

## HP Congress: Congress will roar against the central government outside the Raj Bhavan on December 18



**Diary Times Desk :** On the call of the All India Congress Committee, Congress will protest against the Central Government on December 18 across the country against the anti-people policies of the Central Government, corruption charges against Adani in the US court, protection to capitalists and increasing violence in Manipur. Himachal Congress will protest outside the Raj Bhavan under the leadership of State Congress President Pratibha Singh. All India Congress Committee Secretary, Co-in-charge of State Affairs Chetan Chauhan and Vedit Chaudhary will also specially participate in this demonstration. Pratibha Singh has asked all the senior leaders of the State Congress, all the former office bearers of the party, all the former office bearers of the district and block, all the Congress councilors of the Congress-ruled Municipal Corporation, all the office bearers of leading organizations and departments to gather near Rahat Hotel in Chhota Shimla at 11 am on December 18, 2024. From here, all the people of the party will protest against the BJP-led NDA government at the Center outside the Raj Bhavan.

## During Chandigarh concert, Diljit says no more events in India.

**Agencies :** Punjabi singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh enthralled thousands of fans at his electrifying 'Dil-Luminati Concert' on Saturday in Chandigarh. The singer, who has been on a multi-country tour announced on stage that he would not host a concert in India until the government focuses on concert infrastructure across the country. Diljit took his disappointment live to the stage about the state of concert infrastructure across India. He said while addressing the crowd, "I want to tell the designated authorities that India does not have the infrastructure for live shows. This is a big revenue generating space. It also gives livelihood to many. Please focus on this space as well."

## Sri Lankan President Dissanayake meets PM Modi on his first foreign visit, thanks India for financial aid

**Agencies :** Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday in his first foreign visit after assuming office, ahead of going to China next month. In his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dissanayake thanked India for the \$4 billion financial assistance and also acknowledged India's support in Sri Lanka's debt restructuring. "I am happy to come to Delhi for my first state visit. I thank India for the invite. This visit paved the way for cooperation between our two nations to develop further," said Dissanayake after meeting PM Modi on Monday. He will visit Bodh Gaya on Tuesday. President Dissanayake thanked India's crucial assistance in Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process, and for extending financial assistance of \$20.66 million to settle payments due from Sri Lanka for projects completed under existing Lines of Credit thereby significantly reducing the debt burden at a critical time.



## No missive from Centre on participation of B'desh in Kolkata Book Fair: Guild

**Agencies :** The Publishers and Booksellers Guild, organiser of the International Kolkata Book Fair, on Monday said it is yet to receive any communication from the Centre over the participation of Bangladesh in the 48th edition of the fair next year. If any favourable response comes from the Centre in future about publishers from Bangladesh taking part in the event, it will be the responsibility of the state government to ensure there is no untoward incident on the book fair ground, Guild President Tridib Chatterjee said. "In the wake of the incidents in Bangladesh since August, we had in November sought the views of the Ministry of External Affairs about participation of Bangladesh in next year's book fair. The MEA is yet to issue any favourable response," Chatterjee told a press conference.

## KTR Faces Corruption Case Over Alleged Irregularities In 2023 Formula E Race

**Agencies :** A corruption case has been filed against KT Rama Rao, former minister of Telangana and the son of former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, over alleged irregularities in Formula E race held at Hyderabad in February 2023. The Anti-Corruption Bureau, which filed the case, has alleged that ₹ 55 crore was allegedly transferred to Formula E organisers on the verbal orders of Mr Rao. Mr Rao has alleged that he is being targeted by the Congress government of Revanth Reddy, which came to power in the state last year, ending the 10-year rule of Mr Rao's party, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi or BRS. In October this year, the Anti-Corruption Bureau had sought Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma's nod to investigate KTR in the Formula E case. Sources said former Municipal Administration and Urban Development principal secretary.

## Parliament Winter Session: 'One Nation, One Poll' bill likely to be introduced in LS today

**Agencies :** The final week of the Winter Session of Parliament commenced on Monday and the Rajya Sabha began a two-day debate on the Constitution, which completed 75 years on November 26. The Lok Sabha held the Constitution debate on Friday and Saturday, which is otherwise a non-working day. Meanwhile, the government is likely to introduce the bill to pave the way for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, tomorrow in Lok Sabha, ANI reported quoting sources. The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill were earlier listed for Monday but are now likely to be moved to the Lok Sabha later in the week, they said, asking not to be named. The second of these bills seeks to align the elections of the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry and the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Bills are now expected to be brought on Tuesday. The Winter Session of Parliament began on November 25.

## Supreme Court seeks Karnataka police's stance on 'Jai Shri Ram' chant in mosque

**Agencies :** The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea challenging the Karnataka High Court's decision to quash an FIR against two men accused of entering a mosque and shouting "Jai Shri Ram". A bench of Justices Pankaj Mithal and Sandeep Mehta heard the petition on Monday but refrained from issuing a formal notice. The case has been scheduled for further hearing in January 2025. The petition, filed by complainant Haydhar Ali CM, disputes the Karnataka High Court's September 13 ruling, which held that shouting a religious slogan does not amount to a criminal offence. The High Court observed that the complaint lacked ingredients to invoke sections of the IPC, including criminal trespass and criminal intimidation.



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## Jairam Thakur: Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said- Government should listen to the youth and withdraw the guest teacher policy

**Diary Times Desk :** Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that the government will not be allowed to act arbitrarily. Whatever comes to mind cannot be imposed on the state by making a policy. The government should desist from its dictatorship and withdraw the guest teacher policy as per its promise. Sukhu government's guest teacher policy is not only harmful for the youth but also for the students. The government should fulfill the promise it made and give permanent jobs to the youth. From the way the government representatives have talked about the guest teacher policy on various platforms till now, it is clear that this policy will once again bring a bad name to Himachal Pradesh in the entire country. Therefore, now is the time for the government to withdraw the policy which is against the future of the youth, against the education of the students and spoils the image of the state, without bringing a bad name to the state.



