

## HPBOSE 10th, 12th Board Exam: 10th-12th board exams will start from March 4 in Himachal, schedule released



**Diary Times Desk :** The annual examinations of class 10th-12th of Himachal Pradesh School Education Board to be held in March 2025 will start from March 4. The Board of Education has released the proposed schedule for the annual examination of Matriculation and Plus Two regular and State Open School, compartment, additional subject, category improvement examination. As per the schedule released by the board, the examinations of class 10th will start from March 4 and the last paper of class 10th will be on March 19. At the same time, the examinations of class 12 will be conducted from March 4 to 29. Board Secretary Dr. Major Vishal Sharma has released the proposed schedule of annual examinations by the board. He has sought suggestions from students, parents, teachers and every section associated with the education sector in relation to this proposed schedule. He said that the suggestions received within 10 days will be considered and the final schedule will be released. Himachal Pradesh School Education Board has given the last chance to the schools to submit the examination forms of eligible candidates of class 10th and 12th. The Education Board has extended the date for submission of application forms with late fee till 31 December.

**New Year : Thousands of tourists reached the capital Shimla, long traffic jams; Hotels are 70% packed for New Year**

**Diary Times Desk :** Tourists are flocking to Hill Queen Shimla to see the snowfall. The capital's hotels have got 70% advance booking till New Year. Almost all the big and small hotels have reached 80 to 90% occupancy in advance. Apart from Shimla city, advance booking is also going on in full swing in the nearby hotels. Most of the hotels are already full. Thousands of tourists have reached Shimla on Sunday as well. 80 to 90% rooms have been booked for December 31 in Himachal Tourism Development Corporation's (HPTDC) Holiday Home, Willy Park and Peterhoff Hotel in the city. The movement of tourists from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat continued in the city.

## BJP Targets Rahul Gandhi Amid Vietnam Trip Reports, Congress MP Responds



**Agencies :** Amid reports that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has travelled to Vietnam, the BJP has said the Leader of the Opposition had flown abroad to party on New Year while the nation was mourning the loss of former Prime Minister and Congress veteran Dr Manmohan Singh. Hitting back, Congress MP B Manickam Tagore has questioned why Mr Gandhi's private travel bothers the BJP. The attack and the counter-attack are playing out against the backdrop of the massive political row surrounding the cremation of the former PM. The Congress has alleged that the ruling BJP had humiliated Dr Singh by organising the cremation at Nigambodh Ghat. The BJP has trashed these allegations and said the Narendra Modi government had provided a state funeral to the former Prime Minister and done everything required to honour his legacy. Amid the heated row, Mr Gandhi's trip gave the BJP fresh ammo to target the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha.

## ISRO Successfully Launches SpaDeX Mission For "In-Space Docking"

**Agencies :** Two spacecraft that would aid ISRO in demonstrating space docking, a critical technology for future space missions got separated successfully and were placed into the desired low earth orbit late on Monday night, ISRO said. "PSLV C60 mission accomplished as of SpaDeX spacecraft is considered," said Mission director M Jayakumar. Dubbed as a prelude to ISRO setting up its own Space Station by 2035, the PSLV-C60 mission would also make India join an elite club in achieving this feat which is expected to take place in the coming days. The 44.5 metre tall rocket carried two spacecraft -- Spacecraft A and B, each weighing 220kg which would help in space docking, satellite servicing and interplanetary missions.

## Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge's "Double Dare" To BJP In Suicide Case

**Agencies :** Priyank Kharge, Karnataka minister and the son of Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, denied all allegations levelled by the BJP in connection with the suicide of a contractor in the state and said he is waiting for the forensic test report on the 8-page note left by Sachin Panchal. The note, which alleges that he had received threats from Raju Kapanur - who the BJP claim is a close aide of Priyank Kharge - also claims there is a conspiracy to kill a BJP MLA. In an exclusive interview to NDTV, Mr Kharge said while the note has a huge discrepancy which merits investigation. It is an 8-page note, where the seventh page signed. This is the eighth page mentioning the conspiracy theory to murder ex-MLA or MLA, he said.

## "Hope You Let Go Of Baggage Of Politics": Atishi Hits Back At Lt Governor

**Agencies :** Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena's New Year greetings to Chief Minister Atishi, heavy in its criticism of her predecessor Arvind Kejriwal, has drawn a stinging response. In a two-page letter, the Chief Minister, among other things, expressed hope that in the New Year, Mr Saxena would "let go of the baggage of politics" and work towards the welfare of the people of Delhi. The 10-point "concerns" she raised, hit out at Mr Saxena over his "criticism rather than constructive cooperation", "unnecessary interventions that slowed down critical work" and actions taken to stop the Mahila Samman Yojana and accused his office of becoming a "proxy of the BJP". The Lieutenant Governor, she alleged, has failed to keep the city safe - "the one job that you are directly responsible for and mandated to do". While an ex-Member of Parliament.

## Abhijit Mukherjee counters sister, says Covid-19 curbs in place when Pranab died

**Agencies :** Abhijit Mukherjee, son of former President Pranab Mukherjee, on Monday responded to his sister Sharmistha Mukherjee's criticism of the Congress party, saying restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic prevented gatherings, including a rally planned by Congress, at the time of their father's death in August 2020. "When my father died, it was the time of Covid. There were many restrictions, so people could not gather. Kejriwal's administration did not allow any family member to meet him. Only 20 people from family and friends were present. Congress also wanted to hold a rally but could not do so. However, PM and Rahul Gandhi came," he told news agency PTI. Sharmistha Mukherjee has cited Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's proposal for a memorial for former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Delhi, and said that when her father passed away, the Congress Working Committee did not hold a condolence meeting. In a post on X, she said.



