times Desk : Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini celebrated Holi in Ladwa on Thursday, emphasising that the festival fosters national unity and strengthens the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. "Holi is a festival of joy and togetherness, celebrated across the country with enthusiasm. In Haryana, people from all communities come together to celebrate, reinforcing our shared cultural heritage," he said while addressing a gathering. Highlighting the scientific, historic and social significance of Indian festivals, he urged people to use natural colours and conserve water while celebrating Holi. "Sanitation and awareness are our shared responsibilities. May all social evils be burned away in the flames of Holika Dahan," he added. The CM was accompanied by his wife Suman Saini, former Minister of State Subhash Sudha, BJP District president Sushil Rana and other party leaders. Speaking to the media, CM Saini hailed BJP's sweeping victory in the civic body elections, calling it a testament to public support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed India. "People have given a clear mandate to BJP candidates. Now, with a 'triple-engine government,' Haryana's development will accelerate further.

PUNJAB, HARYANA SOAK IN COLOURS, FESTIVE FERVOUR ON HOLI

Diary Times Desk : Holi, the festival of colours, was celebrated in Haryana, Punjab with great fervour on Friday as children threw balloons filled with colourful water, people smeared 'gulaal' on each others' faces and distributed sweets to friends and relatives. Some revellers zoomed through the streets on motorbikes while others danced to music. Police in the two states and their joint capital Chandigarh made elaborate arrangements to ensure a safe and joyous Holi. A warning was issued against any kind of hooliganism, while traffic and local police were deployed at many places to check incidents of speeding and reckless driving. Durgiana Temple in Amritsar witnessed a heavy rush during the day. There was also a huge rush of devotees among Sikhs for the Holla Mohalla festival at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab. Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria, Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his Haryana counterpart Nayab Singh Saini extended Holi greetings to the people.

STARTUP POLICY GETS DEPT NOD, OFFERS RS 10 CR ANNUAL INCENTIVES

Diary Times Desk : With focus on encouraging innovation and economic growth, the UT Finance Department has given approval to Chandigarh Startup Policy-2025. According to officials, the policy will be sent to the UT Administrator for final approval and could be rolled out next week. It is aimed at boosting entrepreneurship with financial incentives worth Rs 10 crore annually and a total corpus of Rs 50 crore over a period of five years. After multiple revisions and delays, the main focus of policy has been kept on developing startups and strengthening incubators in the region. On September 3, 2022, the UT Administration unveiled the draft startup policy with a dedicated startup fund for the city ecosystem. In October last year, Punjab Governor and UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria approved the policy, but gave some suggestions to be included in the policy. Kataria emphasised the need to simplify the administrative procedure in it.

ANOTHER ACCUSED IN PUNJAB CHILD KIDNAPPING CASE INJURED IN POLICE ENCOUNTER

Diary Times Desk : Another accused involved in the Seehan Daud child kidnapping case was injured in firing by cops posted at CIA wing of Malerkotla done in self-defence on Friday morning. Harpreet Singh of Bathan in Amargarh, arrested along with Ravi Bhinder of Jaggowal village, received a bullet injury in the leg when he allegedly tried to flee after firing from a pistol retrieved from the outskirts of Salar village. No cops were injured in the crossfire. Three Patiala cops were injured during the encounter that took place at Mandaur village in Nabha on Thursday. Jaspreet Singh, the main accused in the kidnapping case, had succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in Patiala after the encounter. Malerkotla SSP Gagan Ajit Singh said Harpreet was injured while trying to escape from police custody during a follow-up operation to recover illegal weapons near Salar village. The encounter took place a day after the police rescued seven-year-old Bhawkirat Singh from Seehan Daud within 24 hours of his kidnapping with the arrest of accused Harpreet and Ravi, who had kidnapped the child on a motorcycle on Wednesday evening.

COP AMONG 3 KILLED AS SPEEDING CAR CRASHES INTO POLICE 'NAKA' IN CHANDIGARH

Diary Times Desk : Three people, including a police constable and a home guard volunteer, were killed on Friday when a speeding car rammed into a police 'naka' here at the Zirakpur-Chandigarh barrier. All three died on the spot, police said. A 30-year-old on the way to his native place for Holi also died in the accident that happened in the early hours on Friday when vehicles were being checked at the police roadblock, they said. The incident occurred around 2.30 am when constable Sukhdarshan and Home Guard volunteer Rajesh were checking a vehicle. At the time of the incident, checking of vehicles was going on at Chandigarh-Zirakpur barrier when this car came at high speed and hit them," Deputy Superintendent of Police Jaswinder Singh said. A constable on duty at the 'naka', a home guard volunteer and one civilian have died in the incident," he said. After getting the information, police teams, along with a fire tender, were rushed to the spot. The speeding car came from the Zirakpur side when it rammed into the 'naka', hitting the cops and the civilian. The driver of the offending car has been arrested, he said. The DSP said the 30-year-old man, whose car was also being checked at the 'naka', was standing outside his vehicle at the time of the incident. The man who worked at a phone company in Gurugram was coming home to Mullanpur.