## "Write Panjab Or Punjab...": Diljit Dosanjh Reacts To Spelling Controversy

**Agencies :** A social media post by Punjabi singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh has sparked a 'Punjab vs Panjab' debate. In a recent post on X, the singer shared a video of him arriving at Chandigarh airport accompanied by the word 'Panjab'. Social media users alleged that he deliberately omitted the Indian flag emoji in his post. Responding to the accusations, Diljit today dismissed the allegations which he termed "conspiracy theories". "If the tricolour is missed once while mentioning Punjab in a tweet, it's called a conspiracy. Even in a tweet about Bengaluru, it was missed once. If Punjab is written as Panjab, it's called a conspiracy. Whether you write it as Panjab or Punjab...it will always remain Punjab (he wrote in Punjabi)," his post read. The controversy began when Diljit posted a note announcing an upcoming concert in Chandigarh, spelling Punjab as Panjab.

## 'If Muslim processions can ...': Yogi Adityanath speaks in UP Assembly on communal violence

**Agencies :** Addressing the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on the first day of the ongoing four-day session, chief minister Yogi Adityanath questioned the specific nature of communal flare-ups in the state. The chief minister, trying to understand the anatomy of violence, remarked why flare-ups breakout specifically occur when Hindu processions pass through a Muslim area, whereas Muslim processions pass through Hindu areas peacefully. He added that the history of riots in Sambhal dates back to 1947. He claimed that 184 Hindus were burnt in 1974 and 209 Hindus have been killed in Sambhal since 1947. Raising questions about the Sambhal violence, Adityanath questioned who were the stone pelters, adding that whoever they are, they will not be spared. The CM also took a swipe at the Congress and opposition parties for claiming "exclusive ownership" of India's legacy. "Some people wander around with a self-proclaimed contract of representing India and treat Discovery of India as if it were the oldest book of this country," he remarked, without naming any party. Yogi Adityanath spoke about the temple in Sambhal that was unlocked recently after decades, following an anti-encroachment drive by the local administration, according to an official statement. He emphasised the historic significance of the temple, which included an ancient idol of Bajrang Bali.

## Nirbhaya's mother says 'daughters still not safe' 12 years after Delhi gangrape case

**Agencies :** Asha Devi, the mother of the 2012 Delhi gangrape victim, said the country is still not safe for its daughters and claimed that circumstances that perpetuate crimes against women have not changed. She made an emotional appeal, with her voice choking, at the first "National Convention on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children". "It is with great pain that I want to say that even after 12 years, the circumstances have not changed. The daughters of the country are not safe. When I was struggling to get justice for my daughter, I knew that she was no more and that she would never return, but I remembered her words that the perpetrators should get such punishment that such an incident is not repeated," news agency PTI quoted Nirbhaya's mother as saying. She also referred to the rape and murder of a 31-year-old postgraduate doctor inside the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9. "No one still knows what actually happened," she said. Asha Devi also questioned the functioning of the criminal justice system.

## Guest Teacher Policy: Know what CM Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said on the Guest Teacher Policy

**Diary Times Desk :** While presiding over the meeting of the Education Department, Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that material related to constitutional values will be included in the curriculum of schools. He said that the state government is giving special preference to educate students about duties and responsibilities along with quality education for their all-round development. Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that 6 schools each in each assembly constituency of the state will be equipped with all necessary facilities. These will have adequate staff, library, laboratory and other facilities. He directed the officials to complete all the formalities in a timely manner for setting up these schools. He also asked to prepare parameters for their administrative control. He said that a strong infrastructure will be developed through all these schools. He said that a calendar of activities for the whole year will be prepared for all schools, which will have details of each day's academic and other activities. The Chief Minister said that with the aim of system transformation, work is being done on a wide scale rationalization process in the Education Department. Under this, positive and innovative measures are being taken regarding the deployment of teachers along with strengthening the infrastructure. He said that the headmaster and principal of the school will have to regularly send information about the teachers going on leave to the Deputy Director's office. This will help in ensuring the presence of teachers in schools. While discussing the Guest Teacher Policy, Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that this policy will help in maintaining continuity in the teaching-learning process. In case the regular teacher of the educational institution goes on leave, the services of qualified teachers will be taken. This will not hamper the studies of the children.

## Delhi HC summons SpiceJet COO, CEO over non-payment of dues to lessors

**Agencies :** The Delhi High Court has directed the chief operating officer and chief executive officer of SpiceJet to appear before it in a plea seeking compliance of over USD 6.03 lakh in payment to the aircraft engines lessors. Justice Manmeet PS Arora "specifically denied" the request of the counsel for judgement debtor, SpiceJet, for the appearance of the two senior officers before the court through video conferencing. "The chief operating officer (COO) and chief executive officer (CEO) of the judgement debtor are directed to remain present in court on the next date of hearing, that is, January 16, 2025," the court said in its order on December 10. The court was hearing an application by the decree holder and aircraft engine lessor Team France 01 SAS and another, seeking a direction for the compliance of the consent order passed on May 29 wherein the airline was directed to make the payment of USD 6,03,870.82 to the decree holders. In the recent hearing, Spicejet's counsel urged the court to grant an adjournment due to the unavailability of the senior lawyer. The court would hear the case on January 16, 2025.



