

## HMPV Virus Himachal: Alert in Himachal Pradesh regarding HMPV virus, instructions to keep an eye on these people



**Diary Times Desk :** After three cases of HMPV virus were reported in the country, the state government has issued an alert in Himachal. Medical colleges and district hospitals have been instructed to remain alert. Officials of the Central Government's Health Ministry held a meeting with the Health Secretary of Himachal Pradesh regarding this. After this, the Health Secretary issued an alert to medical colleges and hospitals about the virus. People coming to Himachal from other states have been asked to keep an eye on them. NHM Deputy Mission Director Dr. Gopal Bari said that all hospitals and medical colleges have been alerted. Human metapneumovirus, also known by the short name of HMPV, is a virus that affects the respiratory process of humans. It was first identified in 2001. Then scientists from the Netherlands discovered it. It is a virus of the Paramyxoviridae family. Like other respiratory viruses, it also spreads by staying close to infected people while they cough and sneeze. Some studies have claimed that this virus has been present in the world for the last six decades. It mainly affects children. However, its effect has also been recorded on people with weak immunity.

## Himachal News: Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri met Venugopal, discussed new executive

**Diary Times Desk :** Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri met All India Congress Committee's Organization General Secretary KC Venugopal in New Delhi on Monday. Mukesh apprised Venugopal of the activities of the government and the organization. Mukesh, who had come to meet the Union Ministers, also visited the party headquarters on Monday and met many other senior leaders of the party. Party sources said that during the meeting between Mukesh and Venugopal, there was a detailed discussion about the new executive of the Congress to be formed in Himachal Pradesh. Mukesh talked about giving place to active workers of the organization in the organization.

## PM Modi Inaugurates Jammu Railway Division, Calls It 'Monumental Step'

**Agencies :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday virtually inaugurated the new Jammu Railway Division, calling it a historic milestone in the development of Jammu and Kashmir's connectivity and infrastructure. Jammu and Kashmir tourism. Addressing the nation during the ceremony, PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), congratulated the people of Jammu and Kashmir, saying, "Integration of J&K into the national railway network is a monumental step towards transforming Indian Railways into a global leader in efficiency, speed, and passenger experience." "The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) project is a landmark achievement that demonstrates India's engineering excellence." Highlighting the feats of modern engineering, he said, "India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, the Anji Khad Bridge, and the iconic arch bridge over the Chenab River—the world's highest railway bridge—are marvels that are making waves globally."



## "Why Don't You Want Probe?" High Court To Techie Atul Subhash's Wife

**Agencies :** Karnataka High Court on Monday rejected the plea for cancelling the First Information Report (FIR) against Nikita Singhania in connection with the alleged suicide case of Bengaluru techie Atul Subhash. Subhash, an automobile company employee in Bengaluru, had died by suicide over alleged torture and demand of Rs 3 crore by his wife Nikita Singhania for divorce settlement. The single bench headed by Justice SR Krishna Kumar passed the order orally. The bench in disapproval of the demand by Subhash's wife stated that the FIR gives out everything to file the case under abetment of suicide. "What more the bench can look into?" the bench said. "The prima facie ingredients of the offence are made out in the complaint. Why don't you want the investigation to happen?" the bench asked Ms Singhania. The counsel for Ms Singhania submitted to the court that no ingredients were made out in the complaint for registration of the FIR over the abetment of suicide.

## BPSC protest: 'Rejected bail, accepted jail', says Prashant Kishor on arrest

**Agencies :** Jan Suraaj Party founder Prashant Kishor on Monday stated that he went to jail and refused to sign a bail order as he had not taken part in a criminal activity and the document required him to promise not to participate in any wrongdoing, reported news agency ANI. Kishor was arrested on Monday morning, along with other supporters, while on an indefinite hunger strike demanding the cancellation of the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC)'s preliminary examination over allegations of a paper leak. "I was taken to court and I was granted bail but, it is written in the order that I should not do any wrongdoings, so I rejected this bail order, I accepted to go to jail," said Prashant Kishor. He also directed allegations of mistreatment towards the Bihar police, saying, "From 5-11 am, I was made to sit in the Police vehicle."

## Himachal News: Chief Minister Sukhu said- Rs 2415 crore will be spent on construction and strengthening of tourism infrastructure

**Diary Times Desk :** While reviewing various projects of the Tourism Department, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu said that tourism sector is the main pillar of Himachal Pradesh's economy. The State Government is giving priority to complete various tourism projects within the stipulated time so that world class facilities can be provided to the tourists. He said that the State Government will spend Rs. 2415 crore in the coming time on construction and strengthening of infrastructure in the tourism sector of the State. The CM said that Rs. 150.27 crore will be spent on Shivdham to be built in Mandi district and Rs. 51.70 crore will be spent on the beautification of Baba Balak Nath Temple in Hamirpur district. Similarly, Nagarota Bagwan in Kangra district and Palampur town will be beautified at a cost of Rs. 78.09 crore. The State Government will develop Wellness Centres at Naidun in Hamirpur district, Nagarota Bagwan in Kangra and Manali and Kullu in Kullu district.

## Supreme Court to hear appeals against acquittal in Nithari killings in March

**Agencies :** The Supreme Court will hear the appeals challenging the acquittal of Surendra Koli in the Nithari killings on March 25. The order was passed by a bench headed by justice Bhushan R Gavai while hearing a set of appeals filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Uttar Pradesh government challenging Koli's acquittal. The bench, also comprising justice Augustine George Masih, directed the top court's registry to provide the digitised trial court records on the scheduled date of hearing as Koli's lawyers sought to rely on the same to highlight procedural delays in the investigation.



