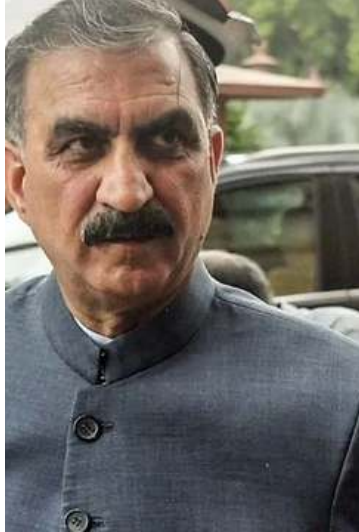


## HP Cabinet Decisions: Increased compensation to disaster affected, guest teachers will be appointed



**Diary Times Desk :** The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet meeting was held on Thursday at the State Secretariat under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. Many important decisions have been taken in the meeting. Minister Harsh Vardhan Chauhan gave information about the decisions of the Cabinet. In the meeting, the State Cabinet expressed gratitude to the people of the state and the Congress High Command for their unwavering support in implementing various policies and programs in the last two years. The Cabinet also thanked the Congress Party workers and government departments for the successful organization of the two-year celebrations held in Bilaspur. The Cabinet decided to give a special relief package to the disaster affected areas including Samej and Rampur of Shimla district, Jaon-Bagipul, Nirmand of Kullu district and Tikkam Thalu-Kot of Mandi district. Under this package, the compensation amount for the completely damaged houses to the affected families will be increased from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh, as in last year. The Cabinet approved the criteria for fixing the age limit of 20 to 30 years for the appointment of 80 mining guards in the Industries Department. Approval was also given to fill up 26 posts of various categories in Sainik Welfare Department, 17 vacant posts of Punjabi language teachers and 14 vacant posts of Urdu language teachers in Education Department. The Cabinet approved the appointment of guest teachers on hourly basis to fill the gaps arising due to short-term vacancies in any institution in the Education Department. In the meeting, as per the recommendations of the Cabinet Sub-Committee, approval was given to include five percent LDR quota for SMC teachers (PGT/DPE) in direct recruitment, which will be included in the recruitment and promotion rules of the Education Department. It has been decided to regularize the services of about 928 part-time water carriers who have completed 11 years of daily and part-time service in the Education Department on the post of Class IV employees.

## D Gukesh Becomes Youngest Ever World Champion

**Agencies :** Indian teenager Gukesh Dommaraju has become the youngest-ever world chess champion after beating defending champion China's Ding Liren in a dramatic turn on Thursday. Dommaraju, at age 18, is four years younger than Russian grandmaster Garry Kasparov was when he won the title in 1985 at age 22. The Chennai prodigy has long been a superstar in the chess world, having attained the status of chess grandmaster at the age of 12. But he was seen as the challenger going into the final of the FIDE World Chess Championship match held in Singapore this year.



## Cabinet Approves One Nation, One Election, Likely To Table Bill Next Week: Sources



**Agencies :** The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved 'one nation, one election', sources said. The government is likely to bring a comprehensive bill on the same during the next week, amid the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has issued a three-line whip to all its MPs, asking them to be present in the House on December 13 and 14 for discussions on some important legislative business, sources said. On Wednesday, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made a strong pitch for 'one nation, one election', and contended that frequent polls were creating hurdles in the nation's progress. Addressing an event in Kurukshetra as part of the ongoing International Gita festival, Chouhan said the country is moving ahead rapidly under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A glorious, prosperous and powerful India is being built under the leadership of the prime minister. Soon, India will become the "Vishwa Guru" (world leader) in front of our eyes. There is no doubt about it, and the whole world knows it, he said.

## Nitin Gadkari on road accidents in India: 'I try to hide my face in meetings abroad'

**Agencies :** Union road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said that road accidents in India have increased and that human behaviour must change for things to improve. He also underlined that he had set a target to reduce accidents by 50% when he first took charge as the road transport and highways minister. "Forget about reducing the number of accidents, I have no hesitation to admit that it has been increased," Gadkari said, according to PTL. "When I go to attend international conferences where there is a discussion on road accidents, I try to hide my face." The minister, who was replying to a supplementary question during the Question Hour, said that for things to improve, human behaviour in India has to change, society has to change and the rule of law has to be respected. Gadkari said road accidents claim 1.78 lakh lives annually in the country and 60% of the victims are in the age group of 18-34 years. He said that in Uttar Pradesh, over 23,000 people (or 13.7% of the total deaths due to road accidents) have died, followed by Tamil Nadu with over 18,000 (10.6%) deaths.





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### Kangra News: Death due to rabies in Nurpur block of Kangra district, health-animal husbandry department alert; This appeal to the people

**Diary Times Desk :** A person has died of rabies in Nurpur Vikas Khand. After this, the Nurpur administration has become alert. As a precaution, the administration has started a campaign to administer anti-rabies injections to stray and pet dogs. Under this, on Thursday, the Animal Husbandry Department has given injections to stray dogs in various areas and has appealed to the owners to vaccinate pet dogs with anti-rabies. After the death of a person in a village panchayat of Nurpur Vikas Khand, the report was found to be rabies positive when tested by the Health Department. After the person's death was confirmed to be due to rabies, the Health Department and Animal Husbandry Department have become alert in the area. On the instructions of the administration, the Animal Husbandry Department administered rabies vaccines to pet and stray dogs in Nagni, Bhadwar and Khajjiyan to control rabies.