## Himachal Pradesh: Crooks tried to cheat DC, complaint lodged in cyber crime; Police started investigation



**Diary Times Desk :** The online fraudsters have now tried to cheat DC Chamba as well. Deputy Commissioner Mukesh Repaswal started receiving WhatsApp messages on Monday afternoon. Funds were demanded from the Deputy Commissioner through messages. The fraudsters tried to use the DC's name and made the Deputy Commissioner Kulbir. On this, the Deputy Commissioner told his real name and the conversation began. After receiving a few messages, the Deputy Commissioner understood and stopped replying to them. After this, the Deputy Commissioner has lodged a complaint in cyber crime. Along with this, the police has also started investigating the matter. Actually, on Monday at 2 pm, the Deputy Commissioner received a message on WhatsApp from 99320-52917. The fraudster had written the name Mukesh Repaswal on WhatsApp along with this number and himself became the DC. In the first message, the Deputy Commissioner was made Kulbir. The Deputy Commissioner replied to this message after three minutes and wrote, "This is Mukesh Rapswal, Deputy Commissioner of Chamba, Himachal Pradesh." During this time, the fraudster also made a voice call.

## Himachal Rajya Chayan Aayog: 13 candidates could not clear the typing test, no eligible candidate found; post vacant

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal Pradesh State Selection Commission Hamirpur has declared the result of one post of post code-1001 Junior Scale Stenographer. Candidates who passed the written examination for this recruitment could not pass the typing test. In such a situation, this post has remained vacant. This post to be filled in Himachal Pradesh Human Rights Commission Shimla was reserved for SC category. Out of 100 candidates who passed the written examination, 21 candidates were called for typing test. A total of 13 candidates participated in the typing test, but they could not pass it. The test was to be given in both Hindi and English languages, but no candidate could pass it. Apart from this, the State Selection Commission has also declared the result of typing test for one post of post code 1000 Junior Office Assistant IT. 10 candidates were called for typing test. Out of these, ten have passed it.

## Himachal Assembly Winter Session: Five ministers including CM-Deputy CM will stay in rest house, rest will stay in hotels



**Diary Times Desk :** Seven government rest houses, four hotels of Tourism Corporation and 42 private hotels have been booked for the winter session of the Assembly starting from tomorrow at Tapovan in Dharamshala. Only five ministers including CM-Deputy CM will stay in the government rest house. About 350 rooms have been booked in hotels around Dharamshala, Naddi, Khaniyara, Siddhpur and Mata Kunal Pathri for other ministers, MLAs, officers and their staff.

## Himachal Weather Update: Light snowfall on the high peaks of Lahaul including Rohtang Pass, temperature drops

**Diary Times Desk :** There was light snowfall around noon on Monday in Rohtang Pass along with the high peaks of Lahaul in Himachal Pradesh. However, the weather department had issued a forecast of clear weather in the entire state. The cold wave in the valley has increased due to snowfall. The valley was cloudy since morning and suddenly snow started falling in the afternoon. While snow also fell in Koksar and Gramphoo. During this time, the tourists who came to Koksar for sightseeing had a lot of fun in the snow. According to the update released by the Meteorological Center Shimla at 3:00 pm on Monday, light snowfall may occur at one or two places in Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur district today. However, earlier in the bulletin released at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm, the weather was forecast to remain clear in the entire state till December 22.

## HP Assembly Winter Session: Security tightened in Tapovan, police force deployed at every nook and corner

**Diary Times Desk :** Security arrangements have been tightened for the winter session to be held from 18 to 21 December at the Tapovan Assembly building in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. This time too, the security arrangements will be in four to five circles. The building has been painted. The assembly building has been decorated by installing lights all around. Checkposts have been set up at various places. CCTV cameras have been arranged in Tapovan and Dharamshala market. The police will have information about all the officers-employees, media personnel and other people sitting in the visitors' gallery. Apart from this, the identity cards of those who reach the ministers' rooms in the premises with complaints will also be checked by the police personnel. Director General of Police Atul Verma is continuously holding online meetings with IG Abhishek Dullar and Superintendent of Police regarding security in Tapovan two to three times a day. The team will leave for Dharamshala from the police headquarters on Monday. Officers of the (CID) have also reached Dharamshala.

## Himachal: Five private automatic fitness testing centers will be established in the state, will be operated on PPP mode

**Diary Times Desk :** Commercial vehicle operators in Himachal Pradesh will now be able to get their vehicles tested at private automatic fitness testing centers as well. The government has decided to open 5 automatic fitness testing centers in the state. These centers will be operated on public private partnership basis. The private company will test the vehicle and send the report to the transport department. The RTO of the transport department will issue fitness certificates to vehicle owners. After the establishment of automatic centers, neither recommendations nor any Jugaad will work for the fitness of vehicles.

## Himachal News: CM Sukhu said- The next budget will focus on villages along with education and health services

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that the basic infrastructure of education in the state will be strengthened. In the next three years, the government will spend Rs 600 crore on the construction of school buildings. The Chief Minister said this in a public meeting organized at Loharghat in remote Panchayat Kyar Kanaita of Arki Assembly constituency. He also announced the opening of a sub-tehsil in Loharghat. He said that the state government is ensuring the welfare of all sections of the society. Various guarantees are being fulfilled in a phased manner in accordance with the promises made to the public. The Chief Minister said that infrastructural and other improvements are being made in primary sectors like roads, education and health. The government is ensuring necessary facilities in all schools. In the health sector, infrastructure is being strengthened at all medical colleges and district hospital level. The state government is not only solving problems by reaching far-flung areas but is also taking the benefits of development to the people. The government is promoting natural farming to improve the rural economy. Health and Family Welfare Minister Colonel Dhani Ram Shandil said that under the able guidance of the Chief Minister, the state is writing a new chapter of development. Arki MLA Sanjay Awasthi said that the Chief Minister started the system transformation.

## "Stupid Things": BJP vs Congress Over Priyanka Gandhi's 'Palestine' Bag

**Agencies** : Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi arrived in Parliament today with a handbag displaying a bold "Palestine" tag. Her gesture drew sharp reactions from the BJP who termed it as "crass communal posturing". Priyanka Gandhi, who has been vocal about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, previously described Israel's military actions as "barbaric and inhuman." The latest debate over her stance comes a day after she hosted Palestine embassy representative Abed Elrazeg Abu Jazer at her residence. The diplomat congratulated her on her Lok Sabha victory from Wayanad and urged India to take a leadership role in facilitating a ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza war. "Was the bag a statement? Why has she kept mum on issues of Bangladeshi Hindus? It is a big question mark," BJP MP Anurag Thakur told NDTV. "It is an Indian Parliament. MPs are elected here from across the country to try and raise the concerns of 140 crore Indians. The opposition did not let the House function for two weeks. First, it was Asaduddin Owaisi who raised a 'Jai Palestine' slogan, and now it is Priyanka Gandhi who brought a Palestine bag to Parliament."