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## Jairam Thakur Birthday: 60 kg cake cut on the 60th birthday of the Leader of Opposition, supporters gathered from across the state

## Bengaluru Techie, Wife Kill Their Children, Then Die By Suicide

**Diary Times Desk :** There was a rush of supporters on the birthday of former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur. Thousands of people reached his official residence and wished him on his birthday. During this, officials and workers from across the state also reached his residence and wished him on his birthday in their own style. Former Chief Minister Jairam Thakur said that people from different areas also honored him with various types of symbols. People from different divisions of the state came in groups and danced and wished him in their own style. Jairam Thakur cut a sixty-kg cake with his supporters and party workers on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. This series of birthday wishes, which started at eight in the morning, continued till late evening. Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur thanked everyone for wishing him on his birthday. Along with this, he thanked all the senior leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, National President Jagat Prakash Nadda. He also thanked the people of the state for the affection given in this way. On this occasion, he also launched his official calendar for 2025.



**Agencies :** A family of four, including a software consultant, his wife, and their two children, were found dead in their rented home in Bengaluru. According to the police, the case is being investigated as a suspected murder-suicide. They have been identified as Anup Kumar (38), his wife Rakhi (35), their 5-year-old daughter Anupriya, and their 2-year-old son Priyansh. Originally from Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. Anup Kumar was working as a software consultant in a private firm. However, he quit the job a month ago. Monday morning the family's house help arrived for work. Receiving no response despite repeated attempts to contact the family, the house help alerted neighbours, who then informed the police. Upon entering the premises, police discovered the bodies of the couple and their children.

## Himachal Governor: Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said- India needs to be made a drug-free nation

## 'Brazen disrespect': Governor RN Ravi walks out of Tamil Nadu assembly for second year in a row

**Diary Times Desk :** Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla presided over the Border Area Youth Exchange program organized at Raj Bhavan on Monday. The Governor, emphasizing on the issue raised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Mann Ki Baat program, said that there is an urgent need to make India a drug-free nation. On this occasion, the Governor praised the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and said that this organization is playing an important role in empowering the youth and awakening the spirit of national unity in them. The Governor said that youth are the backbone of any nation and the future of the country is decided by their energy, ideas and positive participation. He said that this program is a unique platform through which not only the youth of the border area come together but also the cultural distances are reduced, which further strengthens the feeling of unity and national pride. He said that Himachal Pradesh is known as Devbhoomi and being a border state, it has a special place from a strategic point of view. Due to the indomitable courage of the soldiers of the state and the high spirits of the people living in the border areas, they have a special and unique contribution in maintaining the security and integrity of the nation.

**Agencies :** Tamil Nadu governor R N Ravi alleged "disrespect" to the national anthem and the Constitution and walked out of the state assembly without reading his customary address on the first day of the winter session. In a post on X, the Raj Bhavan claimed that the governor made a "fervent appeal" to chief minister M K Stalin and speaker M Appavu which was "cussedly refused". "Today on arrival of Governor to the House only Tamil Thalai Vaazhthu was sung. Governor respectfully reminded the House of its Constitutional duty and fervently appealed to the Hon'ble Chief Minister who is the Leader of the House and the Hon'ble Speaker for singing the National Anthem. However, they cussedly refused. It is a matter of grave concern. Not to be a party to such brazen disrespect to the Constitution and the National Anthem, Governor in deep anguish left the House," the Raj Bhavan's post added. Reacting to Ravi's walkout, Stalin said the governor had made it his custom to violate the Constitutional practice of reading out the government's address.

## HP Board: Himachal will have board exams for classes 3rd, 5th and 8th in March, schedule finalised; sent to the government

## 2 Women Die, 5 Injured On Way To Tirumala After Being Hit By Ambulance



**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal Pradesh School Education Board will conduct annual examinations of class 3rd, 5th and 8th in March. The schedule has been prepared and sent to the state government for approval. Secretary Dr. Major Vishal Sharma said that the State School Education Board prepares question papers for class 3rd, 5th, 8th, 9th and 11th in the state. Apart from this, the schedule of examinations of these classes is also decided by the Board of Education. The annual examinations of these classes of academic 2024-25 will be held from March. It was being speculated that the third, fifth and eighth examinations of the board would start from February. The Board of Education has clearly denied these speculations. The board management has argued that there is snowfall in many parts of Himachal Pradesh till February. In such a situation, if there is snowfall during the examinations, many students will not be able to reach to take the examinations. In such a situation, the Board of Education will conduct these examinations in March itself.

**Agencies :** Two women devotees on their way to Tirumala died here in Tirupati district in the early hours of Monday after being hit by an ambulance, said a police official. A 108-ambulance coming from Piler hit the devotees around 4 am between Rangampeta and Mangapuram, said the official. "The ambulance hit seven devotees from behind. Two of them died and five others sustained injuries," the official told PTI. Police registered a case under section 106 clause 1 of BNS. Meanwhile, Tirupati superintendent of police L Subba Rayudu said that fog could be the reason for the early morning accident. He exhorted the devotees who prefer to go the temple by walk, to tread on the side of the road and to be watchful so that accidents can be avoided. He also said that winter nights are plagued with low visibility due to foggy conditions. A 108-ambulance coming from Piler hit the devotees around 4 am between Rangampeta and Mangapuram, said the official. "The ambulance hit seven devotees from behind. Two of them died and five others sustained injuries," the official told PTI. Police registered a case under section 106 clause 1 of BNS.



## Shimla Snowfall: Snowfall in upper Shimla and hailstorm in the capital stopped the wheels of vehicles

**Diary Times Desk :** Due to snowfall in the upper areas of Shimla district and hailstorm in many areas of the capital, traffic came to a halt on Monday evening. Buses were sent via Basantpur for upper Shimla due to slippery roads in Kufri. Apart from this, traffic remained disrupted on the National Highway Shimla-Mandi in the evening after heavy hailstorm in Tutu. The weather remained clear in the capital till Monday afternoon, but by evening the weather suddenly changed and rain started. Due to snowfall in many areas of upper Shimla including Kufri, Narkanda, the traffic system came to a halt on Monday evening. Due to slippery roads in Kufri, vehicles going to Rampur were sent via Basantpur. As a precaution, HRTC also sent buses going to Rampur, Kinnaur via Basantpur on Monday evening. If snowfall continues, the movement of vehicles to upper Shimla may come to a halt on Tuesday morning. Tutu, adjoining Shimla city, was covered in a white sheet due to heavy hailstorm on Monday evening. Due to this, traffic was disrupted on NH 205 from Dhanda to Hiranagar in the evening. Due to slippery roads, there was a long jam till late evening.