### HP Board: School Education Board has released the result of improvement examination, check here; The examination was held in September

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal Pradesh School Education Board has declared the result of the special marks improvement examination of matriculation and 12th class conducted in September under SOS. 2234 candidates of 10th-12th class appeared in the examination. Out of these, the result of 1844 was PRC. Education Board Secretary Dr. Major Vishal Sharma said that during the examination held in September, 1564 candidates appeared in 10th. Out of these, the result of 1293 candidates was PRC, 48 was PRS, 124 was RLD, 67 was RLE and 32 candidates got RLF. He said that the applications received after the prescribed date and offline will not be considered by the Education Department. He said that the examination result has been uploaded on the board's website, from where the candidates can get their result.

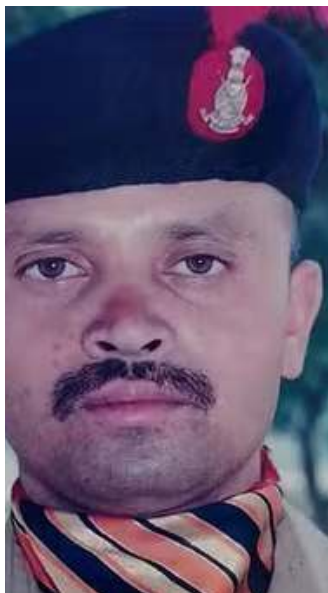
### Himachal News: Himachal BJP MPs demanded 900 crores from Finance Minister, met him in New Delhi today

**Diary Times Desk :** A delegation of BJP MPs from Himachal Pradesh, led by former Union Minister MP Anurag Singh Thakur, met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. During this, MPs Rajiv Bhardwaj, Kangana Ranaut, Indu Goswami and Sikandar Kumar were present. The MPs placed the demand for early approval of the Himachal Pradesh Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness Loan Agreement before the Finance Minister so that Himachal Pradesh gets a loan of Rs 900 crore soon. Anurag Thakur said that the BJP MPs of Himachal Pradesh met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and sought financial assistance of Rs 900 crore from the French Development Agency (AFD) under the Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness Project. Earlier, this proposal was considered during the 104th Screening Committee meeting in February 2020 and it was approved and formally presented to AFD in May 2020. He said that the Finance Minister has assured successful implementation soon.



### Himachal News: ITBP jawan Vinod Kumar died of cardiac arrest during duty, wave of mourning in the entire village

**Diary Times Desk :** Vinod Kumar (47), a resident of Wagli village under Dharamshala assembly constituency, who had gone to Guwahati for ASI training in ITBP, died of cardiac arrest while on duty. The body of the soldier is expected to reach his native village by Friday. As soon as the news of the soldier's death was received, a wave of mourning spread across the village. Vinod Kumar was currently serving in Guwahati. Giving information, his younger brother said that he had gone on duty after cutting his leave about a month ago. Vinod Kumar had joined ITBP in 2000. He is survived by his wife and two sons. Both sons are studying. The elder son is studying in Chandigarh and the younger son is studying in Dharamshala College. Local Panchayat Pradhan Shalini and Deputy Pradhan Sandeep Kumar said that Vinod Kumar was a person of sociable nature. The news of his death due to cardiac arrest while on duty last night has been received. His body is expected to be brought on Friday, after which his last rites will be performed with state honours.



### Jairam Thakur targeted Sukhu government, said- 25 crores were wasted in celebrating two years

**Diary Times Desk :** Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur targeted the celebration of two years of the Congress government of Himachal Pradesh. In a press conference held in Shimla on Thursday, Jairam said that this is perhaps the first time in the history of Himachal that there is not a single achievement after the completion of two years of the government. But despite that, celebrations are being held. On one hand, Himachal is going through a period of severe economic crisis, which the Chief Minister repeatedly mentions. When there is nothing in the name of achievements, despite this, the government spent about Rs 25 crore in celebrating two years. Rahul, Priyanka, Sonia Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge refused to come for the celebration. With this, the Congress party leadership at the Center gave a clear message that the government was able to run in Himachal in two years of tenure, apart from this there is nothing worth mentioning in the name of achievement. Therefore, the high command stayed away from the celebration. Last time also Priyanka Gandhi was in Shimla, but did not come. Neither she came then nor now.



## BJP anti-Himachal, says Deputy CM Agnihotri



**Diary Times Desk :** Terming BJP leaders as anti-Himachal, Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri today accused the opposition of trying to stall financial assistance and projects from the Centre for Himachal. Speaking at the rally in Bilaspur, Agnihotri said despite the best efforts of the BJP leaders to bring down the collapse of the Congress regime, the tally of ruling party MLAs was back to 40. "The BJP leaders from Himachal go to Delhi to stall help from the Centre. On the contrary, when during Covid they asked us to donate our salaries, we readily agreed," said Agnihotri. "The BJP leaders have always worked against the interest of Himachal and its people. I want to ask Jai Ram Thakur to name even one government employee who has not received salary.

If he can name even one such employee from the HRTC, I will resign or else he should resign," he said. He lashed out at the opposition BJP for repeatedly trying to destabilise Congress government in Himachal in the last two years.