## Amit Shah's Assurance To Families Of Jawans Killed In Anti-Maoist Ops

**Agencies** : Union Home Minister Amit Shah today met families of jawans who died in the line of duty in Maoist attacks and also civilians affected by violence on the second day of his visit to Chhattisgarh's Bastar. "Today I paid tributes to the martyrs. I salute the sacrifice of the martyrs, due to them Bastar is naxal-free. The country will always be indebted to them," said Mr Shah during his visit to Amar Vatika, assuring them of the unwavering support of the central and state governments. While expressing his condolences to family members of those who lost their loved ones in the Maoist violence, the Home Minister said, "Sacrifices of martyrs will not go in vain. In the last forty years, many have lost their lives but I assure you this will change as Naxalism will be eradicated soon." "The pain of losing your loved ones cannot be diminished, but we stand firmly with you. The Chhattisgarh government is making efforts to preserve the memories of the martyrs to ensure their sacrifices remain eternal," he said, acknowledging the immense loss they have endured in this painful battle.

## "Won't Permit...": Sri Lanka's Big Statement Amid China's Hambantota Port Ops



**Agencies** : In a significant commitment on defence cooperation, Sri Lanka today assured India that it will not permit its territory to be used in any manner inimical to the security of India. Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanaayaka reiterated Colombo's stand in the joint statement today, making its promise to New Delhi official. Colombo's assurance to New Delhi comes at a time when China is aggressively pursuing its 'Mission Indian Ocean' - which targets India. China, which has taken over Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port after Colombo failed to pay off Chinese debt, has been docking its naval surveillance and spy ships. Over the last two years, Beijing has, on multiple occasions, stationed its 25,000-tonne satellite and ballistic missile tracking ship Yuan Wang 5 at Hambantota - which is detrimental to New Delhi's interests due to Sri Lanka's proximity to India.

## GRAP-3 Restrictions Back In Delhi-NCR, Hybrid Mode Up To Class 5

**PTI** :GRAP-III recommendations have been reimposed across Delhi and the national capital region following "highly unfavourable meteorological conditions, including calm winds and very low mixing height", the Commission for Air Quality Management said Monday afternoon. Under GRAP-III, all schools in Delhi-NCR must switch to a hybrid class mode for students till Class V, and there will be restrictions on the entry of diesel-powered commercial vehicles. A hybrid class mode means students and parents can choose between online and in-person classes.

## "Show How EVMs Can Be Hacked?" Trinamool Latest To Trash Congress Charge

**PTI** : Close on the heels of National Conference leader Omar Abdullah trashing the Congress-led charge against Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), another key Opposition party has dismissed the questions surrounding the machines. Trinamool Congress MP and general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has said those who doubt EVMs must demonstrate how they can be hacked. "The people who raise questions on EVM, if they have anything, they should go and show a demo to the Election Commission.

## "Balraj Sahni Was Arrested...": N Sitharaman vs M Kharge Over Constitution

**Agencies** : Starting the debate to mark the Constitution's 75th anniversary in Rajya Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched an all-out attack on the Congress and accused it of repeatedly trying to undermine the Constitution through amendments. Targeting the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, she referred to the first Constitutional amendment in 1951. "It was essentially to curb the freedom of speech (and expression). India prides itself even today on the freedom of expression.

## Sambhal: Broken idols of Hindu deities found near newly uncovered temple, say cops

**Agencies** : Near the newly uncovered ancient Hindu temple opened on Saturday in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal, authorities on Monday claimed to have recovered three idols. The Shiv-Hanuman Temple in Sambhal was reopened on December 14, reportedly for the first time after 1978. Holding the three broken idols in hand, Sambhal Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shrish Chandra said these were found during the digging of well. There is an idol of Lord Ganesh, the other one seems to be of Lord Kartikeya, more details are being sought. There was debris and soil in the well. The idols were discovered when it was dug...The area has been secured so that excavation can be done smoothly," he added.



## Israel plans to expand Golan settlements after fall of Assad

**Agencies :** Israel's government has approved a plan to encourage the expansion of settlements in the occupied Golan Heights. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the move was necessary because a "new front" had opened up on Israel's border with Syria after the fall of the Assad regime to an Islamist-led rebel alliance. Netanyahu said he wanted to double the population of the Golan Heights, which Israel seized during the 1967 Six-Day War and is considered illegally occupied under international law. Israeli forces moved into a buffer zone separating the Golan Heights from Syria in the days following Assad's departure, saying the change of control in Damascus meant ceasefire arrangements had "collapsed". Despite the move, Netanyahu said in a statement on Sunday evening that Israel has "no interest in a conflict with Syria".

## Twelve Indians die of suspected gas poisoning at hotel resort in Georgia

**Agencies :** Twelve Indian nationals were found dead due to suspected poisoning from carbon monoxide at an Indian restaurant in Georgia's mountain resort of Gudauri. All were found dead in their bedrooms on the second floor of the facility. Initial inspection of victim's dead bodies revealed no signs of injuries or violence among the deceased, Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs said in a statement. Indian embassy officials in Tbilisi confirmed to the Hindustan Times that all 12 deceased were Indian nationals who were employees of the Indian restaurant. However, Georgia claimed that 11 were foreigners, and one of the victims was its citizen. "Mission has just learned about the death of 12 Indian nationals in Gudauri, Georgia. Deepest condolences to the bereaved families. Mission is in touch with the local authorities to get details of the Indian nationals who lost their lives. All possible assistance will be given," the Indian mission said in a statement. Preliminary investigation found that carbon monoxide poisoning could be from a power generator.