## Himachal News: Jewellery worth lakhs of rupees kept in bank locker goes missing, woman lodges complaint

**Diary Times Desk :** Jewellery worth lakhs of rupees belonging to a woman has gone missing from the locker of a government bank in Solan, the district headquarters. The woman has complained about this to the police. The police have registered a case and started investigation. It is being told that the woman has a locker in the bank for 35 years. A woman from Solan has complained to the police that she had taken a locker in the Punjab National Bank branch, Mall Road, Solan, about 35 years ago to keep her jewellery. She had kept her precious gold and silver jewellery in it. These included 1 tikka to be worn on the head, 1 nose ring, 1 headgear, 1 necklace, a pair of ear sets, four gold bangles (gokhru) and a silver crown of Mata, four pieces of rings, two silver rings. She used to check these jewellery from time to time by going to the bank. On 25 June 2024 also, when she went to the bank and checked the locker.

## Himachal Weather: Weather deteriorates again, snowfall in Lahaul valley including Rohtang, know the forecast till January 12

**Diary Times Desk :** The weather has deteriorated once again in Lahaul-Spiti and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh. Since Monday morning, there has been intermittent snowfall in many residential areas including Rohtang, Koksar, Keylong. The effect of severe cold has increased due to snowfall. On the other hand, there were clouds in Kullu since morning. In the evening, the weather also deteriorated in the capital Shimla. It rained in the city and hailstorm occurred in Tutu. There has been snowfall in the upper areas of the district. Gardeners and farmers are hoping for good rain and snowfall. After the snowfall in Lahaul in the past few days, 50 roads have still not been restored for traffic. The Meteorological Center Shimla has predicted snowfall in the high mountain areas.

## Himachal News: Industry Minister Harsh Vardhan Chauhan said- Hollow treasury was found in 2022 from the previous BJP government

**Diary Times Desk :** The previous BJP government of Himachal Pradesh had left a hollow treasury in the year 2022. The state is going through a difficult phase economically today. But, within the next one year, the hill state will come out of the adverse conditions. The dream of the state Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu is to make Himachal economically self-reliant by the year 2032. Industry, Parliamentary Affairs and Labor and Employment Minister Harsh Vardhan Chauhan said this while addressing the launch program of portable X-ray machine in Paonta Gondpur during his visit to Sirmaur on Monday. Industry Minister Harsh Vardhan Chauhan said that Himachal is still the only state in the country in which industries get uninterrupted power supply for 24 hours. Even today, electricity rates are cheaper than other states of the country. He said that there is less scope for jobs in the government sector. Therefore, employment opportunities are being created for the youth in the private sector. For this, efforts are on to bring more and more new and big industries in Himachal.

## Himachal News: Education Minister Rohit Thakur said- new teachers will be deployed in schools with more children

**Diary Times Desk :** Education Minister Rohit Thakur said that new teachers will be posted in schools with more children. The government has approved 700 posts of PGT. These teachers are being posted where there are sufficient admissions in the respective subjects. While chairing the first review meeting of the year with the District Deputy Directors at the Directorate of Samagra Shiksha on Monday, the Education Minister said that he himself will go to the district and block level to take feedback of government schemes. Quality of education is the priority of the government. The Education Department is the largest government department. It has a big responsibility to prepare the new generation for the future. He asked the Deputy Directors to work for the betterment of education with full dedication. He said that the government has made record recruitments in the Education Department in the last two years. To improve the quality of education, the government has decided to merge schools. This is not a political decision.

## Himachal BJP: BJP elected presidents in six districts in Himachal Pradesh, know who got the responsibility

**Diary Times Desk :** In Himachal Pradesh, six organisational district presidents of BJP have been appointed on Monday. Nine district presidents were elected on Sunday. Now the election of the district president is left in only Una. Claims are being made that elections will be held in Una within two to three days. On Monday, district presidents were elected unopposed in six districts. BJP election officer Rajiv Bhardwaj said that the responsibility of Shimla district president has been given to Keshav Chauhan, who belongs to Balsan of Chaupal assembly constituency. Arun Falta has been elected as the district president of Mahasu under Shimla. Rajesh Kaka has been elected as the district president of Nurpur in Kangra, Rakesh Thakur of Hamirpur, Krishna Lal Chandel of Bilaspur, Sachin Sharma of Kangra and Yashwant Singh Manju has been elected as the district president of Kinnaur. Let us tell you that there are a total of 16 organisational districts of BJP in Himachal Pradesh. 15 districts have got presidents. On Sunday, BJP had appointed nine organisational district presidents.

## Shimla: Drug smuggler escapes from Haryana Police custody in Matiyana of Theog, search continues

**Diary Times Desk :** A drug smuggler escaped from Haryana Police by dodging them in Matiyana of subdivision Theog in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh. In this regard, a case has been registered in Theog police station on the complaint of SI Subhash Chand of Haryana Police. The complainant told that during the investigation of FIR registered on January 1 in Police Station Chandni Bagh Panipat Haryana under ND & PS Act PS Act, accused Pawan alias Mistri son Rameshwar village Garhi Chaju Panipat escaped from the custody of police personnel of ANC / AVT Cell Panipat in Matiyana of Theog on Sunday evening at around 5:30-6:00 pm. Police has registered a case and started further action to catch the accused. A drug smuggler escaped from the Haryana Police at Matiyana in Theog subdivision of Shimla district.