"Congress had 40 MLAs and today also our number is again up to 40. So, the BJP should stop dreaming about being in power," he stated. Taking a dig at the bureaucracy, Deputy CM asked the Chief Secretary to tell his officers that Congress government is stable and here to stay.

## HP Cooker And Heater Ticket: HRTC management issued clarification, told why the conductor had issued the ticket

**Diary Times Desk :** Regarding the issue of ticket being issued for carrying luggage in HRTC bus, Atul Gupta, Regional Manager, Himachal Road Transport Corporation, Reckong Peo said that false news is being spread on social media. He said that Rohan Kaundal, conductor, was working in Thangi-Dharamshala bus service from Reckong Peo to Dharamshala on 4 December. Two students were travelling from Shimla in this bus. Both of them had 5 bags, 1 heater and 1 table. According to the luggage policy of Himachal Road Transport Corporation, each passenger can carry 30 kg of luggage or 2 bags of any size free with them. These student passengers were found carrying about 30 kg of luggage in addition to the authorized free luggage. The conductor issued proper ticket for this. He said that false propaganda is being spread against Himachal Road Transport Corporation on social media in this matter. Whereas the conductor has worked as per the rules.

## Himachal Weather: Third death due to cold in Himachal, tailor found dead in vegetable market; woman dies after slipping on ice

**Diary Times Desk :** The third case of death due to cold has come to light in Shimla district. The case is from Sabzi Mandi area under Sadar police station. A person working as a tailor was found dead here. On the information of the local people, the police team reached the spot and took the person to IGMC hospital but the doctors here declared him dead. The deceased has been identified as Surinder Kumar resident Bhagwat Uttar Pradesh. In the preliminary investigation, the cause of death is being told to be cold. The police has started investigation in this regard. According to the information received from the police, the local people saw a person in an unconscious state in the Sabzi Mandi in the morning. They informed the police about the matter. After this, the police team reached the spot and the person was taken to IGMC hospital. Here the doctors declared him dead after investigation. Investigation has revealed that Surinder used to work as a tailor in the city for many years. After finding out the number of the family members from his mobile, they have been informed about this. After the consent of the family members, the police has got the post-mortem of the body done in IGMC hospital.

## Shimla: MP Harsh Mahajan met PM Modi, discussed development plans



**Diary Times Desk :** Rajya Sabha MP Harsh Mahajan met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday at the Parliament House in New Delhi. Mahajan discussed various development works in the state. He especially stressed on the need to build new national highways connecting Chamba, Tisa, Pangi, Kishtwar and Leh. The PM congratulated Mahajan on his birthday. Harsh Mahajan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always considered Himachal Pradesh as his second home and has not left any stone unturned for the state. The current Congress government is also getting money from the Centre. These people are trying to take credit for this.

## Himachal News: Teachers going on study leave will get only 40 percent salary, Education Department issued instructions

**Diary Times Desk :** In Himachal Pradesh, professors and teachers going on study leave after August 7, 2024 will get only 40 percent of the total salary. Under the new CCS leave rules, the Education Department has issued instructions regarding salary payment during study leave. It has also been made mandatory to take permission from the Finance Department instead of the Administrative Department for study leave up to 24 months. After some objections related to the salary of college professors, the Education Department had raised this matter with the Finance Department. On Tuesday, a letter has been issued to all the college principals in this regard by Director of Higher Education Dr. Amarjeet Kumar Sharma. The state government has recently amended the Central Civil Services Leave Rules-1972. The new rule has been named Central Civil Services Leave Himachal Pradesh Rules-2024. Since the year 1986, the Administrative Department has been giving permission for study leave up to 24 months. Now the Finance Department will decide whether to send an officer or employee of a department on leave or not.

### Himachal News:

## Employment opportunity, 24 posts will be filled in Kangra Cooperative Primary Agriculture and Rural Development Bank

**Diary Times Desk :** 24 posts of various categories will be filled in Kangra Cooperative Primary Agriculture and Rural Development Bank. The categories of posts to be filled include four posts of Assistant Manager, 20 posts of Recovery Supervisor and Office Assistant. The examination for recruitment to these posts will be conducted through IBPS Mumbai. Interested candidates can apply online for these posts till 15 December 2024. For the post of Assistant Manager, it is mandatory for the candidate to have a graduation degree in second division. Whereas for Recovery Supervisor and Office Assistant, it is mandatory to have 12th class or graduation / post-graduation degree with 50% marks. As per the rules, five percent relaxation in marks will be provided to the candidates of reserved category. Diploma holder in Computer Application / Cooperative Management will be given preference. Anil Kumar, General Manager, Kangra Cooperative Primary Agriculture and Rural Development Bank said that applications have been invited to fill 24 posts of various categories in the bank. For transparency, this recruitment examination will be conducted through the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS).

## HP High Court: Himachal Pradesh High Court directs-BDO is responsible for maintenance of toilets; report sought

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal High Court issued instructions that the responsibility of maintenance of toilets in the state will be of Block Development Officer (BDO). The court issued these instructions while hearing a petition filed regarding the dilapidated condition of toilets. The division bench of Acting Chief Justice Tarlok Singh Chauhan and Justice Satyen Vaidya said that BDO should take care of the condition of toilets in their area. The division bench has also given orders to file a report in the court on the cleanliness of toilets, their maintenance, how many are closed and how many are not. Amicus curiae Devan Khanna told the court that the 15th Finance Commission has given Rs 800 crore to the state only for sanitization. Out of them, Rs 526 crore has not been spent yet.