## Russia's "Starlink Killer" Might Become A Nightmare For Ukraine, Elon Musk

**Agencies :** In a major concern for Ukraine and its allies, as well as US billionaire Elon Musk, the Russian Military has reportedly developed an advanced system which could detect and locate signals from enemy unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UAVs) that connect to satellite systems such as Starlink. The new Russian system, dubbed as the 'Starlink killer', is officially called the "Kalinka monitoring system." The United States has provided a large number of Elon Musk-owned SpaceX's Starlink communication terminals to Ukraine's military after the escalation of Russia's offensive in February 2022. Ukrainian forces have been actively using Starlink to coordinate their military operations and connect with aerial and naval drones that Kyiv has been using for attacks on civilian infrastructure in Russia. The new state-of-the-art Kalinka monitoring system has been developed by Russia's Center for Unmanned Systems and Technologies (CBST), according to a report by news agency Sputnik.



## 'Never sought refuge': Syria's Bashar al-Assad in first statement since ouster



**Agencies :** Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said his country has fallen to "terrorism" and said it can never be portrayed as a "liberation" for his country. Ousted Syrian ex-president Bashar al-Assad in his first public statement since exile said he "never" intended to step down or "seek refuge" out of the country and was prepared to fight "terrorism". Assad said Syria has "fallen into the hands of terrorism" and stressed that his bond with people "remains unshaken by any position or circumstance". The exiled Syrian president said his statement intended to clarify "a flood of misinformation and narratives", which Assad described as an attempt to "recast international terrorism as a liberation" for the Syrian people.

## After Assad's Ouster, Nations Intensify Contact Efforts With New Syria Rulers

**Agencies :** Foreign countries stepped up efforts Sunday to establish contacts with Syria's interim rulers, a week after Islamist-led rebels sent President Bashar al-Assad fleeing to Moscow, ending decades of brutal rule. The United Nations special envoy for Syria was among those arriving in the Syrian capital, where he pressed for "justice and accountability for crimes". "And we need to make sure that that goes through a credible justice system, and that we don't see any revenge," Geir Pedersen said. He later met rebel leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the rebels' Telegram channel said. A Qatari delegation also landed in Syria to meet transitional government officials. They reaffirmed the Gulf emirate's "full commitment to supporting the Syrian people... following the success of their revolution," Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman told the emirate's official news agency. Qatar's embassy is set to resume operations Tuesday, 13 years after it closed in the early stages of the anti-government uprising.

## World's Largest Iceberg A23a Breaks Free, Drifts In The Southern Ocean

**Agencies :** After being grounded for over 30 years, the world's largest iceberg, A23a, has started drifting in the Southern Ocean. This massive iceberg, which is roughly double the size of Greater London and weighs approximately one trillion tonnes, broke off from Antarctica's Filchner Ice Shelf in 1986. Since then, it had remained stuck on the seabed near the South Orkney Islands in the Weddell Sea until it began its slow movement northwards in 2020. "It's exciting to see A23a on the move again after periods of being stuck. We are interested to see if it will take the same route the other large icebergs that have calved off Antarctica have taken. And more importantly what impact this will have on the local ecosystem," said Dr Andrew Meijers, who is an oceanographer with the British Antarctic Survey.

## UK In 'Diplomatic Contact' With Syrian Rebels After Bashar Al-Assad's Ouster

**Agencies :** Britain's foreign minister said Sunday that London had established diplomatic contact with the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) rebel group in Syria, which led the offensive that ousted Bashar al-Assad. They remain "a proscribed terrorist organisation, but we can have diplomatic contact and so we do have diplomatic contact, as you would expect", said Foreign Secretary David Lammy. "We want to see a representative government, an inclusive government. We want to see chemical weapons stockpiles secured, and not used, and we want to ensure that there is not continuing violence," he added. "So, for all of those reasons, using all the channels that we have available, and those are diplomatic and of course intelligence-led channels, we seek to deal with HTS where we have to."

## Bangladesh To Hold Elections In Late 2025 Or Early 2026: Muhammad Yunus

**Agencies :** Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, who heads the caretaker government installed after an August revolution, said Monday that general elections would be held late next year or in early 2026. Pressure has been growing on Nobel Peace Prize winner Yunus -- appointed the country's "chief adviser" after the student-led uprising that toppled ex-premier Sheikh Hasina in August -- to set a date.

## 'Harassed', Opposition nominees want Patiala MC poll deferred



**Agencies :** A majority of candidates from the Opposition parties contesting the upcoming Municipal Corporation elections have alleged harassment by authorities and "gross violations of democratic principles" during the electoral process. They have accused local AAP leaders of intimidation with the support of the police. Sources said many candidates from the BJP, Congress and SAD were missing from the poll campaigning given the alleged "threats received and fear of registration of false cases against them". "Cops have summoned me twice. A message was conveyed through a relative for me to reach the police station as a complaint was pending against me. I know if I go there, they will hold me on flimsy grounds. They just don't want us to campaign," said a candidate. Alleging electoral 'malpractices', former Mayor and SAD halqa incharge Amrinder Singh Bazaz has written to the Patiala Deputy Commissioner-cum-Election Officer for cancelling the election and holding it later under the supervision of Central forces. "I am compelled to bring to your immediate attention the gross violations of democratic principles and extensive electoral malpractices.

## Cross-border drug, weapon smuggling module busted; 2 porters among 8 held

**Agencies :** Busting a trans-border drug trafficking module, the CIA staff of the Amritsar rural police today arrested eight persons, including two porters working at the Attari Integrated Check Post and notorious criminal Jagroop Singh, alias Jupa, of Chananke village. Jagroop is associated with foreign-based gangster Pavitar Chaura. The suspects were staying as paying guests in Kabir Park area near Guru Nanak Dev University here. They were using that place as storage and transit point for supplying drugs. Apart from Jagroop Singh, the police have arrested Karandeep Singh of Jalal Usma village, Gursewak Singh, alias Sandhu Majhail, of Mehsampur Khurd village, Nishan Singh of Dhianpur Baba Bakala, Varinder Singh of Wadala Khurd, Lovepreet Singh of Masid Wali Gali Attari, Lovepreet Singh of Ram Bari Mandir Darzi Wali Gali Attari and Jugraj Singh of Mehsampurkhurd.

## Elections to Bar associations of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh to be held on Feb 28

**Agencies :** Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana has finalised the schedule for elections to the Bar Associations of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. The election will be held on February 28, 2025. The last election to the associations was held on December 15, 2023. Election will be held for posts of president, vice-president, secretary, joint secretary and treasurer. Executive members will be named by the office-bearers after the elections. Vijender Ahlawat, chairman, Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana, said advocates enrolled with the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana would be eligible to vote after clearing their annual subscription up to January 10. Ahlawat said all Bar associations would send a list of eligible voters to the Bar Council till January 10. The Bar Council will issue a list to the Returning Officer/Election Committee of the Bar Association concerned up to January 24.

## HC acquits NDPS convict because of procedural gaps in evidence-handling

**Agencies :** The Punjab and Haryana High Court overturned the conviction of an accused in a case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act after citing critical procedural lapses in the handling of evidence by the prosecution. The Bench of Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Sudeepti Sharma made it clear that procedural safeguards under the NDPS Act were non-negotiable due to the severity of the penalties involved. Appearing before the Bench, counsel for the appellant-accused Vipul Jindal submitted that he was convicted by Amritsar Special Court in 2013 of possession of 480 grams of smack and 5,000 intoxicating capsules. The trial court sentenced him to rigorous imprisonment for 12 years along with Rs 1 lakh fine. The conviction was primarily based on the prosecution's claims of recovery and the subsequent forensic examination of the seized contraband. The High Court revisited the case upon appeal and scrutinised the chain of custody and compliance with procedural safeguards mandated under the Act. After hearing detailed arguments advanced by Jindal, the court found significant lapses in the handling of the case property-contraband undermining the reliability of the evidence.

## Dallewal makes brief address, seeks guarantee of MSP on crops

**Agencies :** Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who has been on a fast-unto-death at the Khanauri border point for past three weeks, on Monday made a brief address, reiterating the farmers' demand of giving a guarantee of MSP on crops. Claiming that a senior Minister at the Centre has claimed that the government was giving over and above the MSP to farmers, Dallewal asked if that is the case, "then what is the problem in giving legal guarantee to MSP". On Monday, Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, INLD senior leader Abhay Singh Chautala, AAP leader Malvinder Singh Kang and some other leaders visited Khanauri border to enquire about Dallewal's health. Dallewal, a 70-year-old cancer patient, has been on a fast-unto-death at the Khanauri border point between Punjab and Haryana since November 26 to press the Centre to accept the agitating farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP on crops. Lying down and speaking in a resting position, Dallewal made a seven-minute address to the farmers. In his brief address, Dallewal again sought from the Centre to give a guarantee of MSP on crops.

## 8K fall prey to cyber fraud in city, lose Rs 70 cr this year

**Agencies :** There has been a significant increase in the number of cybercrime complaints annually. The Cyber Crime Investigation Cell here has received nearly 8,150 complaints this year, with the victims losing a total of Rs 70 crore to fraudsters. The rising number of cyber complaints highlights the growing reach of fraudsters to technology. One of the latest tricks employed by scamsters is "digital arrest". They pose as police or law enforcement officers, threaten their victims with arrest and force them into transferring large sums in specific accounts. Police officials have advised people to immediately report such frauds on helpline 1930, as timely intervention can help cops recover their hard-earned money. "We managed to freeze and recover nearly Rs 7 crore from the bank accounts of fraudsters before they could withdraw or transfer money. This was possible only due to the timely reporting of crime by the victims," said a police official.

## Charuni extends support to Dallewal, emphasises on united farmer front

**Agencies :** The Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni) has extended its support to the farmers protesting at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders. The union, led by Gurnam Singh Charuni, has decided to mediate between the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and agitating unions, including SKM (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), to bring them together on a common platform. Charuni, along with senior union leaders Rakesh Bains, Rajiv Sharma and Malkeet Singh, visited the Khanauri border today to meet SKM (Non-Political) leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, who is on a fast-unto-death. "The primary purpose of meeting Dallewal was to inquire about his health and express solidarity. Respecting public sentiment that all unions should unite, we decided to play the role of a mediator," a BKU (Charuni) leader said. Speaking to the media after the meeting, Charuni said, "In February, we had extended our support to the agitating farmers as they are fighting for genuine farmer rights. Though there was no message from the agitating unions, we felt it was our duty to meet Dallewal and support him. A collective effort is necessary to elevate this to a national-level agitation. We will discuss our future course of action with our members and then with SKM leaders. We appeal to the government to accept the farmers' demands." Charuni, who rejoined the SKM in March this year.

## Tourists upset, Kufri needs better infra & services

**Diary Times Desk :** The place is crowded, dusty, unorganised and expensive. It's a complete waste of time and money. It's overhyped and has very little to offer...These are some of the many such reviews that disgruntled tourists have posted online after visiting Kufri, the famous tourist spot near Shimla, in recent times. The unflattering feedback is not a good news for the hill station that offers livelihood to thousands of people belonging to adjacent villages. Such discontent with the place could kill the golden goose that Kufri has been for a large local population over the last couple of decades. The major reason behind this tiny hill station losing its charm is the lack of indifference towards it by successive governments. Hardly any infrastructure or services to facilitate the tourists have been raised over the decades. The government and its concerned agencies – the district administration, Tourism Department, Forest Department and the Public Works Department – have left it to the local people to run and manage the place as they like. And given the reviews the tourists are posting online, this arrangement is not working. It leaves a lot to be desired as far as tourists' experience and satisfaction is concerned.

## Renuka Ji Dam project back on track after years of delays

**Diary Times Desk :** The much-delayed Renuka Ji Dam project, envisioned to ease Delhi's water crisis and a source of renewable energy for Himachal Pradesh, is finally moving closer to its construction phase. Planned on the Giri river, a tributary of the Yamuna in the Sirmour district, the project has cleared major hurdles, including forest clearances, and now awaits final nod from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Officials from the Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) expressed optimism about the progress. HPPCL Managing Director Harikesh Meena said, "We are in the final stages of procedural requirements. Once the Central Water Commission appoints a Project Management Consultant to finalise the design, we expect to invite.

## Himachal: Underwater tunnel to be built on Gobind Sagar lake, possibility being explored



**Diary Times Desk :** To connect Bilaspur city of Himachal Pradesh to the four-lane, the construction of an underwater tunnel on Gobind Sagar Lake is being considered. The tunnel will be built from Luhnu Maidan to the four-lane. If the plan comes to fruition, it will not only prove to be a lifesaver for Bilaspur city, but will also be the first bridge in the country to be built inside a lake. After the construction of Kiratpur-Manali four-lane, Bilaspur city has lost its connection with the main road, due to which the economic activities here have slowed down. The construction of the bridge is important to provide a new path to businessmen and industrialists. The underwater tunnel bridge will not only connect the city directly to the four-lane, but it will also become a center of attraction for tourists. If there are possibilities of bridge construction, experts and consultants from Germany will be hired for the ambitious project. The bridge will be constructed using Germany's advanced immersion tunnel technology and tunnel boring machine. In immersion tunnel technology, parts of the tunnel will be built on the ground and installed under the lake. It will be made safe and durable by digging below the bottom of the lake.

## Himachal: Seven cattle died in a cowshed in Una due to cold and lack of fodder, three in critical condition

**Diary Times Desk :** Seven cattle died due to cold and lack of fodder in Saransh Garg Foundation's Gaushala in Cantt village of Chowki Khas Panchayat of Jol area of Una district of Himachal Pradesh. The condition of three is very serious. Neither the dead animals have been picked up on the spot nor the sick are being treated. According to the information, there is only one shed in the Gaushala. There is no arrangement to protect from cold winds in the shed. Neither are the cattle being given green fodder. Only dry corn stalks are being given to the cattle. The cattle are shivering due to the temperature being below zero. Due to this, seven cattle died here in two days. The coming time is not free from danger even for those cattle who are fine. Vijay, a migrant working in the Gaushala, told that cattle die every day. Many cattle come in a state of illness. On top of that, they do not get anything to eat. There are only dry stalks. There are no walls in the Gaushala shed. If the bodies of the dead cattle are lifted, it is fine, otherwise they will remain lying there. He doesn't know when the sick cattle will be treated. Gaushala operator Krishna Gopal said that he himself is ill, so he is unable to come to the Gaushala.

## Himachal Tourism: Himachal's tourist places are bustling with tourists before Christmas

**Diary Times Desk :** Before Christmas, the tourist places of Himachal have become crowded with tourists. On the weekend, Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, Kufri, Narkanda, Kasauli and Chail witnessed a huge crowd of tourists. On the weekend, the occupancy in Shimla hotels has reached 70 to 80 percent. In Dharamshala it has reached 60, while in Kasauli it has reached 90 percent. In the hope of snowfall, tourists from all over the country are visiting the tourist places of Himachal. After Saturday on the weekend, there was a gathering of tourists in Shimla on Sunday as well. Tourists enjoyed strolling on the city's Ridge Maidan and Mall Road till late evening. A large number of tourists also reached Kufri and Narkanda to enjoy the natural views. On Sunday also, local people and tourists had to face the problem of traffic jam on the city's Circular Road. In Kasauli too, a huge crowd of tourists gathered on the weekend, due to which the problem of traffic jam arose here too. This time a record number of tourists are expected to arrive in Himachal for Christmas and New Year celebrations.

## BJP to raise issue of discrimination with Kangra on Dec 18: Parmar

**Diary Times Desk :** The BJP will raise the issue of discrimination with Kangra during its 'Jan Akrosh' rally on December 18 to be held in Dharamsala. This was stated by former Speaker of Himachal Vidhan Sabha and BJP MLA from Sullah Vipin Singh Parmar while addressing a press conference here today. Parmar alleged that since the present Congress government took charge in the state, Kangra region, which is part of lower Himachal, was facing discrimination. Dharamsala, which is the district headquarters of Kangra district, used to act as second capital of state. Winter sojourn was organised by the government in which the Chief Minister used to stay at Dharamsala and listen to the grievances of people of lower areas. However, in the last two years winter sojourn has not been held. Besides, the CM's camp office located in Dharamsala has been abandoned and a new office has been opened in Dehra. The office of SP has been opened in Dehra despite the fact that there was no crime there, Parmar alleged. He further alleged that the issue of North Campus of Central University of Himachal Pradesh has been hanging fire for the past two years. The state government was not depositing Rs 30 crore for transferring land in the name of CUHP in Jadrangal area of Dharamsala Assembly constituency due to which Rs 250 crore released by the Union government for the North Campus of the CUHP was not getting utilized. The BJP would take up the issue of CUHP during the rally forcefully.