To place an advertisement

CALL +91 9736115050

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)

Akansha Building, VPO Ghanahatti, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, 171011

DIARY TIMES

2

Shimla | Tuesday | 31-12-2024

## Punjab Bandh: HRTC suspended bus services to neighbouring states, 8 trains coming to Una cancelled; 500 trucks stranded

**Diary Times Desk :** Due to the farmers' agitation, the impact of the Chakka Jam in Punjab on Monday was also seen in Himachal. HRTC kept the bus service on Punjab routes closed. Buses for Delhi were sent via Shahabad in Haryana. On the other hand, 400 to 500 trucks carrying goods from BBN stood in Baddi the whole day. There was a demand for these trucks from the industries a day before. The goods were also loaded on Sunday night, but the trucks could not go on Monday. On the other hand, the trucks carrying goods to other states could not return. Due to this, industrialists and truck operators had to suffer losses. However, many truck operators left with the goods on Monday night. On the other hand, tourists coming to Himachal to celebrate the New Year also got stuck in Punjab. Due to the farmers' agitation, HRTC had kept the regional managers of Parwanoo, Una and Pathankot on alert. As soon as the farmers took to the streets in Punjab on Monday morning, the corporation issued instructions to the divisional managers to completely stop the movement of buses on Punjab routes. The buses that were to come to Himachal from Punjab were also stopped. Ordinary and Volvo buses for Delhi were operated via Shahbad in Haryana. Passengers faced problems as buses on Pathankot and Una routes via Punjab were not running. However, after the traffic was restored in the evening, buses operated normally. HRTC Managing Director Rohan Chand Thakur said that bus services were affected during the day due to the farmers' agitation in Punjab. However, night services operated normally. HRTC buses could not operate on 57 routes that run regularly from various districts of the state to Chandigarh and Delhi via Una.

## "Would Have Been Better If...": Pawan Kalyan's Take On Allu Arjun's Arrest

**Agencies :** Refusing to blame Telangana Police for the action against actor Allu Arjun in the theatre stampede case, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan said the law is equal for all and police must act with public safety in mind. Mr Kalyan, leader of NDA ally Janasena Party, praised Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy as a "great leader" and suggested that on the behalf of Allu Arjun, someone should have visited the family of the woman killed in the stampede earlier. Speaking to reporters in an informal interaction at Mangalagiri, Mr Kalyan shared his perspective on the stampede incident at Hyderabad's Sandhya Theatre on December 4. Allu Arjun visited the theatre where his movie Pushpa 2 was being screened. The film star's visit led to chaos. A 35-year-old woman, Revathi, died in the incident and her son was injured.

## Himachal News: 1.60 lakh quintals of pulses reached the godowns, quota for two months will be available; Urad dal became cheaper, but...

**Diary Times Desk :** From the new year, pulses will start being available in fair price shops in the state. The State Supply Corporation has supplied pulses to the godowns. From January, you will be able to buy cheap pulses from the depots. Two months' quota will be available together. At present, no significant change has been seen in the prices of pulses. Urad dal has reached the godowns a week ago. Due to the early arrival of pulses in the depots, the consumers of the state will get relief from buying pulses which are available at double the price in the markets. 1.60 lakh quintals of pulses have been supplied by the State Supply Corporation across the state, in which 80 thousand quintals are only gram dal. The remaining 80 thousand quintals are Malka Masoor and Urad dal. The corporation has purchased the buffer stock of pulses from the Government of India. A two-month quota of pulses purchased by the corporation after testing them on the basis of quality will be given to the consumers together from next month, in which all consumers will get chana dal at Rs. 65 per kg, Malka masoor at Rs. 56 for BPL, Rs. 66 for APL and income tax payers at Rs. 91 per kg. There are a total of 5300 depots of the food supply department in the state.

## Torpedo Deal With French Firm, DRDO's New Tech To Boost India's Submarines

**Agencies :** India's Ministry of Defence signed two significant deals to greatly enhance its submarine fleet. While one of the deals was signed with France's Naval Group, the larger of the two contracts was signed with Mumbai's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. The two contracts have a combined value of Rs 2,867 crore. While the contract with France's Naval Group, worth Rs 877 crore, pertains to more advanced torpedo technology, the contract with Mazagon Dock, worth around Rs 1,990 crore, is over DRDO's new indigenous submarine propulsion system. "The Ministry of Defence has signed two contracts, worth approximately Rs 2,867 crore, for the construction of Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) Plug for DRDO-AIP system and its integration onboard Indian submarines; and the integration of electronic heavy weight torpedo (EHWT) onboard the Kalvari-class submarines," a ministry statement read. The agreement is about the Electronic Heavy Weight Torpedo or EHWT. According to the Ministry of Defence, the deal for the integration of EHWT onboard the Kalvari-class submarines will be a joint effort by the Indian Navy.

## Jairam Thakur: 'What happened to the ideal health institutions announced in the budget, the head of the state forgets them after giving a speech'

**Diary Times Desk :** Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur has asked the Chief Minister that what is the status of the promise made by the government to open model health institutions to the people of the state during the first budget? Have 69 model institutions been built in the state? Has high level medical facility become available? The Chief Minister had promised the people of the state inside the House in page number 13 paragraph number 37 of his first budget speech that his system change government will build 69 model health institutions in the state in which every type of treatment facility will be available. The government has not been able to move even a step forward in the announcement made during the budget 2 years ago. Jairam Thakur said that in his second budget, the Chief Minister crossed another limit of lies and he said that 'Cancer Day Care Center' will also be built at selected model health centers in the district hospital of the state and Palliative Care Unit will also be run there. In his budget speech for the financial year 2024-25, the Chief Minister had said that work on the 69 model health institutions announced is in various stages and most of these will be completed in 2024-25. There are only about two months left for the new budget to come, in such a situation the Chief Minister should tell what happened to the announcements made during his budget speech? Jairam Thakur said that I investigated it in various areas at the ground level. I came to know the condition of the state's ideal health institutions through local people, administrative officers, public representatives. The reality is surprising. It seems that the government has forgotten the promises made in its budget speech just like the election speech.

## Andhra's Chandrababu Naidu is 'richest CM', Pema Khandu, Siddaramaiah in top three: Report

**Agencies :** N Chandrababu Naidu is the richest chief minister in India with an assets worth over ₹931 crore, a data released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report claimed on Monday. The ADR report claimed that the average asset per CM from state assemblies and Union territories is ₹52.59 crore. According to the report, India's per capita net national income (NNI) was approximately ₹1,85,854 for 2023-2024, the average self-income of a CM is ₹13,64,310, around 7.3 times the average per capita income of India. The total assets of 31 chief ministers are worth ₹1,630 crores, PTI quoted the ADR report. Arunachal Pradesh's Pema Khandu is the second richest chief minister with total assets worth over ₹332 crores, Karnataka's Siddaramaiah is the third on the list with assets worth more than ₹51 crore. Khandu also has the highest liabilities to the tune of ₹180 crore. Siddaramaiah has liabilities worth ₹23 crore and Naidu more than ₹10 crore, the report said. The ADR report also said 13 (42 per cent) chief ministers have declared criminal cases against themselves, while 10 (32 per cent) have declared serious criminal cases including.