PROTEST IN MCLEODGANJ TO OBSERVE TIBETAN UPRISING DAY

Diary Times Desk : The Tibetan Women Association (TWA) yesterday carried out a protest march in McLeodganj to observe Tibetan Women Uprising Day. The protesters carrying placards raised slogans against the Chinese government and then marched to Dharamsala and held a protest near the Dharamsala mini secretariat. The day is observed to pay homage to Tibetan women, who just a day after Tibetan Uprising Day, rose against the Chinese government on March 12, 1959. The Tibetan women, who participated in the protest, were arrested and later executed by the Chinese authorities. A spokesperson for the TWA said that 1959 was a critical year in determining whether Tibet would survive as an independent nation. Realising the gravity of the situation, Tibetan women showed a deep sense of patriotism and unwavering courage, which ultimately led to their organised struggle for freedom. The movement was initiated and led by brave women such as Kunsang, Galing Shar Choe-la, Pekong Penpa Dolma, Tavu Tsang Dolkar, Demo Chime, Tson Khang Meme, Kukar Shar Kelsang, Rizur Yangchen and Tson Khang Tsamla.

DALAI LAMA'S NEW BOOK SAYS HE WILL BE BORN OUTSIDE TIBET, CHINA

Diary Times Desk : The Dalai Lama in his new book "Voice of the Voiceless" has for the first time clearly stated that he will reincarnate outside China or Tibet. He has stated in the book that he will be born in a free world to ensure that the institute of the Dalai Lama continues in its traditional role, advocating rights and protecting spiritual leadership. The book has once again brought spotlight on his reincarnation. With the present 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, the temporal and spiritual head or the god king of Tibetans going to be 90 this year and concerns being expressed about his health, the issue of reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama is casting apprehensions among of the Tibetan community in exile. (CTA) spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay today said that his reincarnation was the sole discretion of the Dalai Lama.

ECONOMIC SURVEY PROJECTS STATE'S GROWTH RATE SLIGHTLY HIGHER AT 6.7%

Diary Times Desk : The growth rate of Himachal Pradesh for the financial year 2024-25 is expected to improve marginally to 6.7 per cent from 6.6 per cent in the previous financial year. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, who also holds the finance portfolio, laid the report of the Economic Survey for 2024-25 in the Vidhan Sabha today. "The Economic Survey presents an assessment of the challenges faced by all sectors of the economy and the government's response in terms of new policy initiatives and the implementation of development plans," he said. According to advance estimates, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices for 2024-25 is estimated at Rs 146,553 crore against Rs 137,320 crore for last year. The per capita income (PCI) for the state for 2024-25 has been pegged at Rs 2.57 lakh, indicating a growth of 9.6 per cent over last year. The PCI in 2023-24 was Rs 234,782 compared to Rs 257,212 this year at current prices. It was Rs 87,721 in 2011-12. In Himachal Pradesh, inflation has remained relatively stable and has decreased from 5 per cent in 2023-24 to 4.2 per cent in this financial year.



MY REPUTATION WAS TARGETED, WILL WAGE WAR AGAINST BJP: SUKHU

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, while participating to the debate on the Governor's Address in the Assembly today, said that a war would be waged against the BJP over the next three years of his government. "The BJP tried to kill democracy. The challenges before us were huge, but we faced them like battles. In the coming years, we will wage a war against you," he said. The BJP legislators left the House raising slogans when the Chief Minister gave some data related to the Himcare scheme during the BJP government. Sukhu said that his government stood for good governance and transparency. "We have been in power for more than two years, but no one could accuse any member of his government of corruption," he added. Sukhu accused the BJP of running a sustained campaign to tarnish his reputation. "Ever since we have won the byelections and again have 40 MLAs, the BJP has started a targeted campaign against me to tarnish my reputation. Its social media wings constantly target me," he alleged. The Chief Minister also accused the BJP of being insensitive towards the youth when it was in power. "Chitta entered the state during the Covid years but the BJP did not implement the PIT NDPS Act.