## Mitch, Josh and Pat stay ahead in race against the weather

**Diary Times Desk :** In a Test where time is clearly going to be a precious commodity, it was a little odd to see Alex Carey and Nathan Lyon adding 22 runs in ten overs on the third morning at the Gabba. Clearly Australia wanted as many as they could first time around and those extra few runs may yet be important in keeping the follow-on as an option. Eventually, when Akash Deep picked up a much-deserved wicket by removing Carey, Australia could get to work with the ball. In this aspect, they made the most of the limited time available. In three out of their four innings in this series, India have yet to reach 200 and, at 51 for 4, a fourth is possible. There are also some patterns emerging about how Australia are working their way through the batting. After consecutive first-innings ducks, Yashasvi Jaiswal squirted his opening ball from Mitchell Starc between the slips and gully to get off the mark. But against his second delivery, he flicked firmly off his pads into the hands of Mitchell Marsh at forward square leg. Starc has now removed Jaiswal in each of the first innings for a grand total of four runs across 11 deliveries - full deliveries, on varying lines, bringing his downfall each time. Six of Jaiswal's 30 Test dismissals have now been against the left-arm pace of Starc and Nandre Burger.



## Short TAKES

### 'Winning is everything for me': Shreyas savours fourth title win of the year

**Diary Times Desk :** "Fantastic feeling. This is the fourth title of the year. Can't be happier to be honest," gushed Shreyas Iyer as he sat down to interact with the media following Mumbai's Syed Mustaq Ali Trophy victory. At the start of the year, Shreyas was part of the Mumbai team that won the Ranji Trophy for the 42nd time. He then led Kolkata Knight Riders to their third title triumph and was a member of the Irani Cup-winning Mumbai team. The icing on the cake came in the shortest format again as the formidable Mumbai outfit saw off a spirited challenge from Madhya Pradesh in Bengaluru on Sunday (December 15). While the IPL victory is the most celebrated among the four, how important are the wins in the other domestic competitions? "I personally feel that it's important for me and also for all the youngsters who have come up," replied Shreyas. "And the way they showcase their talent is simply phenomenal."

### 'Utterly Blindsided': Jason Gillespie Reveals Real Reason Behind Decision To Quit As Pakistan Coach

**Diary Times Desk :** Jason Gillespie has revealed he had no clear communication with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on the playing eleven before a matchday and added his role as their red-ball coach had reduced to him hitting catches. Gillespie, the former Australia fast bowler, took over as Pakistan's red-ball coach in April for a two-year deal and led the side to a 2-1 series victory at home over England in October. But Gillespie resigned from his role last week ahead of Pakistan's Test series in South Africa. Aqib Javed has now been named as the interim Test coach of Pakistan and also handles white-ball duties after Gary Kirsten exited from the role in October. "I felt I was basically hitting catches, and that was about it on the morning of a game." "You want to be able to have clear communication with all stakeholders, with selectors, for instance, knowing what the team is as head coach well before the game, or at least the day before the game," said Gillespie on ABC Grandstand show during the third Test between India and Australia at the Gabba. He also said the communication between him and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was not clear, while the sacking of high-performance coach Tim Neilsen and his reduced role.

## 'We are in transition' - Bumrah defends India's bowling show

**Diary Times Desk :** Jasprit Bumrah has defended the rest of the Indian bowling attack who have come under some criticism for the way they have struggled to provide support to him over the course of this Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Australia have been able to mount two big first-innings totals - 337 in Adelaide, which gave them a lead of 157, and 445 in Brisbane, where they could prise only 76 runs at 2.61 per over off Bumrah, and lost six wickets in the process. But they made up for it by taking Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep and Nitish Kumar Reddy for 257 runs at the cost of four wickets and a run-rate of 3.88. "See, we don't as a team point fingers at each other and we don't want to get into that mindset where we are pointing fingers at each other [and say] that 'you should do this, you should do that'. "Obviously, we, as a team, are going through a transition where new players are coming here and it's not the easiest place to play cricket. Over here, it's a different atmosphere with this wicket being a different challenge. So yeah, we're not looking at that. "Obviously, as a bowling unit, as I said, we are in transition, so it's my job to help the others. I have played a little more than them, so I am trying to help them."

## Sunil Gavaskar's Unfiltered Verdict On Virat Kohli's Yet Another 7th Stump Dismissal

**Diary Times Desk :** It isn't often that one sees India's great Sunil Gavaskar mincing his words. As Virat Kohli departed after scoring just three runs in the first innings of the third Test against Australia, Gavaskar was quick to call out the India batter's poor shot selection. Facing Josh Hazlewood, Kohli edged the ball into the hands of Australia's wicket-keeper Alex Carey despite the fact that the ball was quite far from the stumps. Gavaskar, in his blunt criticism of Kohli, said that there was no need for him to play the 7th or 8th stump delivery. "If it was on the fourth stump I could understand," Gavaskar said on Channel 7 after Virat was dismissed for a single-digit score on Monday. "This was wide, on the seventh, eighth stump, you could say. There's no need to play that," he added. Gavaskar feels Kohli would be extremely disappointed with the manner in which he was dismissed, understanding how much India needed him to play a big knock on the day, knowing Australia had put 445 runs on the board. Gavaskar even felt that Kohli lacked the patience required to excel on The Gabba's tricky surface. "He'd be very, very disappointed, he'd be very upset with that."

## Isa Guha Apologises Over 'Racist Remark' On Jasprit Bumrah, Ravi Shastri Reacts

**Diary Times Desk :** The second day's play during the third Test between India and Australia in Brisbane triggered a huge controversy after former England women's team cricketer Isa Guha referred to Bumrah as a 'primate' while speaking of his bowling prowess in the match. The remark by Guha triggered anger among fans on social media. Ahead of the start of play on Day 3, however, Guha issued an apology for her comment, clarifying that she only meant it as a high praise for the marquee Indian pacer. Guha had called Bumrah "MVP - Most Valuable Primate". Furthermore, she said, "He is the one that's going to do all the talking for India and why so much focus was on him in the build-up to this Test match and whether he would be fit. He needs some support though." On Monday morning, Guha said on Fox Cricket's broadcast, "Yesterday in commentary I used a word that can be interpreted in a number of different ways. I'd like to apologise for any offence caused. I set myself really high standards when it comes to empathy and respect of others."