## Cold wave grips Delhi, light rain expected today; Kashmir sees fresh snowfall

**Agencies :** Inclement weather and cold wave conditions continued to grip the national capital in the early hours of Monday, bringing a dip in temperature and chilly winds. Several trains were running late at New Delhi Railway Station due to dense fog in various parts of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. According to data from the India Meteorological Department, Delhi recorded a temperature of 11.4 degrees Celsius at 5.30 am on Monday. However, the IMD has also predicted a "generally cloudy sky with light rain" for the city on Monday. The MeT Department has forecasted a minimum temperature of 11 degrees Celsius for the day, with the maximum temperature expected to remain around 18 degrees Celsius. As the harsh weather continued, many homeless people sought refuge in night shelters. At shelters like those in Yamuna Bazar, near Kashmere Gate, and near ALIMs, all beds were occupied amid the plummeting temperatures.

## Prashant Kishor On Why He Rejected Bail And Decided To Go To Jail

**Agencies :** Prashant Kishor, who was detained during a fast-unto-death protest at Patna's Gandhi Maidan, was sent to jail today even after he was granted bail by a court in Patna. Speaking to reporters outside the court, Mr Kishor, founder of Jan Suraj and political strategist-turned-activist, explained why he refused to sign a bail bond. "I was taken to the court and I was granted bail but in the bail order it was mentioned that I should not do any wrongdoings, so I rejected it and I accepted to go to jail," he said. Mr Kishor, however, was later released from police custody after a Patna civil court granted him bail. The former poll strategist has been on the hunger strike for the last five days. He is demanding the cancellation of a Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) exam following allegations of a question paper leak. Prashant Kishor also narrated the sequence of events this morning: "Around 4 am today, police reached Gandhi Maidan, where I have been sitting on an indefinite fast unto death for the last five days. They told me that they were detaining me and asked me to go with them. I left with them. Since my supporters were also with me, it's natural that a minor clash broke out (between them and the police).

## WHO Ex Chief Scientist Says HMPV Nothing To Panic About, Lists Precautions



**Agencies :** Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is nothing to panic about, former chief scientist of the World Health Organisation Dr Soumya Swaminathan said. "It's a known virus that causes respiratory infections, mostly mild," she said in a post on X. Ms Swaminathan also urged people to take normal precautions that are taken for symptoms of cold, like wearing a mask, washing hands etc. "Rather than jump at detection of every pathogen, we should all take normal precautions when we have a cold: wear a mask, wash hands, avoid crowds, consult a doctor if severe symptoms," she said. The expert's assurance comes even as three infants tested positive for the virus in Karnataka and Gujarat on Monday, the first reported cases of HMPV in India. Two of the three cases were detected in Karnataka by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens. None of the patients had any history of international travel.

## "Every Law Broken": BJP Gets Fresh 'Sheesh Mahal' Ammo After Centre Audit

**Agencies :** A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on the expenses made in renovating the Delhi Chief Minister's residence has given the BJP fresh ammo to attack the ruling AAP and its leader Arvind Kejriwal as the national capital preps for the Assembly polls. The CAG probe, according to news reports, found that the preliminary estimate for the renovation was Rs 7.91 crore. This went up to 8.62 crore when work was awarded in 2020. But by the time the Public Works Department completed the job in 2022, the cost had jumped to Rs 33.66 crore. According to a report in The Indian Express.

## Atishi breaks down over BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri's remarks: 'Never thought politics could stoop so low'

**Agencies :** Delhi chief minister Atishi on Monday broke down while addressing a press conference on Bharatiya Janata Party leader Ramesh Bidhuri's alleged derogatory remark at her. "I want to tell Ramesh Bidhuri, my father was a teacher throughout his life, he has taught thousands of children coming from poor and lower-middle-class families, now he is 80 years old," said Atishi as she broke down during the presser. "Now he is really ill that he can't even walk without help.

## 9 Including DRG Jawans Killed In IED Blast In Chhattisgarh's Bijapur

**Agencies :** At least nine people, including eight Dantewada District Reserve Guard (DRG) jawans and one driver, were killed after their vehicle was blown up by Naxals through an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Monday, police said. According to Bastar Inspector General (IG) Sundarraaj P, the jawans were returning from a joint operation of Dantewada, Narayanpur, and Bijapur police when the blast occurred. The incident took place near Ambeli village under the Kutru police station when the security personnel were returning in their Scorpio vehicle after an anti-Naxalite operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraaj P said. The DRG is a unit of the state police. This is the biggest strike on security personnel by Naxalites in the last two years, an official said. On April 26, 2023, ten police personnel and a civilian driver were killed after Naxals blew up their vehicle.

## Key Accused In Chhattisgarh Journalist's Murder Arrested In Hyderabad

**Agencies :** The man accused of plotting the murder of journalist Mukesh Chandrakar, whose body was found in a septic tank in Chhattisgarh last week, was arrested in Hyderabad on Sunday night. Suresh Chandrakar, a distant relative of the journalist and a contractor, is believed to be the mastermind behind the murder. He had been missing since the murder came to light. According to the police, Suresh Chandrakar was hiding at his driver's home in Hyderabad. To track him, the police reviewed footage from 200 CCTVs.

## US Clearing Hurdles Limiting Nuclear Cooperation With India: Jake Sullivan

**Agencies :** The United States National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, who is on a two-day trip to India, said on Monday that the federal government in Washington is finalising necessary steps to remove barriers in India-United States civil nuclear cooperation to give fresh momentum to a landmark deal between the two countries. "United States is now finalising the necessary steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies," Mr Sullivan said in New Delhi on Monday. New Delhi and Washington have been discussing the supply of US nuclear reactors to India since the mid-2000s. The civil nuclear deal was signed in 2007 by then-President George W Bush, a major step toward allowing the United States to sell civilian nuclear technology to India. The two countries agreed in 2019 to build six US nuclear power plants in India. However, a longstanding obstacle in the corporation has been the need to bring Indian liability rules in line with global norms which require the costs of any accident to be channelled to the operator rather than the maker of a nuclear power plant.