## Arvind Kejriwal promises ₹2,100 per month to women if AAP retains power in Delhi

**Diary Times Desk :** Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal announced on Thursday that the Delhi government cabinet has approved the Mahila Samman Yojana, under which ₹1,000 will be given to eligible women of the national capital each month.

Kejriwal said while the ₹1,000 aid will be rolled out from today, the amount will be increased to ₹2,100, if AAP returns to power in the upcoming elections.

The elections to the 70-member Delhi assembly are expected to be held in February next year. The Election Commission of India has not announced the dates yet. The term of the current assembly in Delhi expires on February 23, 2025. "I had promised ₹1,000 per month for women of Delhi. And I am happy to announce that CM Atishi's cabinet has approved this scheme today. Now women can register and avail this scheme," Kejriwal said on December 12.

## First Indian to return from Syria 'thanks' govt, describes Damascus horror

**Agencies :** A Ghaziabad resident, first of the 75 Indian nationals to return to home from Syria, recounted the horrifying situation in Damascus and thanked the Indian government for its help. Ravi Bhushan told ANI about the efforts the Indian embassy made to help get the Indian nationals back home. "India has started a rescue operation and we are the first team who rescued from Syria. The best part is that they contacted each and everyone. They were even motivating them and asking them if they were okay," he said.

Bhushan told ANI that the Syrian embassy kept updating them every hour through messages about when and what they are going to do in connection to the rescue operation. "If somebody faced any problem regarding food or anything, they arranged it. We are very much thankful to Indian government and Indian embassy at Lebanon and Syria both places," he added.

In seeing the suffering people from other countries were going through, Bhushan felt the efforts made by the Indian government were very good.

## 'Misplaced priorities': Opposition slams Cabinet nod to One Nation One Election



**Diary Times Desk :** The Opposition INDIA bloc leaders attacked the BJP after sources earlier said that the 'One Nation, One Election' bill was cleared by the Union Cabinet, and said that it was an attempt to undermine democracy. While some leaders pointed to other important issues like education and healthcare, others questioned the logistics behind holding simultaneous elections, and said larger consultations on the bill are required.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin called the bill a "draconian" measure that would "erase regional voices, erode federalism, and disrupt governance." He urged people to "resist this attack on Indian Democracy with all our strength."

## 'Rajya Sabha chairman consistently suppressed freedom of expression of Opposition MPs': Kharage

**Agencies :** Leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharage on Thursday continued his attack on House chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, alleging abuse of power.

"While trampling of 'democracy' and 'subjugation of truth' has become the autocratic norm in Rajya Sabha... assault on established 'parliamentary practices' is promoted and 'ethical conduct' stands liquidated in Rajya Sabha," Kharage said in an X post. "Our resolve to uphold the Constitution, defend the sacred chamber of Democracy, stand in defense of time-honoured Parliamentary practices becomes even stronger and steadfast in face of this brutal, lethal and obtrusive assault being unleashed," the Congress chief said. "We will not bow down. We will stand tall in protection of Democratic rights of every fellow citizen and our sacred Constitution," he added. Kharage said he was not permitted to speak in the House and he seeks to place before the People of India, 10 points as to why the Opposition expresses.

## Isro successfully fires LVM3 cryogenic engine that will power Gaganyaan Mission



**PTI :** The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has achieved a key milestone in its space program with the successful sea-level hot test of the CE20 Cryogenic Engine on November 29, 2024. Conducted at the Isro Propulsion Complex, the test is a critical step in enhancing the engine's performance and reliability. The CE20 engine powers the upper stage of Isro's LVM3 launch vehicle, which has played a pivotal role in missions like Chandrayaan-2, Chandrayaan-3, and the upcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight project.

## Delhi records coldest December day in 3 years, mercury drops to 4.5°C

**Agencies :** The city recorded its coldest December day in the last three years on Thursday as the minimum temperature dropped to 4.5 degrees Celsius. The forecast predicts cold wave conditions to persist at isolated places until the weekend. The city recorded a low of 4.5 degrees Celsius on Thursday, 0.4 degrees below normal, compared to 4.9 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department said. The temperature had dropped sharply from 5 degrees Celsius on Wednesday.

## Devendra Fadnavis meets PM Modi amid deadlock over Maharashtra cabinet



**Diary Times Desk :** Nearly three weeks since winning majority in the Maharashtra assembly elections, the Mahayuti alliance is yet to divide the cabinet portfolios among the three alliance partners - BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP. Days after Devendra Fadnavis took oath as the Chief Minister, he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday. The meeting comes amid the three parties requesting the intervention of central BJP leaders to address remaining contentious issue. On Wednesday night, Fadnavis and his deputy Ajit Pawar held a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP chief JP Nadda. Disputes over certain departments within the cabinet persist, prompting the leaders' Delhi visit. But an upset Eknath Shinde chose not to join the trip. According to sources, Fadnavis, Shinde, and Ajit Pawar agreed on a division of 22 ministerial berths for the BJP, 11 for Shiv Sena, and 10 for the NCP. The maximum number of cabinet positions in Maharashtra, including the chief minister, is 43. The distribution of berths may still change. According to BJP leaders, if Shiv Sena and NCP request more positions, they will likely be assigned less significant portfolios.