## Himachal: Rs 25 crore bribe demanded from directors of institutions named in scholarship scam, questions raised on ED office

**Diary Times Desk :** One layer after another is being revealed in the much talked about scholarship scam of Rs 181 crore in Himachal Pradesh. In the year 2019, the Assistant Director of ED, who was investigating the scholarship scam in Himachal, had demanded bribe from the accused of private educational institutions. It is alleged that the Assistant Director of ED and two others demanded Rs 25 crore from 29 private educational institutions in the name of arresting the operators of private educational institutions. The private educational operators complained about this to the Chandigarh CBI office. After this, the CBI laid a trap to catch the accused with the help of the operators of private educational institutions. However, Assistant Director Vishal Deep Singh is still out of the reach of CBI. His brother Vikas Deep and aunt's son Neeraj have been arrested. Both of them are in jail. Himalaya Group of Institutes Chairman Bhupinder Sharma, Devbhoomi Himalaya Group Chairman Rajneesh Bansal, ICL Group of Institutes Chairman Sanjeev Prabhakar, Vidya Jyoti Group of Institutes Chairman DJ Singh and others alleged in a joint press conference in Shimla on Monday that ED officials had demanded Rs 25 crore in lieu of not arresting them. Along with this, they were called to the ED office to pressurize them to give bribe and were mentally tortured by making them sit outside for 8-8 hours. The names of 3 officers working in ED's Shimla office were also disclosed. Some staff members were also claimed to be involved in the bribery case. Rajneesh Bansal said that the ED assistant director showed him a fake arrest warrant. Once Sanjeev Prabhakar was about to commit suicide due to harassment. Then we went to the lawyer. After that it was decided to go to the CBI. Sanjeev Prabhakar said that he was beaten with sticks.

## New Year Celebration: New Year celebration will continue till 12 midnight in Shimla-Manali, markets will remain open till late night

**Diary Times Desk :** A huge crowd of tourists is flocking to Himachal for the New Year celebrations. On Sunday too, there was a huge influx of tourists at Shimla, Manali, Dalhousie and other tourist places. Lakhs of people are expected to reach the tourist places of the state on the New Year. The Ridge Ground of Shimla and the Mall Road of Manali will be bustling till 12 midnight. The occupancy in hotels at the tourist places of Himachal has reached 90 percent. All the hotels are expected to be packed on the New Year. Due to the New Year celebrations, the markets will also remain open till 12 midnight. The Chief Minister has also instructed the police personnel not to be strict with the tourists. After the fresh snowfall, there has been a huge increase in the number of tourists coming to Himachal to welcome the New Year. On the other hand, there will be a blast in Manali on New Year's Eve on 31 December.

## Kisan Andolan: Impact of Kisan Andolan, 8 trains coming to Una cancelled, only Himachal Express will run, HRTC alert

**Diary Times Desk :** Out of the total nine trains coming to Una district, eight will be cancelled on Monday. This decision was taken by the railways in view of the farmers' agitation in Punjab. Only Himachal Express train number 14053/54 will run in the morning and evening. Apart from that, all other trains including Vande Bharat will be cancelled. This will cause trouble to the passengers. According to the information, farmers' organizations have announced a Punjab bandh on Monday regarding their various demands. In such a situation, there is a full possibility of road and train routes being blocked. To avoid any inward incident, the movement of trains coming from different places of the country has been stopped. However, the route of Himachal Express train coming from Delhi to Una at around 6:45 am has been kept as before. This train will also return to Delhi again on Monday night.

## Shimla Public Toilet Charges: Public toilets in Shimla are no longer free, both men and women will have to pay Rs 5

**Diary Times Desk :** Now both men and women will have to pay a fee of Rs 5 for using public toilets in the capital. The Municipal Corporation is going to start the system of charging fees in 30 public toilets of the city from the new year. Shimla will become the first city in the state to implement such a system. Businessmen of the city will also come under its purview. They can get a pass from the Municipal Corporation by paying a monthly fee of Rs 150. By showing the pass, businessmen and their salesmen will be able to use the public toilets for a month. This proposal was approved in the monthly meeting of the Municipal Corporation held on Monday under the chairmanship of Mayor Surendra Chauhan. Only Congress councilor Narendra Thakur opposed this proposal in the House. According to the corporation administration, there are currently 130 public toilets in the city. No fee is being charged in most of the toilets. A few days ago, on the orders of the state High Court, the Municipal Corporation had also provided free urinal facilities to women, but still money was being taken from the women. Sulabh International is operating the public toilets in the city.

## Himachal: Clash between tourists and horse operators in Kufri, Shimla, two injured; Tourists had come to Shimla from Punjab

**Diary Times Desk :** There was a fight between tourists and local horse operators in Kufri, a tourist spot adjacent to the capital. In this incident, Chandrashekhar and Jagdish have suffered serious head and leg injuries. They are undergoing treatment at IGMC Hospital. Both the injured youths are laborers. It is being told that the tourists have been accused of attacking with a sharp object. Police have named six people in the case. This incident happened on Sunday in Dhali police station area. Four people of the same family from Punjab had come to Shimla for a trip. This incident happened near the police post in Kufri late on Sunday evening. Horses are operated from here for Hatu Peak. It is being told that tourists from Punjab were also viewing the valleys on horseback. Later, the dispute over money turned into a fight. Two people were injured before the local people could intervene. On receiving the information, the police reached the spot and pacified the matter and took the injured to the hospital for treatment. Police say that statements of all the people involved in the incident are being taken. Medical check-up of four people including two tourists.

## Himachal Weather: Temperature dropped to -15.5 degrees in Tabo, know whether there will be snowfall in Himachal

**Diary Times Desk :** In Himachal Pradesh, the weather has remained clear in the last 24 hours. At the same time, the temperature in Tabo dropped to minus 15.5 degrees at night. According to the Meteorological Center Shimla, the weather is expected to remain clear till January 1 and the weather is likely to deteriorate again from January 2. An orange alert for cold wave and a yellow alert for fog has been issued for today and tomorrow. At the same time, after snowfall in Manali, the sun has come out due to which the mountains are shining like silver.