## How Justin Trudeau's Allegations Against India Set Stage For His Downfall

**Agencies** : Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau faces a political crisis that could lead to his resignation. Increasingly isolated within his own Liberal Party, Trudeau has been accused of using allegations against India to deflect attention from mounting domestic challenges, including a falling economy, and dissent within his party. Over the past year, several high-profile Liberal Party MPs, including Sean Casey and Ken McDonald, have publicly called for Trudeau to step down, citing dissatisfaction with his leadership. Reports suggest that more than 20 Liberal MPs have signed a pledge demanding his resignation. The resignation of Chrystia Freeland as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister in December marked a blow to Trudeau's government. Freeland's departure reportedly stemmed from policy disagreements, including Trudeau's handling of potential US tariffs and his economic strategy. "Like most families, sometimes we have fights around the holidays," Trudeau said in December. "But of course, like most families, we find our way through it. You know, I love this country, I deeply love this party, I love you guys, and love is what families are all about."

## 'Bring them home now': Gal Gadot after Hamas releases 19-year-old hostage's video

**Agencies** : Two days after Palestinian group Hamas released a video of 19-year-old Israeli hostage Liri Albag urging the Israeli government to take actions to bring hostages home, Israeli actor Gal Gadot has shared a post on Instagram reiterating her urge to reach an agreement to secure the release of hostages. "This is Liri, only 19 years old. She was abducted by Hamas on October 7. Yesterday, we received a sign of life from Liri - a sign that sharpened the pain that Liri, along with 99 other hostages, has been held captive in Hamas tunnels for over 450 days," said Gal Gadot in her post. Gadot shared the post ahead of attending the Golden Globes award ceremony. Referring to the big night, she said, "On a personal level, while I prepare for a festive and joyous evening."

## "Condemn Any Attack On Innocent": India Slams Pakistan's Airstrikes On Afghanistan

**Agencies** : India on Monday "unequivocally" condemned the Pakistani attack on civilians in Afghanistan, saying it was Islamabad's "old practice" to blame its neighbours for its internal failure. Kabul has claimed that Pakistani airstrikes on the Paktika province of Afghanistan on December 24 last year resulted in the death of at least 51 people, including women and children. Responding to media queries regarding airstrikes on Afghan civilians, the Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We have noted the media reports on airstrikes on Afghan civilians, including women and children, in which several precious lives have been lost." "We unequivocally condemn any attack on innocent civilians. It is an old practice of Pakistan to blame its neighbours for its own internal failures. We have also noted the response of an Afghan spokesperson in this regard," he added.

## Elon Musk attacks PM Keir Starmer over 'Pakistani rape gangs', UK responds



**Agencies** : The United Kingdom government has responded to criticism from Tesla CEO Elon Musk on the handling of a child sexual abuse scandal, stating that the billionaire was misinformed about the issue. On social media platform X, Musk posted and shared several posts that claimed that UK PM Starmer had failed to bring to justice to young girls who had been sexually assaulted in England in the past decade, especially involving gangs of Pakistani-origin men. In a post he said, "Starmer was complicit in the RAPE OF BRITAIN when he was head of Crown Prosecution for 6 years." "Starmer must go and he must face charges for his complicity in the worst mass crime in the history of Britain," he added. "Some of the criticisms that Elon Musk has made, I think are misjudged and certainly misinformed," UK health secretary Wes Streeting said, PTI reported.

## New Orleans Attacker Visited Canada, Egypt In 2023, Says FBI

**Agencies** : The man accused of the ramming attack that killed 14 revelers on a crowded New Orleans street had earlier visited the city on apparent reconnaissance missions, once recording the location using camera-equipped glasses, investigators said Sunday. They said he had also traveled to both Egypt and Canada in the two years prior, though it was unclear what he did on those trips. US Army veteran Shamsud-Din Jabbar first came to the Louisiana city from his Texas home in late October, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said in a briefing. On that first visit, according to a video released by the agency, Jabbar slowly rode a bicycle through the iconic French Quarter while filming the scene with his Meta smart glasses. Meta glasses allow users to take photos or videos without using their hands, FBI special agent Lyonel Myrthil said. The video shows Jabbar at one point studying his reflection in a full-length mirror.

## Pope Names First Woman To Head Major Vatican Office

**Agencies** : Pope Francis on Monday named the first woman to lead a major Vatican department, appointing an Italian sister to take charge of the office that oversees the world's Catholic religious orders. Sister Simona Brambilla, 59, will lead the Vatican's Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. She replaces Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, a Brazilian prelate who had led the office since 2011. Francis has elevated women to leadership roles at the Vatican throughout his 11-year papacy, naming a range of women to second-in-command positions at various offices. But he had not yet appointed a woman to lead one of the offices of the Holy See, the internationally recognised sovereign entity that oversees the global Catholic Church. Brambilla was named as "prefect" of the Vatican office. Francis also named Spanish Cardinal Angel Fernández Artime as "pro-prefect" of the department.

## 3 US States Declare Emergency As 60 Million Americans Brace For Winter Storm

**Agencies** : Dangerous wintry conditions descended Sunday on a large swath of the central United States as a severe storm system tracked eastward, prompting travel and work disruptions from Kansas City to Washington. Around a dozen states from Kansas to New Jersey were under winter storm warnings Sunday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service (NWS), while areas across the US South faced possible tornado and cold weather threats. Nationwide, over 60 million people were under some sort of weather alert, according to broadcaster CNN, while air traffic monitoring site FlightAware showed almost 2,200 flight cancellations and over 25,000 delays. Gusty winds from the storm system, the first of the year, brought blizzard conditions to Kansas and Missouri, while states farther east were blanketed in multiple inches of snow. Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear implored residents to "please stay home" after reporting multiple vehicle crashes had closed a major highway. The NWS also warned that accumulations of up to a half-inch of ice in some areas -- as well as widespread tree damage from powerful wind gusts -- could lead to "prolonged power outages. A mix of freezing rain, sleet and snow began hitting Kansas early Sunday morning. Storm chaser Brian Emfinger said on X.