## 'Never rent to Indians': Australian couple's racist rant over 'butter chicken' smell in house goes viral

**Agencies :** A social media post is grabbing eyeballs after an Australian homeowner detailed their experience of dealing with persistent food odours in the newly-purchased house. The couple, who recently bought the property from "two men from South Asia," said the house carries strong smell they associate with traditional South Asian dishes. The homeowner described the smell as a mix of "butter chicken with a side of saffron rice and garlic naan, lamb rogan josh, and beef vindaloo." Despite thorough cleaning, airing out the property, and using diffusers overnight, they claim the smell persists and may even have seeped into the walls.

## Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni named 'most powerful person in Europe'

**Agencies :** Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni has been named as the "most powerful person in Europe" by Politico. The media outlet released its annual ranking list of 28 most influential people in the continent. "The list captures another continental trend: the ascent of right-wing populists and ultranationalist figures. These leaders, who have undermined civil-rights and targeted minorities and asylum-seekers, have gained traction as centrist leaders flounder," Politico said. Leader of the far-right wing Brothers of Italy party, Giorgia Meloni, has undergone a significant transformation. From being perceived as an ultranationalist to taking charge of Italy's highest office, Meloni is a powerful woman, with whom several leading countries can talk business.

In 2022, Meloni gave Italy its first far-right-led government since the end of World War-II and also became the first woman to serve as the country's prime minister.

## Donald Trump becomes Time magazine's person of the year



**Agencies :** Time magazine has named President-elect Donald Trump as its Person of the Year for 2024, marking the second time he has received the honour. Trump was previously recognized in 2016. The announcement was made on Thursday. Last year, the title was awarded to pop icon Taylor Swift for 2023. Time has a history of selecting individuals or groups "individuals who, for better or for worse, did the most to shape the world". While several presidents-elect have received the title, it is not a guarantee. For example, Queen Elizabeth II was selected in 1952 instead of Dwight D. Eisenhower, and in 1968, the Apollo 8 astronauts, who became the first humans to orbit the moon, were chosen over President-elect Richard Nixon. Trump once described Time's Person of the Year as his "holy grail." Over the years, he has appeared on the magazine's cover multiple times, occasionally in unflattering portrayals. In 2015, when Time selected German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Trump publicly voiced his displeasure, tweeting about the decision and even mentioning it at a rally.

## Media groups condemn Israel over Gaza journalist 'massacre'

**Agencies :** Two separate reports from media freedom organisations that analysed the deaths of reporters worldwide this year found Israel carried out a "massacre" of journalists in Gaza, an accusation denied by the Israeli government.

An annual report published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on Thursday found the Israeli army killed 18 journalists – two in Lebanon and 16 in Gaza – as they were working this year. The toll, equivalent to around a third of the total worldwide of 54, was described by RSF as "an unprecedented massacre". "Palestine is the most dangerous country for journalists, recording a higher death toll than any other country over the past five years," the organisation said in its report, which covers data up to December 1. In total, "more than 145" journalists have been killed by the Israeli army in Gaza since the start of the war there in October 2023, with 35 of them working at the time of their deaths, the report found. RSF has filed four complaints with the International Criminal Court (ICC) for "war crimes committed against journalists by the Israeli army".

## Syria's new PM al-Jolani says rights guaranteed for all religious groups

**Agencies :** Syria's new prime minister said the Islamist-led alliance that ousted president Bashar al-Assad will guarantee the rights of all religious groups and called on the millions who fled the war to return home. Assad fled Syria after a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and its allies, which brought to a spectacular end five decades of brutal rule by his clan. Syrians across the country and around the world erupted in celebration, after enduring a stifling era during which anyone suspected of dissent could be thrown into jail or killed. With Assad's overthrow plunging Syria into the unknown, its new rulers have sought to assure members of the country's religious minorities that they will not repress them. They have also pledged justice for the victims of Assad's iron-fisted rule, with HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani vowing on Wednesday that officials involved in torturing detainees will not be pardoned.

## Indians moved ahead in green card queue: US Visa Bulletin delivers good news

**Agencies :** The US Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs has some good news for Indian applicants eyeing an American visa. The Visa Bulletin for January 2025, has shown notable progress in employment-based (EB) and family-sponsored visa categories, that could particularly benefit applicants from India.

The US Visa Bulletin is a monthly publication by the Department of State that provides information on the availability of immigrant visa numbers for applicants waiting to apply for a green card in the United States. The limit for family-sponsored category immigrants has been set at 2,26,000, while the annual cap for employment-based preference immigrants has been kept at 1,40,000.

## 'Drugged, restrained, unable to escape': Sex trafficking charges against Alexander brothers



**Agencies :** Real estate moguls Alexander brothers on Wednesday were arrested and charged with sex-trafficking and drug abuse by federal prosecutors in New York. The twin brothers, Oren and Alon Alexander, and their elder brother Tal, have been accused of luring, drugging, and raping dozens of women for "well over a decade", the indictment said. While Oren and Tal, known for their high-end property deals in New York and Miami, have been facing multiple allegations of rape and sexual assault since June, their brother Alon is facing civil allegations of sexual misconduct, Bloomberg reported. The brothers, all residents of Miami, reportedly used "deception, fraud, and coercion" to entice victims into travelling and attend parties or events with them. The often offered to cover their flights, hotels, and other indictments and at times, even promised a romantic relationship, the indictment said.