## Dharamshala: Exiled Tibetan Parliament passes solidarity resolution against Chinese repression, demands right to live freely

**Diary Times Desk :** The Tibetan Parliament in exile has passed a resolution against Chinese repression. Strong support and solidarity has been expressed for the Tibetans. The resolution emphasizes the ongoing struggle of Tibetans for fundamental human rights, religious freedom and cultural preservation. The resolution began with paying tribute to the Tibetans who sacrificed their lives and well-being for the independence and cultural identity of Tibet. It praised the bravery and indomitable courage of Tibetans who are opposing China's harsh policies, even though they have faced illegal killings, arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances. The Tibetan Parliament demanded the release of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and all Tibetan political prisoners who have been detained since 1995 and demanded accountability for their treatment. The resolution strongly criticized China's Sincization policies that force Tibetan children to adopt Chinese culture. It specifically mentioned residential schools run by China. These colonial-style schools separate children from their families, communities and cultural heritage. They are a form of cultural genocide. The resolution demanded an immediate end to these repressive policies and that Tibetans be given the freedom and right to live with their religious, linguistic and cultural identity. Reaffirming the historical sovereignty of Tibet.



## Fresh western disturbance from Jan 4 to cause snowfall, rain in north India, predicts IMD

**Agencies :** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday predicted that a fresh western disturbance is likely to arrive in north India from January 4, causing snowfall and rain in the region in the days leading up to it. In a statement, the IMD stated that a western disturbance is likely to affect northwestern India from night of January 4 and cause scattered rainfall and snowfall in the western Himalayan region from January 1 to 3. The weather department has also predicted further widespread rainfall and snowfall on January 4 and 5 in the region. IMD scientist Soma Sen Roy told news agency PTI that the current western disturbance had moved away from the north Indian region and cold wave conditions subsided as a result, only persisting in the western Himalayan region. "We had severe weather on December 27-28, thereafter we are having cold wave, and fog conditions. What has really stopped cold wave conditions is lack of strong winds, because of it, the fog conditions that we realised yesterday, it has uplifted, and now it is lying as low clouds throughout north India. The situation is more akin to cold day conditions," she said.

## Akhilesh Yadav Says 'Shivling' Under UP Chief Minister's House, BJP Responds

**Agencies :** Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has claimed that there is a 'shivling' - a cylindrical idol that represents the Hindu god Shiva - under the official residence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow. His remarks come against a backdrop of a raging controversy over the excavation of an ancient step well in Sambhal, the Uttar Pradesh district which witnessed deadly clashes over a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque last month. Speaking to reporters in Lucknow, Mr Yadav said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government is getting excavation done at various places to "hide its failure" and to divert attention from the issues related to the public. "We believe there is a 'shivling' under the chief minister's residence too. Excavation should also be done there," he said. The former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh also alleged that the "houses of innocent people are being demolished illegally by bulldozers". "This is not development but destruction. There is no line of development in the hands of the chief minister, there is a line of destruction," Mr Yadav added. Responding to Akhilesh Yadav's charge, BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi asked why he "has a problem" with digging in Sambhal.

## "Would Have Been Better If...": Pawan Kalyan's Take On Allu Arjun's Arrest



**Agencies :** Refusing to blame Telangana Police for the action against actor Allu Arjun in the theatre stampede case, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan said the law is equal for all and police must act with public safety in mind. Mr Kalyan, leader of NDA ally Janasena Party, praised Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy as a "great leader" and suggested that Allu Arjun should have visited the family of the woman killed in the stampede earlier. Speaking to reporters in an informal interaction at Mangalagiri, Mr Kalyan shared his perspective on the stampede incident at Hyderabad's Sandhya Theatre on December 4. Allu Arjun visited the theatre where his movie Pushpa 2 was being screened. The film star's visit led to chaos. A 35-year-old woman, Revathi, died in the incident and her son was injured. Soon after, Hyderabad police registered a case against Allu Arjun. He was arrested and granted bail shortly after. Mr Kalyan today said it was important for law enforcement authorities to prioritise public safety.

## Traffic Jam In Space, ISRO Postpones SpaDeX Launch By 2 Minutes, Now At 10 pm

**Agencies :** There is a traffic jam in space! It has forced the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to postpone the launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) by two minutes. Earlier, the PSLV-C60 that would launch the SpaDeX mission or the Space Docking Experiment was to be launched at 9.58 pm, but now it has been pushed to 10 pm. The launch has been postponed due to "conjunctions with other satellites in the same orbit", Dr S Somanath, Chairman of ISRO, told NDTV. This is not the first time ISRO has had to reschedule its launch due to congestion in the orbit and flight path of the rocket. Experts at ISRO found that some satellites.

## Students Meet Bihar Chief Secretary Amid Protests Over BPSC Re-Exam Demand

**Agencies :** A day after the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) aspirants was lathicharged and faced water cannons on a freezing winter evening in Patna, a delegation of students met Bihar Chief Secretary Amritlal Meena to put forth their demands. The state home secretary was also present in the meeting. According to the students, the Chief Secretary assured the delegation that their concerns would be considered. One of the students said, "We had five demands, including re-examination, withdrawal of FIRs against the protesting students.

## Protesting farmers' shutdown call in Punjab today, traffic disrupted, trains hit

**Agencies :** Farmers across Punjab are staging widespread road and rail blockades on Monday as part of a state-wide bandh, paralysing commuter and freight movement. The shutdown, to be observed from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., was called by Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha to press the central government to meet their demands, including a legal guarantee for a minimum support price (MSP) for crops. Farmers have blocked key routes, including Airport Road at IISER Chowk in Mohali, Kurali Road Toll Plaza, Ambala-Delhi Highway Toll Plaza near Lalru, and the Kharar-Morinda Highway. Major highways and marketplaces across Punjab also remained shut. Over 200 locations across the state witnessed roadblocks, causing significant disruptions. In Amritsar, protesters assembled near the Golden Gate entry point, while in Bathinda's Rampura Phul, major roads were blocked. Railway services were hit as the farmers' 'Rail Roko Andolan'.

## Actor Vijay Meets Tamil Nadu Governor Over Sex Assault At Anna University

**Agencies :** Actor-turned-politician Vijay is meeting Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi in Chennai amid outrage over the sexual assault incident at Anna University. The sexual assault of a second-year student on the campus of Anna University on December 23 has sparked protests across Tamil Nadu. The incident has led to the arrest of one person and four special police teams are working on the case. The Students' Federation of India (SFI) and the All India Women Welfare Federation staged protests outside Anna University's Guindy campus, demanding justice and stricter security measures for women.