## President Murmu declines meeting with SKM delegation due to time constraints



**Agencies :** President Droupadi Murmu has declined a meeting with representatives of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), citing paucity of time. SKM had sought her intervention to resolve various issues affecting farmers, including remunerative crop prices, increasing production costs, and widespread indebtedness. "SKM appreciates the President for considering its request for an appointment and giving a written response. However, SKM expresses its deep regret that the President could not accede to meet the farmers' delegation due to paucity of time," said a statement issued by Morcha, while expressing hope that the Rashtrapati Bhavan would review its decision on "this crucial request for her intervention, since Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Supreme Court have so far been unable to resolve the impasse and take constructive steps to save the life of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, fasting for the last 41 days". The statement added that as the head of the State of India, she bears the responsibility of supporting the country's constitutional institutions, including the Executive and Judiciary.

## 100-bed maternal, child health facility planned at Sonapat Civil Hospital

**Agencies :** The Public Works Department (PWD) has received a Rs 65-crore tender for constructing a state-of-the-art Maternal and Child Health (MCH) wing at the Civil Hospital in Sonapat. The facility, aimed at improving healthcare services for mothers and newborns, will be a 100-bed advanced unit. Work is expected to begin within two months, officials said. Dr Jayant Ahuja, Civil Surgeon, said the new wing would offer comprehensive healthcare services under one roof. "The MCH wing will reduce maternal and neonatal deaths by providing advanced facilities for mothers and newborns," he said. The wing will include increased delivery tables, gynaecology and paediatric OPDs, Special Neonatal Care Unit (SNCU), Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Newborn Stabilisation Unit (NBSU), Kangaroo Mother Care Unit, Advanced testing labs for women and children and a modern operating theatre. Currently, the Civil Hospital has 200 beds. After the completion of the MCH wing, the hospital's capacity will increase to 300 beds, Dr Ahuja added. He added that new equipment with advanced technology would be procured, and additional staff, including doctors and paramedics, would be requested from the government.

## Building collapses in Chandigarh's Sector 17

**Agencies :** The building housing Mehfil restaurant in Sector 17 here collapsed on Monday, triggering panic among the locals. According to officials, there was no one inside the building when the incident occurred. Sources revealed that the structure had previously been declared unsafe. After the collapse around 7.10 am, the area was cordoned off by the police and fire tenders were dispatched to the site. The building was undergoing repair, but the work was later halted after the structure was declared unsafe. Consequently, the road in front of the building was closed to vehicular traffic in the last week of December. On December 21, 2024, a four-storey building collapsed in Mohali's Sohana village in which two persons died.

## Punjab CM names 2-month-old tiger cubs Abhay and Aryan at Chhatbir Zoo



**Agencies :** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, accompanied by his wife Dr Gurpreet Kaur and Punjabi film actor Binnu Dhillon, made an unscheduled visit to Chhatbir Zoo in Mohali today. During their visit, they toured the enclosures and interacted with the zoo staff. The highlight of the visit was when Mann named two 2-month-old tiger cubs, Abhay and Aryan. Earlier in the day, Mann paid his respects at Gurdwara Bhattha Sahib in Rupnagar, where he vowed to follow in the footsteps of Dashmesh Pitaah Guru Gobind Singh on Parkash Purab of the tenth Sikh master. Mann's visit to the zoo was unscheduled and very few people knew about. The zoo otherwise remains closed for public on Mondays.

## More than 8 lakh cases pending in Punjab courts

**Agencies :** Punjab's district courts are grappling with a massive backlog of 8,45,319 cases, with a concerning 62 per cent of these pending for over a year. The judicial logjam is primarily attributed to the non-availability of counsel for litigants, creating a significant bottleneck in case disposal. Additionally, stays granted by the courts in their orders have further exacerbated pendency, stalling proceedings and delaying justice delivery. The National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) — a monitoring tool to identify, manage and reduce pendency — reveals that 4,71,803 criminal cases involving life and liberty are pending in the courts across the state, with 2,89,825 matters more than a year old. The pending cases also include 3,73,516 civil matters, including 2,33,518 cases pending for more than a year. As many as 3,21,976 or 38 per cent of the cases, including 1,39,998 civil and 1,81,978 criminal matters, are pending for less than a year. Another 3,22,975 or 38 per cent are pending for between one and three years, including 1,46,398 civil and 1,76,577 criminal matters.

## Retired SMO in Amritsar loses Rs 23 lakh in 'digital arrest' scam

**Agencies :** A 76-year-old retired Senior Medical Officer (SMO) from Amritsar fell victim to a cyber-fraud, losing Rs 23 lakh to scammers posing as law enforcement officers from Mumbai. The incident occurred on December 5, 2024, and a case was registered after a preliminary probe. The victim received a WhatsApp call from the scammers, who claimed he was involved in a money laundering case at Tilak Nagar Andheri police station in Mumbai. Despite the victim's denial, the scammers convinced him to share his bank account details and transfer Rs 23 lakh to an educational and charitable trust in Karnataka. According to the police, when the victim answered the WhatsApp call, the caller immediately claimed that he was involved in money laundering and that a case had been filed against him. The victim denied any involvement, but the caller introduced himself as a sub-inspector with the Mumbai police and stated that, as an innocent person, he would need to cooperate with the investigation, which would be conducted by his senior. The call was then transferred to another person posing as a police officer, who alleged that the victim's credentials had been used for money laundering. The scammer demanded that the victim share his bank account details.

## 14 lakh cases pending in Haryana courts

**Agencies :** Haryana is burdened with a massive backlog of 14,30,151 pending cases, with over 70 per cent of them pending for more than a year. National Judicial Data Grid — the monitoring tool to identify, manage and reduce pendency — reveals that the primary reason behind the prolonged delay is the non-availability of counsel, which continues to hinder the smooth progress of cases. Besides, stay orders have emerged as another significant factor contributing to the mounting pendency, further straining the state's judicial system. Out of the total pending cases in the district courts across the state, 4,37,826 are civil cases, while 9,92,325 are criminal matters. Among these, 72.88 per cent of civil cases and 70.29 per cent of criminal cases have been pending for over a year. Furthermore, 72,844 pre-litigation and pre-trial matters remain unresolved, with 21.69 per cent of them older than one year. Age-wise data indicate that 29 per cent of pending cases are less than one-year old, while the highest pendency falls in the one to three years bracket at 37 per cent. Cases pending for three to five years.