## Punjab and Haryana High Court strikes down replacement of Punjab contractual employees by another set



**Agencies :** The Punjab and Haryana High Court has quashed an advertisement by the Punjab government seeking to replace existing contractual employees working as lab assistants with another set of contractual workers, deeming it arbitrary and contrary to established legal principles. The court made it clear that allowing such substitutions would undermine the rights of employees who have been serving under court protection for years. "The advertisement which was issued by the respondents to replace the petitioners with another set of contractual employees is contrary to the settled principle of law and, thus, cannot be sustained and the said advertisement is accordingly set aside," Justice Harsimran Singh Sethi asserted. Delivering the verdict on two connected petitions, Justice Sethi relied on the Supreme Court's judgment in "State of Haryana versus Piare Singh" case, which prohibited such replacements. The Bench further made it clear that temporary or contractual employees must be replaced only by regularly selected employees, not by another temporary batch.

## CM Saini welcomes 'One Nation, One Election' bill, announces medical insurance for athletes



**Agencies :** Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has welcomed the "One Nation, One Election" bill, saying it will boost the country's development. Speaking at the closing ceremony of Haryana Kushti Dangal in Kurukshetra, Saini stated that frequent elections hinder development and waste resources. He praised the bill as a vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that will save money and accelerate development.

Saini also urged the youth to stay away from drugs and focus on sports and education. He pointed out that Haryana's youth have achieved significant success at the national and international levels.

The Chief Minister emphasised the importance of protecting children from drug abuse and encouraging them to excel, with the government providing support for their advancement.

In addition, Saini announced a comprehensive initiative to support athletes, including a medical insurance cover of Rs 20 lakh for each player. The state government will also award annual incentives to top wrestling arenas at the state and district levels.

The two-day Haryana Kushti Dangal saw over 500 wrestlers participate at the district and regional levels, with 16 of the 32 finalists being women wrestlers.

## No 'Patiala Peg' please: Diljit Dosanjh told not to glorify drugs, violence during Chandigarh concert



**Agencies :** The Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CCPCR) has issued specific restrictions for singer Diljit Dosanjh ahead of his December 14 show at Exhibition Ground, Sector 34 here.

The singer, who is set to perform in Chandigarh as part of his 'Dil-Luminati' India Tour, has been advised to avoid singing songs that promote alcohol, drugs and violence.

"Avoid to perform songs i.e. Patiala Peg, 5 Tara, Case etc. even with twisted words in which alcohol, drugs and violence are promoted. These songs affect the children of impressionable age," the child rights body said in an advisory on Wednesday. The commission also emphasized that alcohol should not be served to youngsters below 25 years which is punishable under JJ Act and other provisions of law. Citing a WHO report, the commission in its advisory asked the singer not to invite children on stage during the show, where peak sound pressure level is above 120db, saying it is 'harmful' for them.

The WHO report, cited in the advisory, states that adults should not be exposed to sound with a peak sound pressure level above 140db and for children, the level is reduced to 120 db. This advisory comes in the wake of concerns raised during Dosanjh's concerts in Hyderabad and Delhi, warning him against the promotion of alcohol and drugs.

## Sukhbir Badal's 10 happening days of punishment at Punjab gurdwaras



**Agencies :** The last 10 days, were perhaps the most dramatic for Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal. From performing duty of 'sewadar', washing utensils and being shot at outside the Golden Temple gate in Amritsar, former chief minister of Punjab sure saw it all. He performed sewa with a fracture in his leg, a spear in one hand, placard around his neck and humbly heard "shabads" for an hour everyday.

## Indians abroad drumming up support for farmers' protest

**Agencies :** The support from the Indian diaspora all around the world is rising in favour of the farmers' protest. After a rally was held in California on Wednesday, another car rally will be organised in Surrey, Canada, on December 13 to mark the 10 months of the agitation. Confirming the same, farm leader Sharwan Singh Pandher said the rallies were being organised by immigrants to bring the attention of people living in the West towards the protest in India. "Car rallies are being held to show the conditions of unarmed farmers, who were injured after tear gas shells were lobbed at them, as they were marching on foot towards Delhi from the Shambhu border and were denied entry into Haryana by police and paramilitary personnel," said Pandher. The immigrants in California have also decided to observe a day-long fast to express solidarity with farm leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal whose fast unto death reached Day 17 on Thursday. While farmers are busy garnering support from singers and spiritual leader ahead of their December 14 protest march on foot towards Delhi, Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu said farm leaders should not send Merjeevda Jatha towards Delhi and engage in dialogue instead. Bittu, who was visiting Patiala, said he was open to talk to farmers and take up their issues with the government, while urging them to end their protest.