SECTION 118 OF LAND REFORMS ACT HINDERING INVESTMENT: CHAUHAN

Diary Times Desk : Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan today said in the Vidhan Sabha that Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972, has become a hurdle in attracting investment to the state and a long-term policy was required to bring investment and industrial development. "Section 118 is good but it takes two years to get clearance under it. Businessmen want their units to start production at the earliest. The Congress and the BJP will have to agree on its simplification and prepare a long-term plan to bring investment to the state," he added. Chauhan said that the government was trying its best to attract investment and stop industries from moving to other states. There was need for continuity in policies to attract investment, he added. To a question asked by Paonta Sahib MLA Sukh Ram Chaudhary that how many industrial units had been established in the state and how many of them had shut operations in the past two years, Chauhan said that the opening and closure of industrial units was a routine affair and the government's job was only to provide facilities and incentives to the industry.

BJP STAGES WALKOUT OVER KANGRA BANK GIVING FUNDS TO DEHRA MAHILA MANDALS

Diary Times Desk : BJP legislators walked out of the Assembly here today alleging that the state government was deliberately not replying to a question raised by them. They walked out of the House when Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri said that the information on disbursement of funds to mahila mandals in the Dehra Assembly constituency by Kangra Central Cooperative Bank (KCCB) Ltd was still being collected. Hamirpur MLA Ashish Sharma had sought information about how much money was disbursed to the mahila mandals in the Dehra Assembly constituency between June 1, 2024, and July 10, 2024. Expressing dissatisfaction over the response, Sharma said gathering information in the digital era wasn't difficult at all. He then proceeded to provide information he had sought from the House, giving details of the grants that the bank allegedly gave to several mahila mandals between June 1, 2024, and July 10, 2024. Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur said that the government was trying to hide information on important questions by stating "information is being collected". He alleged that the model code of conduct was in force in the Dehra Assembly constituency when the bank is said to have disbursed the money. "Can money be disbursed when the model code of conduct is on?" asked Thakur. Would the government provide the information sought by Sharma during this session or not, he said.



BUMRAH SET TO MISS FIRST FEW IPL 2025 GAMES FOR MUMBAI INDIANS

Diary Times Desk : Jasprit Bumrah is set to miss the first few IPL 2025 matches for Mumbai Indians (MI) as he continues to recover from the back injury that has kept him out of action since January. It has been learnt that Bumrah is expected to join the squad by early April - MI have three games scheduled in March - subject to clearance from the medical team at BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Bumrah has been recuperating from the stress-related injury in his lower back, which he suffered on the second day of the final Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test in Sydney on January 4. Bumrah was subsequently ruled out of the Champions Trophy, which India won earlier this month. This is the first time Bumrah has gone down with a back injury since undergoing surgery in March 2023. While announcing the squad for Champions Trophy in January, Ajit Agarkar, India's chief selector, had said that Bumrah had been asked by the BCCI medical team to offload for at least five weeks (from the SCG Test). Since the Champions Trophy only started on February 19, Bumrah had been included in India's provisional squad. He travelled to Bengaluru for fresh scans in early February, but continued to feel discomfort and was not named in the final squad.



YUZVENDRA CHAHAL RETURNS TO NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FOR 2025 COUNTY CRICKET SEASON

Diary Times Desk : India leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal will return to Northamptonshire for the 2025 County Championship cricket season. Chahal played for the club in 2024, and his contract for this year will run from June until the end of the season once his IPL 2025 commitments with Punjab Kings are over. Chahal will be available for the club's County Championship and One-Day Cup matches, starting from Northamptonshire's game on June 22 against Middlesex. In the last season, Chahal took five wickets on debut against Kent in the One Day Cup and recorded career-best figures of 9-99 against Derbyshire in the County Championship. Chahal's performances in the County Championship against Derbyshire and Leicestershire earned Northamptonshire back-to-back victories and he finished the season with 19 wickets at an average of 21 from just four first-class matches. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time here last season, so I'm very happy to be coming back. There are some great people in that dressing room, and I can't wait to be part of that again. We played some great cricket towards the back end of the season, so hopefully, we're able to replicate that and big up some victories," said Chahal in a statement.

I RECEIVED THREATS, TOLD NOT TO RETURN TO INDIA IN 2021: VARUN CHAKRAVARTHY

Diary Times Desk : India's spin-bowling sensation Varun Chakravarthi recalled a tough phase of his life, revealing that he received threats via phone calls after his dismal performance in India's T20 World Cup 2021 campaign in the UAE. Varun said he was warned against returning to India and was followed all the way to his house in Chennai after India's disappointing early exit from the tournament. Varun Chakravarthi admitted that he was almost certain his international career was over when he was dropped from the squad after the T20 World Cup in 2021. The Kolkata Knight Riders spinner had made his debut against Sri Lanka in a T20I series in July 2021 and was later drafted into the Virat Kohli-led T20 World Cup squad that year. Varun played three matches for India but failed to take even a single wicket. He was part of India's bowling line-up in their infamous 10-wicket loss to Pakistan in Dubai -- India's first-ever defeat to Pakistan in a World Cup fixture.

DEBUTANT MADARA, ATHAPATHTHU FASHION SL WOMEN'S FIRST T20I WIN IN NZ

Diary Times Desk : Debutant Malki Madara's three-for combined with two-fors from Kavisha Dilhari and Inoshi Priyadharshani set up a comfortable victory for Sri Lanka in the T20I series opener in Christchurch. Chamari Athapaththu's unbeaten 64 off 48 balls then took the visitors home with seven wickets in hand. This was Sri Lanka's first T20I win in New Zealand and second win overall against New Zealand in the format. Emma McLeod (44) was New Zealand's highest scorer but only two of her team-mates got into double figures, and there was only one partnership that stretched past 20 balls. Despite Priyadharshani dismissing Georgia Plimmer early, the hosts got off to a decent start thanks to captain Suzie Bates' 14-ball 21. Madara, Sri Lanka's fourth bowling option, brought on in the fifth over, got the big wicket of Bates which dried up the scoring. The next two overs went for just five runs. Dilhari, the seventh bowler, struck twice upon being introduced in the ninth over as New Zealand slipped from 39 for 1 to 52 for 4. Maddy Green being run out cheaply had New Zealand play with caution as illustrated by the next two partnerships which produced a combined 29 runs off 41 balls. McLeod, who had three fours in her first five balls, finished without adding to that tally.

ALL ENGLAND BADMINTON: LAKSHYA SEN BOWS OUT IN QUARTERS AFTER LOSING TO LI SHI FENG

Diary Times Desk : Lakshya Sen's hopes of clinching the All England Open Badminton 2025 title came to a crushing end on Friday, March 14. The 2022 finalist suffered a straight-games defeat-10-21, 16-21-in the quarter-final against higher-ranked Li Shi Feng of China in Birmingham. Lakshya struggled to find the rhythm he had displayed in his victory over defending champion Jonathan Christie on Wednesday, falling in a one-sided contest that lasted just 35 minutes. Lakshya, who reached the final of the prestigious Super 1000 tournament in 2022, made a strong statement on Thursday by decimating title holder Christie in dominant fashion. Heading into the quarter-final against familiar foe Li, Lakshya had the advantage of fresher legs, as the Chinese star had been stretched to three games in both of his previous rounds. The match began with Lakshya looking the sharper of the two players. He led 4-3 before Li Shi Feng flipped the switch and took complete control. The World No. 6 Chinese star remained composed, refusing to rush his rallies. Li defended superbly, denying Lakshya opportunities to go for his winners. Frustration was evident on the Indian's face as errors crept into his game, particularly when he attempted to find the backline.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS TO BE PLAYED IN LAHORE FROM APRIL 9 TO 19

Diary Times Desk : Pakistan vs Ireland and Scotland vs West Indies will kick off the qualifying competition in Lahore on April 9 ahead of the women's ODI World Cup, which will be played in October this year in India. Bangladesh and Thailand, the other teams in the fray in the six-team event, will face off the following day. Apart from India, Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka have already qualified for the World Cup, and the final two spots will be filled by the top-two teams from the qualifying tournament. The games will be played at the new-look Gaddafi Stadium and the Lahore City Cricket Association grounds. The two venues, as well as the Aitchison College grounds, will host the warm-up fixtures on April 5 and April 7, after the visiting teams arrive in Lahore on April 3. The last set of games will be played on April 19. The schedule has been officially released today, on March 14, just over three weeks from the start of the tournament, though three boards - West Indies, Ireland and Bangladesh - had put out the dates and venues in an unofficial capacity when announcing their season's fixtures and in the case of Bangladesh, their squad for the event.