## Arvind Kejriwal announces Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana, to provide ₹18000 monthly to Hindu, Sikh priests

**Agencies :** Amid a huge row over a scheme that promises a monthly stipend to unemployed women, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Monday announced a new scheme that offers a monthly honorarium of ₹18000 to Hindu and Sikh priests. The former Delhi chief minister said the registration for the Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana will begin on Tuesday. "Today I am making an important announcement regarding a scheme. The name of the scheme is Pujari Granthi Samman Yojana. Under this, there is a provision to give an honorarium to the priests of temples and the 'granthis' of the Gurudwara. They will be given an honorarium of about ₹18,000 per month. This is happening for the first time in the country. The priest is a class that has carried forward the rituals from generation to generation. They never paid attention to their family and we never paid attention to them," Kejriwal said at a press conference.



## Elon Musk Says H-1B Visa System "Broken", Days After "Will Go To War" Promise

**Agencies :** Days after vowing to "go to war" to defend the H-1B visas, tech billionaire Elon Musk on Sunday said the system, which is used to bring skilled foreign workers to the US, is "broken" and needs a "major reform". Mr Musk and Indian-American tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy have recently clashed with supporters of US President-elect Donald Trump over the issue of immigration. Mr Musk and Mr Ramaswamy, who are set to be part of the incoming Trump administration, have backed the H-1B visa program. In response to a post on X, the social media site he owns, Mr Musk said he has "been very clear" that the program is "broken" and "needs major reform". He was responding to a user who said the US needs to be a destination for the "world's most elite talent", but the H-1B program "isn't the way to do that".

## "Stop Employing Women Or...": Taliban's Latest Diktat To NGOs In Afghanistan

**Agencies :** In yet another draconian move to curtail women's freedom in Afghanistan, the Taliban said it will close all national and foreign non-governmental groups in the country employing women. In a letter published on X on Sunday night, Afghanistan's Economy Ministry warned that failure to comply with the latest order would lead to NGOs losing their license to operate in the country. "The Ministry of Economy, as the authority for registering non-Emirati institutions, is responsible for coordinating, leading, and supervising all activities of domestic and foreign NGOs," the post in Persian read. "Therefore, once again, a follow-up circular has been issued to stop the work of female employees in non-Emirati and foreign institutions. In case of non-cooperation, all activities of the offending institution will be suspended and the activity license they received from this ministry will be cancelled," it added. This comes two years after the Taliban told NGOs to suspend the employment of Afghan women, allegedly because they didn't wear the Islamic headscarf correctly, according to a report by the Associated Press. Since the Taliban returned to power.

## "Where Am I? What Happened": Survivor Of Korea Plane Crash That Killed 179



**Agencies :** Two flight attendants were the lone survivors of the plane crash in South Korea that killed 179 out of 181 people on board. The Jeju Air flight had taken off from Bangkok and was attempting to land at Muan International Airport, 290 kilometres south of Seoul. The crash triggered a massive rescue operation, with emergency teams combing through the debris for hours. The survivors, identified as 32-year-old Lee and 25-year-old Kwon, were pulled from the tail section of the charred aircraft, their recollections of the event shrouded in shock and confusion. Lee, stationed at the rear of the aircraft to assist passengers during landing, repeatedly asked, "What happened?" and "Why am I here?" when questioned by doctors at Mokpo Korean Hospital, according to a report by Korean Times. Hospital staff described Lee as appearing dazed and unable to describe his injuries, suggesting that shock had taken a firm hold.

## Xi Tells Biden China-US Ties "One Of The Most Important" In World: Report

**Agencies :** Chinese leader Xi Jinping told his American counterpart Joe Biden that he was "deeply saddened" by the death aged 100 of former US president Jimmy Carter, state media said Monday. Carter "had long made significant contributions to advancing the development of China-US ties and fostering friendly exchanges and cooperation between the two countries", state broadcaster CCTV reported Xi as saying in a message of condolence to Biden. Washington's diplomatic links with the People's Republic of China were formally launched in January 1979 -- breaking with the Nationalist government in Taiwan that was a staunch US ally throughout the Cold War. "Former US president Jimmy Carter was a promoter and decision-maker on the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US.

## More Than 70 People Dead In Southern Ethiopia Road Accident

**Agencies :** At least 71 people died in Ethiopia when a truck packed with passengers plunged into a river, according to the spokesperson for the southern Sidama regional government and a statement. The accident occurred in the Bona district, the regional communication bureau said in a statement issued late on Sunday. Wosenyeleh Simion, spokesperson for the Sidama regional government, told Reuters on Monday at least 71 people had died, including 68 males and 3 females. "Five are in a critical condition and taking treatment at Bona General Hospital," he said. In a statement late on Sunday the regional communication bureau had given the death toll as 60. Wosenyeleh said the truck had missed a bridge and fell into a river and that the road had many bends.

## Biden Announces \$2.5 Billion In Fresh Military Assistance To Ukraine

**Agencies :** US President Joe Biden announced \$2.5 billion in additional security assistance for Ukraine on Monday as he uses his final weeks in office to surge military aid to Kyiv before President-elect Donald Trump takes power. "At my direction, the United States will continue to work relentlessly to strengthen Ukraine's position in this war over the remainder of my time in office," Biden said in a statement. Biden's announcement includes \$1.25 billion in military aid drawn from US stockpiles and a \$1.22 billion Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) package, the final USAI package of Biden's time in office. Under USAI, military equipment is procured from the defense industry or partners, rather than drawn from American stocks, meaning it can take months or years to arrive on the battlefield. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is approaching the three-year mark and recently the Russians have used North Korean troops to bolster their fighting position. North Korean forces are experiencing mass casualties on the front lines of Russia's war against Ukraine, with 1,000 of their troops killed or wounded in the last week alone in Russia's Kursk region, White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Friday. In a statement, Biden said the new assistance will provide Ukraine with "an immediate influx of capabilities that it continues to use to great effect on the battlefield and longer-term supplies of air defense, artillery, and other critical weapons systems." Nearly three years into the war, Washington has committed \$175 billion in total aid for Ukraine, but it is uncertain if the aid will continue at that pace under Trump.

## Climate Crisis Brought Extreme Weather, Heat In 2024: UN

**Agencies :** Climate change sparked a trail of extreme weather and record heat in 2024, the United Nations said on Monday, urging the world to pull back from the "road to ruin". The outgoing year is set to be the warmest ever recorded, the UN's weather and climate agency said, capping a decade of unprecedented heat. Meanwhile emissions of greenhouse gases grew to new record highs, locking in more heat for the future, the World Meteorological Organization said. "Climate change plays out before our eyes on an almost daily basis in the form of increased occurrence and impact of extreme weather events," WMO secretary general Celeste Saulo said. "This year we saw record-breaking rainfall and flooding events and terrible loss of life in so many countries, causing heartbreak to communities on every continent. "Tropical cyclones caused a terrible human and economic toll, most recently in the French overseas department of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean.





## All 8 blast incidents targeting police installations solved: Punjab DGP Yadav



**Agencies :** Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav on Monday said all eight bomb blast incidents targeting police installations had been solved. He said 14 accused belonging to the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) and Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) had been arrested. "We have thwarted the new conspiracy by Pakistan's ISI and terrorist groups to disturb law and order in Punjab," Yadav announced in a video message on social media. He said five terrorist modules, having handlers in the US, Canada and Europe besides in Pakistan were responsible for the eight blasts in which grenades and RDX were used. "Three of these modules belong to the BKI while two to the KZF. Two AK-47 rifles, five grenades, two Glock pistols and 1.04 kg of heroin were recovered from them," he added. The DGP asked the public to be alert against such conspiracies.

## Chandigarh-Delhi airfare soars from Rs 3,000 to Rs 19,000 amid Punjab bandh

**Agencies :** On a day when protesting farmers have called for Punjab bandh, a surge in pricing has sent airfares on the Chandigarh-Delhi route skyrocketing, with a routine Rs 3,000 ticket selling for Rs 19,000. Various Punjab farmer unions have called a statewide shutdown on December 30 to press the government for acceptance of their demands. Most airlines have not been showing the booking prices for flights online, with tickets available only at the airport or through their dedicated websites. Depending on the timing of the day, tickets are available at a premium. The daytime tickets are expensive but the evening tickets are cheaper," said a ticketing firm owner in Phase 7, Mohali. Those commuting by road in Mohali were inconvenienced as farmers blocked roads and rail tracks and even staged a sit-in outside shops and petrol pumps.

## Nandu gang behind Panchkula killings, 2 shooters identified

**Agencies :** The police have identified two shooters linked to the Kapil Sangwan gang, also known as the Nandu gang, in the triple murder that took place outside a resort on Morni Road, Panchkula, recently. The police have also recovered the Honda City used in the crime from Bathinda Railway Station. Kapil Sangwan, a gangster based in the United Kingdom, was also named in the case of Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) leader Nafe Singh Rathi's murder earlier this year. Vinit Gahlot, a gangster associated with the Manjeet Mahal gang, and two others were shot dead near the resort on the Morni Road on the night of December 23. Police sources said Sahil and Vijay, both residents of Najafgarh, had been identified as shooters behind the killings. Both are linked to the Kapil Sangwan gang and have a criminal history. They police had reportedly announced a cash reward for information leading to their arrest.

## Life hit in Punjab due to farmers' 9-hour bandh; rail, bus services affected

**Agencies :** Normal life was hit across Punjab on Monday due to a nine-hour 'bandh' called by farmers protesting against the Centre for their various demands including a legal guarantee of MSP for their crops. Rail operations in Punjab were mostly suspended, buses and other vehicles remained off the road, leaving passengers stranded; and shops and establishments downed shutters as the '7 am to 4 pm' bandh passed off peacefully. Petrol pumps were also shut, a senior farmer leader said. Farmer leaders who gave the bandh call more than a week ago declared it "successful" and thanked the "three crore Punjabis for extending their full support". Amid a harsh winter chill and dense fog at some places, farmers staged 'dharnas' on several roads and highways including in Patiala, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ferozpur, Bathinda, and Pathankot, crippling the traffic. The sit-in at the Dhareri Jattan toll plaza affected vehicular movement on the Patiala-Chandigarh national highway. At Amritsar's Golden Gate, scores of farmers staged a 'dharna' near the city's entry point. Police there assisted some stranded foreign tourists by arranging auto rickshaws for them to reach Golden Temple.

## Punjab govt team again meets Dallewal as Supreme Court deadline approaching

**Agencies :** As the Supreme Court's deadline to shift Jagjit Singh Dallewal to a hospital is fast approaching, the Punjab government on Monday intensified its efforts to persuade the fasting farmer leader to take medical aid which he again declined. Over the past few days, a state government's team led by former additional DGP Jaskaran Singh has made several attempts to convince Dallewal, whose indefinite hunger strike entered 35th day on Monday, to take medical help, but he has refused. The apex court recently gave the Punjab government time until December 31 to persuade Dallewal to shift to a hospital, granting the state the liberty to seek logistical support from the Centre, if necessary. On Monday, Jaskaran Singh again met Dallewal at the Khanauri protest site. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, the retired Punjab Police officer said a team of government doctors collected Dallewal's blood samples for conducting various tests, which are done twice a week. Replying to a question, Singh said Dallewal is weak, but "he is stable".

## Karnal youth dies mysteriously in US, family seeks govt help to bring body back

**Agencies :** The family of 27-year-old Manish from Kunjipura village in Karnal district is reeling in shock after he died under mysterious circumstances in the US. Manish had travelled to the US around 18 months ago to improve his family's financial situation. His family had taken a loan of Rs 38 lakh to fund his trip. According to his family, Manish died of a heart attack. However, they received no prior indication of any health issues, as he had spoken to them just a day before his death. "Manish seemed perfectly fine when he spoke to us yesterday. He didn't mention any health problems. Everything seemed normal, but today we received the devastating news of his death," a family member said. Manish had travelled to the US through irregular channels ('donkey routes'). His family had pinned their hopes on him to alleviate their financial struggles, but now they are burdened with both grief and the weight of an unpaid loan. The family has appealed to the Union Government to assist them in bringing Manish's body back to India for his final rites.

## Severe cold grips Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh; maximum temperatures hover below normal

**Agencies :** Severe cold gripped Punjab and Haryana on Monday, with maximum temperatures hovering well below normal limits in the two states. A thick blanket of fog reduced visibility early in the morning at many places in the two states. Piercing cold prevailed in Chandigarh during the day with the city recording a maximum temperature of 11.3 degrees Celsius, it's coldest day of the winter season so far, over eight notches below normal, according to the local Met office. In Haryana, severe cold prevailed during the day at most places. The maximum temperature in Ambala was recorded at 12 degrees Celsius, Hisar 14.5 degrees, Karnal 13.2 degrees, Rohtak 12.7 degrees, and Gurugram recorded a high of 13 degrees Celsius. In Punjab, cold wave swept Pathankot, which recorded a high of 11 degrees Celsius while Bathinda registered a maximum of 12.4 degrees. Amritsar also shivered under biting cold during the day registering a high of 12.6 degrees Celsius while Ludhiana recorded 13.8 degrees. Patiala also braved intense chill, recording a high of 13 degrees Celsius, while Faridkot.

## Powerful individuals attempting to conceal timber, says MLA Satti

**Diary Times Desk :** An investigation committee formed by the BJP today visited the Dharampur region in Mandi district to examine reports of illegal felling of timber, a matter that has garnered significant media attention. The committee, led by BJP MLA Satpal Satti and members Sukh Ram Chaudhary and Balbir Verma, toured various areas to assess the situation. Addressing the mediapersons at Dharampur, MLA Satti said the committee had visited various locations in the Dharampur subdivision, where they found a significant amount of timber, including banned tree species like banyan, peepal and others, stacked illegally. They discovered a depot at Bahri village, where prohibited logs were being stored, but the owner could not be identified and no permits were shown. According to local residents, the timber was linked to an individual from Kangra, though no official records or permits were available, he added.

## No end in sight for state's financial woes

**Diary Times Desk :** It's been a tight ropewalk for the Himachal Government with there being no end to its financial woes. The year ahead is likely to be even tougher. Not only has the second year of the Congress government headed by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh been politically very tumultuous due to a failed 'Operation Lotus' but financially also, it's been a tough time. The reducing Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG) has been a major cause for worry and the Rs 30,000 crore annual salary and pensionary bills of serving and retired employees have only compounded the situation. With a fiscal liability of Rs 86,589 crore, Himachal is the fourth-highest debt-stressed state of the country and will require a sum of Rs 44,617 crore in the next five years to just pay the interest on the loans raised for development, salaries and other works. The details of the fiscal liabilities presented before the 16th Finance Commission present a very grim picture of the state's finances. The fiscal liabilities have mounted from Rs 54,299 crore in 2018-19 to Rs 86,589 crore in 2022-23. The state's fiscal liabilities are likely to reach Rs 1,07,230 crore in 2024-25 considering the limited revenue-generating areas.

## HP feels like home, was part of erstwhile Punjab, says new CJ



**Diary Times Desk :** Justice GS Sandhawalia was sworn-in as the Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court at Raj Bhavan here today. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla administered the oath of office to Justice Sandhawalia. The ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Judges of the High Court, ministers, Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena and other dignitaries. "I've been here very often and it's been a part of Punjab. So, therefore, it's like homecoming for me," the Chief Justice said in a brief interaction with the media. "I am told that the people of Himachal are far more peace loving and there's very little criminal work. There's more service and civil work," said the Chief Justice. He added that with the help of his colleagues, he would ensure that justice is delivered at the earliest to the people. "We will ensure that the needy and senior citizens, the ones who require legal aid and help get it," he said. "We will sit for longer hours to address the pendency of cases. We will also involve the Bar to ensure it is in sync with us."

## With reforms, state has opportunity to set benchmark for modern policing

**Diary Times Desk :** The Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly recently passed the Himachal Pradesh Police (Amendment) Bill, 2024, marking a pivotal shift in the state's governance and law enforcement framework. Introduced by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, the legislation aims to enhance administrative efficiency, streamline recruitment processes and protect public servants from undue harassment. While its objectives reflect a progressive vision, the Act has sparked intense debate, drawing both praise and criticism for its far-reaching implications on accountability, local governance and administrative flexibility. A standout provision in the Act mandates prior government sanction before arresting public servants for actions taken during official duties. Proponents argue this clause shields honest officials from politically motivated or frivolous litigation, enabling them to perform their duties without fear. However, critics warn that such safeguards may delay accountability, foster impunity and erode public trust in administrative integrity. The Opposition, led by the BJP, has accused the government of shielding corrupt officials.

## BRO restores Manali-Leh highway, 212 tourists rescued from Lahaul valley

**Diary Times Desk :** After two days of heavy snowfall that led to the blockage of the Manali-Leh highway between Manali and Keylong near the Atal Tunnel, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has successfully restored the route for the movement of 4x4 vehicles. The snowstorm had severely affected the movement of traffic in the region, trapping tourists and their vehicles in the Lahaul valley. As soon as the BRO cleared the route, the Lahaul and Spiti police, in coordination with the BRO, launched a rescue operation to evacuate tourists stranded in the region. The police managed to safely evacuate 212 tourists, along with 38 vehicles, from the Lahaul side towards Manali. The efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of the stranded visitors were supported by a thorough assessment and securing of dangerous spots along the road. Lahaul and Spiti SP Mayank Chaudhary said, "Due to heavy snowfall, traffic within the district was disrupted. In this challenging situation, the district police worked in close collaboration with the BRO to ensure the roads were safe and operational."

## BJP overlooks central norms for mandal poll

**Diary Times Desk :** Almost all mandal presidents elected in Solan district on December 17 do not meet the age criteria as per directions issued by the central BJP for the organisational poll. As per the directions issued on November 22 by the central BJP, mandal presidents are supposed to be less than 45 years of age. As many as 13 mandal presidents were elected in Solan district and few among them are aged 55 years or more. The 13 mandals comprise Arki, Darla, Jainagar, Nalagarh (rural and urban), Ramshehar, Patta, Doon, Kandaghat, Solan (rural and urban), Dharampur and Kasauli. As per BJP norms accessed by The Tribune, an elected mandal president is supposed to be an office-bearer of the party's frontal organisation or a district-level office-bearer of the party. Favourites have been accommodated as mandal presidents to suit the political machinations of senior leaders, quite unmindful of the criteria fixed by the central BJP. Peeved by this pick and choose, a section of party functionaries reported the matter to senior leaders in Delhi. This has put on hold the election to the district presidents across the state. These elections were supposed to be concluded between December 16 and 30.





## 'That was the best Test match I've been involved in'

**Agencies :** Pat Cummins, the Australian captain, has hailed his team's win in the Melbourne Test over India as among the best Test matches he has been involved in. Heading into the final day, the game had the potential to swing either way. It went till the last hour on Monday before Australia eventually managed to bundle out the visitors for 155, securing an 184-run win and taking the series lead to 2-1 heading into the final Test. "When you take all that into account, I think that was the best Test match I've been involved in, in terms of 80-odd thousand on the first three days and (74,000) today, it was huge," Cummins said at the end of the fourth Test. "It felt like it swung a lot as well, it never felt like we were so far ahead of the game that a win looked certain. Overall just one of those great wins. Just about everyone, as we were walking off, was trying to work out where it sits. 'I reckon that's right at the top - Edgbaston was pretty special, and I reckon that's pretty much on par. That was amazing.'" Across the five days of the game, the momentum of the contest had shifted several times. Australia had piled on 474 in the first innings and had India reduced to 221 for 7 at a point on Day 2.



## Rohit: Pant needs to figure out the risk-reward game himself

**Agencies :** India captain Rohit Sharma has said that Rishabh Pant needs to figure out "the right way to do things" for himself and the team, while acknowledging that his high-risk methods had brought spectacular success in the past. Rohit was reacting to a question about Pant's dismissals in India's defeat at the MCG, where he was caught scooping to deep third in the first innings and pulled a long hop to wide long-on in the second when the team was fighting for a draw. "It's [Pant's dismissal] just happened, there hasn't been any discussion about today," Rohit said. "Obviously we've lost the game, everybody is disappointed about how things panned out ... But again, look, Rishabh Pant obviously he needs to understand what is required from himself. "More than any one of us telling him, it's about him understanding and figuring out what's the right way to go about it. In the past, he has given us lot of success doing what he does. As a captain, there's a kind of mixed reaction to that. "Sometimes you want to back that thought of him playing the way he plays, sometimes when things don't look good, it frustrates everyone. That is what it is, that's the reality. It's the success and failure - need to be balanced about it. As captain.

## Magnus Carlsen to play world blitz after Fide appeasement

**Agencies :** Two days after he announced his withdrawal midway through the World Rapid and Blitz tournament, world No.1 Magnus Carlsen confirmed that he will play the blitz event after a truce with world body, Fide. Fined and unpaired in Round 9 by Fide for wearing jeans to the playing area on the second day of the rapid event, Carlsen had declared that he would not be playing the remainder of the tournament and had termed it as a feeling of "all-out war" with the governing body. Following talks with Fide president Arkady Dvorkovich on Sunday, the tournament rest day, Carlsen said that he would play the blitz event and as a "matter of principle, I'm definitely playing in jeans." As part of its bending over backwards to appease Carlsen, Fide has eased the dress code rules, allowing "appropriate jeans matching the jacket". "I'm playing at least one more day in New York and if I do well, another day as well," Carlsen told Take Take Take. "I love playing blitz and I want to give fans an opportunity to see. I don't know if it's going to be the last time...who knows. But for now, I'm here. There have been some slight alterations to the rules, and as a matter of principle I'm definitely playing in jeans tomorrow."

## 'I saw Rohit Sharma get emotional; he is tired': India captain's 'unusual' body language suggests retirement is near

**Agencies :** Rohit Sharma may not have announced his retirement from Test cricket yet but going by his body language noticed by former Australia coach Justin Langer it may be only a matter of time before the Indian captain bids farewell to the longest format of the game. Rohit the batter has been a pale shadow of his once dominant self. After a terrific start to the year, where he drew the Test series in South Africa, scored two centuries against England at home and led India to a famous T20 World Cup win, the second half of 2024 has been all but forgettable. Besides embracing fatherhood for a second time, Rohit's fall has been well-documented. In July, under Rohit, India lost their first bilateral ODI series against Sri Lanka after 28 years, and things worsened when India's 12-year-long run of dominance was ended by New Zealand 0-3 at home. As the Australia tour goes, India's only win of the series came in a match Rohit didn't feature in, and once he was back, the team returned to losing ways in Adelaide and now Melbourne. The internal chatter suggested that Rohit may walk away after the MCG Test but is now likely to continue until Sydney. However, once that is done, Rohit mustn't prolong his Test career.



## Short TAKES

### Haryana Steelers win first-ever PKL title after defeating Patna Pirates in final

**Agencies :** The Haryana Steelers, who finished top of the table in the league stage during PKL Season 11, produced an outstanding display on the mat on Sunday after they defeated the Patna Pirates in Pune. With the Show Stopper Shadloui in full flow, the Haryana Steelers won the final with a scoreline of 32-23. For the Haryana Steelers, the champions, Shivam Patare scored 9 points, Mohammadreza Shadloui bagged 7 and Vinay added 6 more to the cause. The champions were awarded INR 3 crore whilst the runners-up Patna Pirates bagged Rsl.8 Crore, as per PKL press release. It was an electric start to the big evening, with the Haryana Steelers picking up the first few points, and the lead in the early exchanges. Devank and Ankit were fighting away for the Patna Pirates, but it was the Haryana Steelers, who were dictating terms and controlling the tempo, with Shivam Patare and Mohammadreza Shadloui doing the heavy lifting. The Haryana Steelers' defence, led by Jaideep and Rahul Sethpal, was showing exactly why they are considered to be one of the best units in the competition, as they made scoring extremely tough for the Patna Pirates. However, as the half progressed, Gurdeep and Sudhakar brought the Patna Pirates back to within touching distance of their opponents.

### Travis Head's 'Obscene' Finger Celebration Explained After Social Media Furore During MCG Test

**Agencies :** Travis Head provided a major breakthrough for Australia during the fourth Test match against Australia but it was his celebration that caused a massive uproar on social media. Head took the wicket of Rishabh Pant that paved the way for his team's victory on Monday and his celebration left a lot of people confused. Head pointed one finger into his other hand which was shaped like a circle and it was perceived as 'obscene' by several social media users. However, Channel 7's James Brayshaw cleared the air around the celebration. "Now, great people in the back have said after he took 4-10 within 17 balls in Sri Lanka in 2022 he was quoted as saying, 'I had to put the digit on ice,'" Brayshaw said. "So that was the celebration. He said 'I just got him and I'm putting it back on ice.'" Australia captain Pat Cummins also justified Head's celebration at the press conference.