## Prez confers national award on two HP panchayats



**Agencies** : President Droupadi Murmu conferred three national panchayat awards on two gram panchayats from the state – Thanadhar gram panchayat in Shimla district and Sikander gram panchayat in Hamirpur district – in New Delhi today. While Thanadhar won two awards – second prize in ‘Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat’ and third prize in Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar- Sikander gram panchayat walked away with second prize in ‘Water Sufficient Panchayat’. These two panchayats outperformed around 3,600 gram panchayats in the state and over 1.90 lakh panchayats across the country to win these prestigious awards. Thanadhar gram panchayat got Rs 1.25 crore for winning two awards, while Sikander gram panchayat will pocket Rs 75 lakh. The Centre government gave these awards to the best performing panchayats in the nine themes based on localised Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Apart from finishing second in one of these nine themes, Thanadhar gram panchayat also won the Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar for securing the third spot in the ‘best gram panchayat’ category in the country. The award is given to the panchayats for best aggregate performance under all nine themes. “We were hopeful of winning one or the other award under the nine SDG themes. But to be adjudged one of the top three panchayats in the country is a huge achievement for us,” said Sandeep Shroal, pradhan of Thanadhar gram panchayat. Incidentally, Thanadhar had been nominated in three different themes for the award. Thanadhar gram panchayat has done exemplary work particularly under the three themes of ‘Clean and Green Panchayat’, ‘Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat’.

## Congress leaders absence from Bilaspur rally proof of regime's lacklustre performance: Jai Ram Thakur



**Agencies** : Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur today said the fact that all senior Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul, and Priyanka Gandhi, chose to skip the two-year celebrations of the state government was proof of the government's lacklustre performance. Addressing a press conference here today, Thakur said it was for the first time in the history of Himachal that there was nothing in the name of achievements after a two-year rule. “The central Congress leadership declining to come for the function at Bilaspur is a confirmation that there was no reason for celebration,” he said. He said while the state is facing a severe financial crunch, the government spent Rs 25 crore on the celebrations. He claimed that till now Rs 10 crore had been spent on engaging lawyers to save the Chief Parliamentary Secretaries (CPS) while no efforts were made to save Himachal Bhawan from being attached. “An attempt is being made to hand over the prestigious HP Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) hotels, even the profit-making ones, to private players,” he alleged.

## Asked to cut short her speech, Pratibha upset



**Agencies** : State Congress president Pratibha Singh did not like it at all when she was given a message to cut short her speech at the Bilaspur function today. Looking upset when Bumber Thakur, a former Congress MLA from Bilaspur, passed on the message to wind up her speech, the Congress president snapped “aap nahin chahte mein jyada bolu?” without even bothering to cover the mike. Making her displeasure absolutely clear over being interrupted, she said that she did not want to make a big speech but just wanted to talk a bit about the organisation. Even as she left the stage, she reprimanded Thakur saying, “You shouldn't do this, I know how much I need to speak,” she said. The incident could reignite the speculations about cold vibes between the state party chief and Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu.

## BJP failed to protect Hindus in Bangladesh, says Rajiv Shukla

**Agencies** : AICC General Secretary Rajiv Shukla said the BJP failed to protect the Hindu community in Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries. Addressing the second anniversary function at Bilaspur on Wednesday, he said during the 10-year tenure of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, there was no threat to the Hindu community. He said the BJP only preaches Hindu and Hindutva, and accused it of spreading misinformation through the media. Shukla said the BJP leaders tried to topple the government in Himachal but failed, adding that the party dishonoured the public mandate to meet its ulterior motives. He said many schemes, including MGNREGA, Right to Information Act (RTI) and farmer loan waivers, were initiated during the Congress regime. He accused the BJP leaders of creating hurdles in providing relief to people affected during the monsoon-induced disaster last year. He said the Modi-led Central Government wanted to weaken the non-BJP ruled states in the country. He added that all attempts of the BJP to topple the state government would fail and the Sukhu-led government would complete its five-year term successfully.

## BJP submits memorandum on two-year ‘Cong misrule’



**Agencies** : Accusing the Himachal Government of trying to stall centrally sponsored scheme by creating hurdles, BJP today submitted a memorandum to Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla highlighting the acts of omission and commission during the two-year “Congress misrule” in Himachal. Led by BJP Himachal in-charge Shrikant Sharma, co-incharge Sanjay Tandon, Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur, state BJP president Rajiv Bindal, MPs, MLAs and senior party office-bearers reached the Raj Bhawan to submit a 110-page memorandum to the Governor on “two-year misrule” in Himachal. The BJP leaders marched to the Raj Bhawan while the state government was holding a rally at Bilaspur to highlight its achievements in its two-year rule. Talking to media persons, former Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said two years are over but the guarantees have still not been fulfilled. “What about the guarantees on the basis of which you came to power? Nor have you given one lakh jobs, Rs 1,500 to women, 300 units free power, start-up scheme and purchase of cow dung,” he stated. The BJP prominently highlighted the failed guarantees made by the Congress in the run-up to the 2022 Assembly polls. The document detailed the various scams in the two-year Congress rule and the attempts by the state government to create hurdles.

## D Gukesh vs Ding Liren, World Chess Championship 2024 : Gukesh Becomes Youngest Ever World Champion



**Diary Times Desk :** At the age of just 18, India's Gukesh Dommaraju scripted history, becoming the youngest-ever World Chess Champion, as he defeated China's Ding Liren in the 14th and final game. Heading into the game on 6.5 points each, the final match also seemed to head towards a draw. However, a late blunder by Ding Liren handed Gukesh the victory. Gukesh becomes the first Indian World Chess Champion since Viswanathan Anand in 2012. It caps off a stunning year for Gukesh, who has also won the Candidates 2024 tournament and the Chess Olympiad gold. Gukesh also became the first teenager to become World Chess Champion.