## Illegal cannabis trade sparks concerns in Mandi, Kullu

**Diary Times Desk :** The illegal cannabis trade continues to be a major issue in the Mandi and Kullu regions, posing a serious challenge to the law enforcement authorities and local community. Despite strict police vigilance and ongoing crackdowns, the illicit cultivation and trade of cannabis persist, particularly in remote and higher-altitude areas where police access is limited. The situation has raised concerns about its growing impact on the public, especially the youth. In 2024, the Mandi police seized 48.69 kg of charas and destroyed nearly 9 lakh cannabis plants that were cultivated illegally. Similarly, in Kullu district, the police managed to seize 62.92 kg of charas from drug offenders. These figures highlight the extent of the problem, despite the efforts made by the authorities to curb the illegal trade. While the situation has improved in certain areas, the illicit cannabis trade continues to thrive due to the constant adaptation of drug offenders to law enforcement strategies.

## HC stays order on refund of upfront money to power firm

**Diary Times Desk :** The HP High Court yesterday stayed the judgment passed by the Single Bench on January 13, 2023, whereby it had directed the state government to return Rs 64 crore along with seven per cent interest to the Seli Hydro Electric Power Company Ltd. A division bench comprising Justice Vivek Singh Thakur and Justice Sushil Kukreja passed this order on an application filed by the state for staying the judgment. It was claimed in the application that the department has deposited sum of Rs 93,96,07,671 in the Registry of the court and in terms of the judgment the entire awarded amount along with up-to-date interest stands deposited in the Registry except interest for two days. However, the counsel representing the Power Company disputed the correctness and calculations of the amount deposited by the state. It was also contended that the application to stay the operation of judgment is not filed under the specific provision.

## Nauni varsity, HIL forge partnership to advance natural farming



**Diary Times Desk :** Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hindustan Insecticides Limited (HIL) to promote natural farming across India. The MoU facilitates the joint implementation of the Global Environment Facility and United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Regional Child Project, which focuses on reducing and managing agrochemical use through the Fostering Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM) initiative in India. HIL, a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers manufactures agrochemicals, seeds, and water-soluble fertilizers. This collaboration marks a pioneering effort by a company traditionally involved in the production of agrochemicals and fertilizers to actively promote natural farming practices in the country. The MoU was signed by Prof RS Chandel, Vice Chancellor of UHF, and Kuldeep Singh, Chairman and Managing Director of HIL. The primary goal of the FARM project is to offer safer alternatives to chemical pesticides and promote Integrated Pest Management practices.

## Following Centre's lead, state scraps 'no-detention' policy for classes V, VIII

**Diary Times Desk :** From the next academic session, the students of classes V and VIII will not be promoted to next class if they fail to clear the exam. With the Centre scrapping the 'no-detention' policy for the students of classes V and VIII, the state has also decided to follow suit. "Quality education is the priority of our government and I feel scrapping the no-detention policy is in the larger interest of the students. So, we will implement it from the next academic session," said Education Minister Rohit Thakur. Interestingly, the state had opted to do away with the no-detention policy for the students of Class V and Class VIII in 2019 and had even issued detailed instructions to the Department of Education to implement it. Despite the government order, the no-detention policy was not done away with and the students were promoted to the next class regardless of their performance in the exam. "The instructions were issued to the schools as well, but it couldn't be implemented after the Covid outbreak. However, the Education Minister has asked the department to implement it from the next session, adding that it will be done on priority," said Ashish Kohli, Director of Elementary Education.

## Govt focusing on making Himachal 'Green State': CM

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today said that a 2 Megawatt solar power plant has been installed to ensure and improve the power supply in the tribal region of Kaza. Appreciating the efforts of the officers and employees of the electricity board, who worked diligently to complete this project, the Chief Minister said the plant would be fully operational said within a few months with the addition of a 1 MWh battery storage system. Sukhu said the government was focusing on maximising the use of solar energy to make Himachal a 'Green State'. To achieve this objective, EV charging stations were being set up in various areas based on demand. "The government has approved the installation of 18 Megawatt ground-mounted and rooftop solar plants on vacant land near electricity board offices," he said. Apart from this, the state government is also working on installing rooftop solar systems on 50,000 houses across the state by 2026-27. As of now, 4,444 applications have been received for this scheme. Sukhu said the state government was taking measures to make the state self-reliant by proper utilisation of resources.

## Rs 85 crore for MRI machines in 3 medical colleges

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today said the state government has allocated Rs 85 crore for the procurement of MRI machines to be installed in three medical colleges – IGMC, Shimla, medical college, Tanda, and medical college, Nerchowk. "The 3-Tesla MRI machine is a state-of-the-art diagnostic tool, particularly useful for cases requiring precision and in-depth analysis. With the installation of these advanced MRI machines, diseases can be accurately diagnosed, facilitating better treatment for patients," the CM said. The CM further said that to ensure improved treatment facilities within the government health institutions, the state government would invest Rs 1,500 crore in the coming times to equip healthcare facilities with modern equipment. Currently, inadequate healthcare services in the state force 9.5 lakh residents to seek treatment outside Himachal Pradesh, leading to a loss of Rs 1,350 crore. He further stated that the government was prioritising the installation of advanced medical equipment at all levels, including medical colleges. Community Health Centres (CHCs) would be equipped with semi-automatic laboratories, ultrasound machines, and ICU facilities. "Additionally, all civil and zonal hospitals would soon have fully-automatic auto-analyzers, digital X-rays, ultrasound machines and modular operation theatres," he said. The establishment of in-house labs would ensure better treatment for patients and provide accurate diagnostic support to doctors.



## India's Squad For England ODIs: Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma's Future Confirmed In Report Amid Rumours

**Agencies :** While their Test future is up for debate, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma still remain crucial to India's hopes in ODI cricket. A few days after reports suggesting selectors are planning to snub the duo for the 3-match ODI series against England, it has been reported that both Kohli and Rohit will be called up for the series by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selection committee. India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who hurt his back while bowling in the 5th and final Test against Australia in Sydney, however, could be rested to manage his workload issues. According to a report in Sports Tak, both Rohit and Kohli will be selected as the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee announces India's squad for the ODI series, starting February 06. The 3-match series is Team India's only assignment in the 50-over format before the ICC Champions Trophy begins later in February. Though India won't have another opportunity to give Bumrah some match practice in the 50-over format, the selection committee and the management reportedly don't want to push the pacer too much. His workload remains of utmost importance for the teams.



## 'Love your...': Usman Khawaja in awe of Yashasvi Jaiswal as southpaw impresses on his first tour of Australia

**Agencies :** There weren't too many happy memories for India to ultimately take home from the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, as Australia's dominance translated to a well-earned 3-1 series win at the end of the five-match bout. However, there were definitely some silver linings for Indian fans, and plenty of reasons for optimism even in a difficult tour abroad. Chief amongst these was the form and ability shown by Yashasvi Jaiswal. The young batter is considered the future of Indian cricket, and his first series down under was one of the key talking points even before the first match in Perth began. Celebrating his 23rd birthday during the tour, how Jaiswal would cope with unfamiliar conditions and the expectations of a major tour was an important question. All in all, it was a remarkably successful time for Jaiswal, as he scored 391 runs in 10 innings, at an average of nearly 44. This included a memorable ton at the Optus Stadium in Perth to anchor India's sole victory, as well as a pair of 80s at the MCG where he was unfortunate not to go on and make another century.

## Harbhajan Singh's Epic Rahul Dravid Remark In Subtle Dig At Gautam Gambhir

**Agencies :** India head coach Gautam Gambhir is off to a torrid start in the new role. Brought to the Indian team after his successful stint with Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the Indian Premier League, Gambhir is staring at some morale-shattering results on the international circuit. First, the ODI series loss to Sri Lanka, followed by a home sweep against New Zealand in Tests, and now a 1-3 series loss to Australia in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Under Gambhir, some of the finest players in the Indian team, including veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, have failed to produce their best cricket. Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh wonders what happened after Rahul Dravid's tenure came to an end. "Everything was fine till Rahul Dravid was there. India won the World Cup, and everything was fine. But what happened suddenly?" Harbhajan questioned in a video on his YouTube channel. "In the past six months, we lost to Sri Lanka, a series whitewash against New Zealand, and now a 3-1 defeat in Australia. Everything seems to have fallen apart," Harbhajan pointed out. The biggest negative for India from the Australia tour was the performances of senior batters Kohli and Rohit.

## Yograj Singh At It Again, Sends Loud Message To Gautam Gambhir Over Virat Kohli's Form

**Agencies :** After India's 3-1 Border-Gavaskar Trophy loss to Australia, former cricketer Yograj Singh gave his take on the Indian senior batter's lack of form in the series. Highlighting Virat Kohli's dismissals in the same way throughout the series, he insisted that someone should have told the star batter not to play that shot. In five Tests, Kohli managed to make only 190 runs and was dismissed eight times while chasing balls outside off-stump. On the other hand, Rohit, who missed the Perth Test because of the birth of his second child, managed only 31 runs in three Tests, before opting to rest for the fifth Test in Sydney. Singh said if a player is representing India, then he might not necessarily need coaching in the traditional sense but rather require man-management to uplift his game. "The role of a coach becomes a significant question when you are playing for India. When you're an exceptional player representing India, you might not necessarily need coaching in the traditional sense. What you truly need is someone for man management. Sometimes, a player's mind gets blocked; they might not be scoring runs, or they keep getting out. No matter how great a player is, they can't be bigger than the game itself," Singh told IANS.



## Short TAKES

### 'Could be only one winner': Johnson lambasts Sam Konstas for enabling India and Bumrah's 'two against 11' mindset

**Agencies :** Former Australia pacer Mitchell Johnson believes Sam Konstas, 19, has much to learn after his act of riling Jasprit Bumrah up during the Sydney Test went horribly wrong. Australia won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1, but all the chatter concerns Konstas and his altercation with Jasprit Bumrah on Day 1 of the Sydney Test. Before the dying minutes of Day 1, Sam Konstas had a thing or two to say to Bumrah from the non-striker's end. Bumrah did not appreciate the teenager constantly chirping and gave him a piece of his mind. Two balls later, Bumrah removed Usman Khawaja and immediately charged towards Konstas. The entire Indian lineup came running towards the Australian opener. This act was earlier described by Australian coach Andrew McDonald as "intimidating". However, India's head coach, Gautam Gambhir, denied this allegation, saying cricket is played by tough men, and there is no room for being "soft." In his column for The Nightly, Johnson said, "Australia's Usman Khawaja, who was dismissed on the last ball of the day after delaying play to try and face only two more deliveries. This latter moment triggered a verbal exchange between fellow opener Sam Konstas and an animated Jasprit Bumrah, with India having the last laugh just a couple of balls later."

### 'Doping is a big problem in India': Neeraj Chopra drops bombshell statement, claims 'To tell you the truth...'

**Agencies :** Doping has been a huge problem in Indian sports. India registered the highest number of drug cheats in the world in 2022, according to a report released by WADA. India had a total of 3865 samples tested, from January-December 2022, and 125 of them returned as Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs). The report also concluded that India is the only country to have over 100 positive results. Meanwhile, countries with higher testing numbers had few AAFs. In a study conducted by WADA, India was named as the second worst country in a 10-year global study of positive doping cases by minors. The list was topped by Russia and China was third. So, when India's most popular athlete Neeraj Chopra was asked about doping.