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh scripted chess history as he became the youngest-ever World Chess Champion, defeating China's Ding Liren in the decisive 14th and final game. Gukesh also became the first teenager to achieve the milestone. It caps off a stunning year for the 18-year-old, who also won the Candidates tournament and the gold medal at the Chess Olympiad for India in 2024. D Gukesh pounced on a mistake by Ding Liren, and wrapped up victory in his 58th move in the final game.

## Short TAKES

**Nitish Rana involved in fiery exchange with former teammate, umpire intervenes during SMAT quarters; loses ego-battle**

Former Kolkata Knight Riders captain Nitish Rana faced his former team, Delhi, in the quarterfinal round of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy tournament. However, the Uttar Pradesh all-rounder's outing was forgettable. He was involved in a heated exchange with Ayush Badoni, which forced the on-field umpire to intervene. It happened in the 13th over of the first innings at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Wednesday. Badoni was new to the crease after Rana had ended the 81-run run opening stand between Priyansh Arya and Yash Dhull by dismissing the former for 44 off 31.

**Gujarat Giants appoint new batting, bowling coaches ahead of WPL 2025 auction**

Ahead of the 2025 Women's Premier League player auctions, Gujarat Giants on Thursday announced strategic changes to their coaching staff, with Pravin Tambe appointed as the new bowling coach and former Australian cricketer Daniel Marsh as the new batting coach. Michael Klingler, the former Australian batter, will continue as the team's head coach, having joined last season.

In a statement, Gujarat Giants said, "Ahead of the 2025 Women's Premier League player auctions, Adani Sportline-owned Gujarat Giants has announced strategic changes to their coaching staff. This move aims to build a robust squad for the coming season. Pravin Tambe will be their new bowling coach, and Daniel Marsh will be the new batting coach. Michael Klingler, who joined the team last season, will continue as head coach."

**IPL 2025: Lauritz Knudsen joins hands with 'fitting partner' Mumbai Indians**

Lauritz Knudsen Electrical and Automation (formerly L&T Switchgear), a Schneider Electric group unit and a leader in the Indian electrical and automation industry, has announced a landmark partnership with the Mumbai Indians, one of the most successful franchises in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Starting in the 2025 season, Lauritz Knudsen will be the team's principal sponsor, with its logo prominently displayed on the official jerseys and training apparel. This collaboration signifies more than a traditional sponsorship; it is a strategic and cultural alignment between two organisations.

## Rohit's Test form concern for India? Ponting reveals ideal batting position



**Diary Times Desk :** Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting opened up if Rohit Sharma's batting form is becoming a concern for Team India. Rohit did not look at his very best in Adelaide after missing out the 1st Test due to birth of his second child. Ponting felt that Rohit should have straightaway slotted himself at the top of the order because of his sheer experience. The Indian captain sacrificed his opening slot for India to continue with the pair of Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul. However, Ponting was not in favour of that. "I felt that if (Rohit) Sharma was coming back into the side, he should have gone straight back up to the top and opened the batting. That's how I felt about it. And I know that KL and Jaiswal had a 200-run partnership in Perth, and they played well, but he's (Rohit) your captain.

## "Not Spoken A Word...": Sanjiv Goenka Breaks Silence On MS Dhoni Controversy



**Diary Times Desk :** Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) Sanjiv Goenka has opened up on his bond with former India captain MS Dhoni. For the unversed, Dhoni was sacked as captain of the now defunct Rising Pune Super Giants (RPSG), a team owned by Goenka, after they finished second from bottom in 2016. RPSG was one of the teams who featured in the IPL for two seasons, alongside Gujarat Lions, after Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Rajasthan Royals (RR) were banned from the tournament in 2016 and 2017, respectively. However, Goenka has now revealed Dhoni has not spoken a word after being removed as captain of the franchise. Goenka also insisted that he and Dhoni still have a very good relationship, adding that the captaincy matter was never an issue.

## Rabada returns for Pakistan ODIs; Nortje ruled out



**Diary Times Desk :** Kagiso Rabada has been named in the South Africa squad for the ODI series against Pakistan, returning to the 50-over squad for the first time since appearing in the semifinal of the 2023 ODI World Cup against Australia. South Africa have also handed Kwena Maphaka his maiden ODI call-up as they announced a 15-member squad for the three-match series. The 18-year-old Maphaka, who has played T20Is for South Africa, was the player of the tournament in the Under-19 World Cup this year, having picked up 21 wickets at an average of 9.71. Marco Jansen, Otneil Baartman and Andile Phehlukwayo are the other pacers in the squad while Anrich Nortje misses out due to a fractured toe. The squad, led by Temba Bavuma, sees the return of Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller, who last played an ODI against India in December 2023. Keshav Maharaj and Tabraiz Shamsi are also back, having last featured in an ODI in December 2023 against India, as South Africa named a strong squad with bulk of their frontline options in preparation for the Champions Trophy. South Africa ODI squad: Temba Bavuma (c), Otneil Baartman, Tony de Zorzi, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Keshav Maharaj, Kwena Maphaka, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Andile Phehlukwayo, Kagiso Rabada, Tristan Stubbs, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen