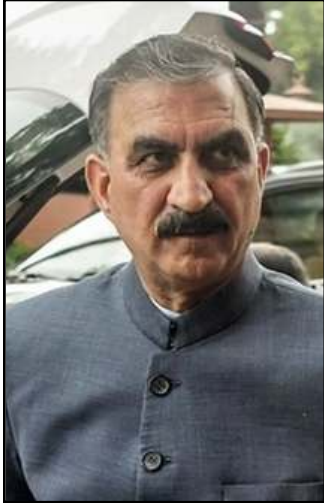


## Himachal CM: Chief Minister Sukhu said- Labor and employment department will be digital, government will also give 200 e-taxi permits



**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu directed the officials of the Labor and Employment Department to focus on data digitization as well as give priority to adopting modern technology to streamline the work of the department. While reviewing the functioning of the department, the CM said that digitization of all the work of the department is necessary. So that, interested people can get help in providing employment and self-employment opportunities. The CM said that so far 121 candidates have been recommended by the Transport Department for providing subsidy on the purchase of e-taxis. These e-taxis will be linked with government departments and e-taxi owners will be provided a fixed income. The Chief Minister said that the state government is considering giving 200 e-taxi permits in the first phase. The objective of this initiative is to protect the environment of the state and reduce carbon emissions. Sukhwinder Sukhu said that the present state government has provided 39,220 jobs during the last two years. Out of these, 13,704 jobs have been given in the government sector alone. The recruitment process is also underway to fill vacant posts in various departments. The state government has launched Rajiv Gandhi Swarojgar Start-up Yojana to provide self-employment to the youth.

## Cricketer Rishi Dhawan said- I took retirement when I felt return to Indian team was not possible

**Diary Times Desk :** cricketer Rishi Dhawan has retired from T-20 and ODI. After retiring from white ball, he will now play Ranji Trophy i.e. Red ball matches. After these matches, he is preparing to retire from red ball as well. He will not completely retire from cricket for now. Now his focus will be on the cricket league to be held worldwide. On the second day of announcing his retirement, Rishi Dhawan reached Mandi late on Monday evening. In a special conversation, Dhawan said that the journey of cricket was very wonderful. There are many memories associated with cricket. Played for Himachal for many years and after that got a chance to play with the Indian team as well.

## Priyanka Gandhi Responds To BJP Leader's Controversial "Cheeks" Remark

**Agencies :** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday dubbed former BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's controversial reference to her cheeks as "ridiculous", and said important issues should be discussed during the Delhi assembly polls instead of such irrelevant matters. He did not speak about his own cheeks, the Wayanad MP told reporters in a jibe at the BJP's candidate from the Kalkaji assembly seat as she left after attending a parliamentary panel meeting. It is a "ridiculous remark", she said, adding that "all this is irrelevant". "Elections are taking place in Delhi. Important issues should be discussed," she said. Mr Bidhuri had said he would make the roads of Kalkaji as smooth as Ms Gandhi's cheeks if elected as an MLA. He is pitted against AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi. He, later, expressed regret over his remarks, which had triggered a row.



## Thick fog engulfs Delhi, over 200 flights delayed, temperature dips further

**Agencies :** A thick layer of fog blanketed Delhi and neighbouring areas as North India continued to reel under a cold wave. Visibility was significantly reduced at airports across the region, disrupting flight services. At New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI), 200 flights were delayed, and four services were cancelled. In the latest advisory, the airport authorities stated that while landings and takeoffs continue, flights that are not equipped for low-visibility landings (CAT III A compliant) may be affected due to the prevailing weather conditions. Along with IGI Airport, the airports in Amritsar, Jammu, and Agra also recorded zero visibility, affecting services. Meanwhile, the weather department's 7-day forecast indicates that from Wednesday, the minimum temperature will start dipping, and by Friday, it is expected to drop to 5 degrees Celsius. Anticipating dense to very dense fog conditions, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange warning for Delhi on Wednesday and a yellow alert for Thursday and Friday.

## India's foreign secretary meets Taliban minister for first time in Dubai

**Agencies :** India pledged to provide support to Afghanistan for the health sector and for rehabilitating refugees as foreign secretary Vikram Misri met the Taliban's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi for the first time in Dubai on Wednesday. The meeting was part of the Indian side's continuing engagement with the Taliban regime in Kabul, which isn't formally recognised by New Delhi. India's engagement with the Taliban leadership has largely been handled by the foreign ministry's pointperson for Afghanistan, JP Singh, and this was the first officially acknowledged meeting between the foreign secretary and a senior Taliban leader. In response to a request from the Afghan side, India will "provide further material support in the first instance to the health sector and for the rehabilitation of refugees", the external affairs ministry said.

## HP High Court: Himachal High Court gave instructions, if the employees do not join after transfer then the government should take action

**Diary Times Desk :** The Himachal Pradesh High Court has directed the government that if the employees do not join duty on time after transfer, then disciplinary action should be taken against them. A division bench of Chief Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhawalia and Satyen Vaidya has said that the common people need staff in the hospital. An affidavit has been filed in the High Court on behalf of the Director of Health Services. It has been said that out of the eight employees who have been transferred, some have been relieved and some have not. Those who have been relieved have not yet taken charge. The next hearing of this case will be on March 13. During the hearing of the PIL, the advocate told the court that the people of the area are facing problems due to lack of staff in Tikkar Hospital, Shimla. The employees who have been transferred here by the government are not joining there. He told the court that because this is a remote area, everyone hesitates to come here.

## Karnataka BJP MLA asks if Siddaramaiah close to Naxals after their surrender

**Agencies :** Karnataka BJP General Secretary Sunil Kumar has raised concerns over the Karnataka government's decision to facilitate the surrender of six Maoists. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Kumar termed the government's move as a "package" designed to convert forest Naxals into urban Naxals. The surrender comes a week after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah appealed to Maoists to lay down their arms and join the democratic mainstream.



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## HP Rajya Chayan Aayog: OTA recruitment result will be declared by the end of the week, candidates have been waiting for two years

## Safety inspection underway, Jammu-Srinagar train service likely to start soon

**Agencies :** The first train connecting Jammu to Srinagar may begin its commercial run later this month, marking the completion of an over two-decade-old project that would link the Kashmir valley with the rest of the country by a direct railway line. Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that safety inspection of the last leg of the train connectivity between Katra and Banihal by commissioner of railway safety (CRS) is expected to be completed this week, after which regular train service between Katra and Srinagar would begin. He said that along with other mail express trains, a Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat train will also be run on the route that would cover the distance between the two junctions in just over 3 hours. A new chapter was written in the Indian Railways' history with a successful rising grade speed trial in the challenging geography from Jammu and Kashmir's Katra to Banihal along the USBRL.

**Diary Times Desk :** The result of Operation Theatre Assistant (OTA) will be declared by the Himachal Pradesh State Selection Commission by the end of this week. To declare the final result of the first recruitment based on Computer Based Test (CBT), the commission has completed the process of evaluation of documents of the candidates who passed the test. Decisions have also been taken on the objections and applications received from the candidates. Now the final merit is being prepared. The commission had declared the result of CBT and sent call letters to 112 candidates for evaluation of documents on 16 and 17 December. 162 posts of Operation Theatre Assistant OTA were advertised under post code 1073 in the year 2022 during the Staff Selection Commission, which was dissolved due to the paper leak case. Candidates have been waiting for the completion of the examination for two years. The commission was dissolved due to paper leak. After this, the newly formed Selection Commission conducted the examination through outsourced agency EdCIL. The examination was held on March 3. After this, the payment to the agency remained stuck for a long time. After making payment to the agency conducting the CBT, the commission received the result, after which all the formalities have been completed. Now preparations are underway to declare the final result of the exam. The final result of the OTA recruitment exam will be declared by the end of this week. The evaluation of documents has been completed.

## Jairam Thakur: Leader of Opposition said- People of the government are unbridled, Chief Minister should remind everyone of his election promise

## 'Modi Mania' sweeping the nation, says Nara Lokesh during PM's Vizag visit

**Diary Times Desk :** Leader of Opposition Jairam Thakur said that Congress leaders seem to have forgotten their election promises and want to divert the attention of the people of the state by talking about irrelevant things. The Congress leaders who are citing fulfillment of election promises, seem to have forgotten their election promises. I had reminded the government of their election promises inside the assembly as well, handed over the cards of Congress guarantees to the Speaker of the Assembly and the Speaker of the Assembly also reminded the Chief Minister of Congress' election promises inside the House. Now I remind the rest of the Congress leaders again of Congress' election promises. The small Congress leaders had shouted on the streets and interjections and guaranteed to give ₹1500 every month to every woman between 18 and 59 years. There was also a promise to give 5 lakh jobs to the youth of the state in 5 years, out of which one lakh jobs were guaranteed in the first cabinet meeting itself. Congress leaders had also come to Himachal Pradesh and given a guarantee of giving free electricity up to 300 units to every electricity consumer of the state. While giving these guarantees, the national leaders of Congress had even said that if we are unable to fulfil our promises.

**Agencies :** During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh delivered a speech praising Modi's contributions to the nation's development. Lokesh welcomed Modi, stating, "On behalf of the City of Destiny, we extend a heartfelt welcome to Narendra Modi. Today, the entire world is looking towards India, and the reason is Nammo." He emphasised Modi's transformation of the role of Prime Minister, adding, "Earlier, Prime Ministers were just figureheads, but today, our Nammo has transformed into a people's man." Lokesh noted that Modi's global vision still remains connected to the people of India. He also mentioned Modi's goal to turn India into a developed nation by 2047. He also praised Naidu's swift actions in implementing welfare schemes, such as increasing pensions with a single signature and reopening Anna Canteens. "When Chandrababu Naidu announced Vision 2020, many mocked him, but today, if you visit Hyderabad, you will see that every word he said has come true," said Lokesh. "Wherever you go, North, East, South, or West, there's only one mania, and that's Nammo mania," said Lokesh.

## Shanta Kumar: Ideology is different, but one for the state, Shanta Kumar gave up electricity subsidy on Sukhu's appeal

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu has appealed to the well-off people of the state to give up electricity subsidy in view of the economic condition of the state. In such a situation, BJP's veteran leader Shanta Kumar has decided to give up the subsidy on electricity on this appeal of Chief Minister Sukhu. Along with this, Shanta has also given some suggestions to the Chief Minister. Shanta Kumar has appealed to the rich people of the state to give up electricity subsidy on their own. On his request, some ministers and MLAs have announced to give up subsidy. At the same time, I have also decided to give up subsidy, and have also given some suggestions to the CM. Former Chief Minister Shanta Kumar has suggested that the poor BPL families of the state should continue to get subsidy as before. Subsidy should be reduced by 50 percent for all others. There will be very few people who will give up subsidy on their own, but due to reduction of subsidy by 50 percent, the government will get more income.



## "Lay Down, Water Took Me To Safety": Survivor Of Flooded Assam Mine

**Agencies :** A body was recovered and eight people are still trapped after water gushed into a 340-foot deep 'rat-hole' mine in Assam and flooded it on Monday. While several teams, including one from the Navy, are engaged in rescue operations, officials have said that the chances of the remaining miners being rescued alive are slim. Some people who were in the mines managed to escape and some others were fortunate not to be working the shift during which the flooding occurred, but they are all desperate for any news because they have friends trapped in the mine. H Islam said he arrived in Umrangso to work in the Assam Coal Quarry situated in the 3 Kilo area last week and was working his first shift on Monday when the flooding occurred. He recounted hearing a gush of water and people shouting for help. He said he had practically no safety gear and got lucky because a stream of water carried him to the surface. "We started work around 6.30 am and, an hour later, I heard people shouting. I called out to one of the people I know, whom I call 'Mama' and told him, 'Mama, there's water. run quickly if you want to live'.



## Himachal Electricity Subsidy: 200 consumers in Himachal have given up electricity subsidy, can also fill the form online

**Diary Times Desk :** So far, 200 consumers in Himachal Pradesh have given up electricity subsidy on the call of Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh. The board management has issued a special link on its website in this regard. By clicking on this link, consumers can give up subsidy by uploading the necessary information. Apart from this, one can also give up subsidy by filling the form by visiting the nearest electricity board office. On Thursday, Congress MLA Ashish Butail and Chief Minister's IT Advisor Gokul Butail also filled the form to give up electricity subsidy.



## HPBOSE: Teachers will not be able to do duty at examination centers as per their wish, will have to apply online

**Diary Times Desk :** Now teachers will not be able to do as they please to become the examination centre superintendent and deputy superintendent in the 10th and 12th class board examinations to be held in March. After the applications received through online medium, the education board will randomly allocate examination centres to the superintendents and deputy superintendents. The board examinations will be conducted in March at about 2,250 examination centres. During this time, one superintendent and one deputy superintendent will be deployed at each centre. For this, the education board will ask the teachers of the state to apply through online medium. After receiving the applications, the board will allocate examination centres to the teachers through online medium only, where the responsibility will be handed over to them. The deployment of superintendent and deputy superintendent will be done randomly. During the deployment, no superintendent or deputy superintendent will be able to select the examination centre of their choice. This time the education board has made such an arrangement that the superintendent or deputy superintendent who has given his services in the school in March 2024, will not be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the examination in that school this time.

## Himachal News: Conflict between Raj Bhawan and government increased, minister said- Governor's words are unfortunate;

**Diary Times Desk :** The conflict between the Rajbhawan and the government is increasing. Recently, Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla had said that it is not the job of the Rajbhawan to fulfill the election promises of any party. On this statement of the Governor, Revenue and Tribal Development Minister Jagat Singh Negi said on Wednesday that such words from the Governor are unfortunate. The government exists only to fulfill election promises. Talking to the media at the State Secretariat on Wednesday, the minister said that it is the responsibility of the Congress government to restore Nautod in tribal areas. It is not wrong to demand in a constitutional manner. He has met the Governor five times for the approval of the Nautod Bill. He will meet him again for the sixth time and request him. The objections raised by the Rajbhawan regarding Nautod mention the full name and address. Its complete data will be given to the Rajbhawan. He has an objection to the use of the word.

## Himachal News: Famous former Panchayat Pradhan Jabna Chauhan joined Congress, Pratibha Singh welcomed her

**Diary Times Desk :** Jabna Chauhan, the youngest and most famous Panchayat Pradhan of the country, has joined the Congress party. On Wednesday, Jabna Chauhan took the primary membership of the party at the party headquarters Rajiv Bhawan Shimla in the presence of State President Pratibha Singh under the chairmanship of Vice President of Small Savings Scheme Prakash Karad. Congress President Pratibha Singh welcomed Jabna Chauhan on joining the party by garlanding her and wearing the party's sash. Pratibha Singh said that Jabna Chauhan has been a celebrity. She has done a lot of commendable work for the upliftment of the society. Jabna is a source of inspiration for youth and women. Jabna Chauhan expressed her gratitude to Congress State President Pratibha Singh, Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu and Vice President of Small Savings Scheme Prakash Karad for making her join the Congress party.

## Himachal: Diseased apple nurseries arriving from Kashmir, risk of disease

**Diary Times Desk :** Diseased apple plants and other fruit saplings from Kashmir have started arriving in Himachal. Plants are reaching Himachal in trucks and pickup vehicles. There is a fear of serious diseases like apple leaf blotch, scab, Alternaria and Marmonina spreading from the Kashmiri saplings being sold in the market without quarantine process. Due to lack of awareness, some gardeners are also buying these plants. Apple nurseries' saplings are reaching Himachal Pradesh illegally from Kashmir. Suppliers of illegal saplings are flouting the Nursery Act. The risk of virus has increased from the apple saplings reaching Himachal Pradesh by ignoring the rules. There is a provision of imprisonment and fine for illegally selling apple saplings. After a long drought like situation, when it rained and snowed, now the apple gardeners of the state have started planting saplings. Apart from the saplings being provided by the government.

## Himachal Weather: Weather will deteriorate again, chances of rain and snowfall in the state for two days, fog alert also

**Diary Times Desk :** The weather is likely to deteriorate again in Himachal Pradesh. According to the Meteorological Center Shimla, there is a forecast of rain and snowfall in the state for two days. According to the department, the weather will remain clear in all parts of the state till January 10. On January 11, light to moderate rain and snowfall is likely at some places in the state. On January 12, there is a possibility of rain and snowfall at some places in the central and high mountainous regions of the state and rain at some places in the lower mountainous-plain areas. The weather is forecast to remain dry in the entire state from January 13. On the other hand, there is no possibility of any major change in the minimum and maximum temperatures during the next three days. After this, there is a possibility of an increase of 2-3 degrees Celsius in the minimum temperature and a decrease of 3-4 degrees Celsius in the maximum temperature in many parts of the state for the next two days.

## Himachal: FIR can now be lodged at police posts, home guards will be deployed in boards and corporations

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu said that registered police posts will be authorized to register FIRs in Himachal Pradesh. These posts will be connected to the crime and criminal tracking network system. Anti-drug act will also be made in the state against drug mafia. To overcome the shortage of employees, the government will soon fill the vacant posts. Apart from this, data warehouse and clearing agency will be established to collect and organize data in the police department. While chairing the review meeting of the police department, the CM said that there is a need to adopt modern technology to improve the functioning.

## Mahakumbh: Agra girl, 13, leaves IAS dream behind to become 'sadhvi'

**Agencies** : Renouncing her dream of becoming an Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer, a teenage girl belonging to Uttar Pradesh's Agra has reportedly expressed the desire to become a 'sadhvi' or a nun, according to her parents, who say the teen has experienced "detachment from worldly life at the Mahakumbh". The girl has been staying with her parents and younger sister at the Mahakumbh camp since last month at the invitation of Kaushal Giri Maharaj of Juna Akhara. "Mahant Kaushal Giri Maharaj of Juna Akhara has been visiting our village for the past three years to conduct Bhagwat Katha sessions. It was during one such session that my daughter Rakhi took her guru diksha," news agency PTI quoted the girl's mother Reema as saying, who is staying at the Juna Akhara camp. Reema said that Kaushal Giri Maharaj invited her, her husband Sandeep Singh, and their two daughters to serve at the Mahakumbh camp in Prayagraj last month. Sandeep Singh runs a confectionery business.

## Elephant Ragdolls Man At Kerala Festival In Horrifying Video



**Agencies** : At least 17 people were injured, one of them critically, when an elephant lost his cool during an annual festival at a mosque in Kerala's Malappuram district late last night. Hundreds had gathered at the Puthiyangadi festival at Tirur. Visuals show at least five elephants adorned with golden plates at the festival as people in the crowd tried to film them. Suddenly, one of them becomes agitated and charges into the crowd as the mahout struggles to control it. This elephant, named Pakkathu Sreekuttan, is then seen lifting a man and swinging him in the air before flinging him away. The condition of the man is critical, according to reports, and he is being treated at a hospital in Kotakkal. Visuals captured the panic in the crowd as people struggled to run to safety. Most injuries were the result of the stampede-like situation due to the panic. Some men were seen trying to control the elephant with chains. It took nearly two hours to bring the elephant under control. The elephant was then near a mast to prevent any further damage.

## Maldives Attempts To Rebuild Defence Ties With India 8 Months After Fallout



**Agencies** : Eight months after New Delhi was made to withdraw its military personnel from Maldives leading to frayed ties between the south Asian neighbours, a visit by the Maldivian defence minister to New Delhi aims to resume defence cooperation. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday met his Maldivian counterpart Mohammed Ghassan Maumoon in New Delhi for high-level talks, including on boosting the defence preparedness of the Indian Ocean archipelago. During the meeting Mr Singh conveyed India's readiness to enhance defence ties with Maldives. According to the press statement, the bilateral talks between the two leaders were wide-ranging, but revolved around the core resolve to work closely in realising the joint vision for India-Maldives comprehensive economic and maritime security partnership. It further stated that the two ministers reviewed in all aspects of bilateral defence and security cooperation in great detail. "During the talks, both sides reasserted the firm commitment to work closely in realising the joint vision.

## Lady Shri Ram College, Tagore International School receive bomb threats in Delhi

**Agencies** : Two educational institutes, including Lady Shri Ram College and Tagore International School, in the national capital received bomb threat e-mails on Wednesday. "We received two different bomb threat calls from Lady Shree Ram College (sic) at 11.40 am. Another bomb threat call was received from Tagore International School in East of Kailash area at 11.17 am," an official told PTI. According to PTI, upon receiving the information, bomb disposal and dog squads were immediately rushed to both the educational institutes, but nothing suspicious was found. This threat comes after schools, hospitals and flights in the national capital.

## 'He never spoke about his cheeks': Priyanka Gandhi reacts to Ramesh Bidhuri's remark

**Agencies** : Days after BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri took back his 'cheeks' remark involving Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the latter hit back at him on Wednesday, saying that "he never spoke about his own cheeks". Last week, the saffron party's candidate in the Kalkaji assembly constituency sparked a massive controversy for his remark in which he reportedly said that he would make the roads of the assembly seat area as smooth as Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks. His remarks drew flak from opposition leaders, who described his comments as "distasteful".

## "Lay Down, Water Took Me To Safety": Survivor Of Flooded Assam Mine

**Agencies** : A body was recovered and eight people are still trapped after water gushed into a 340-foot deep 'rat-hole' mine in Assam and flooded it on Monday. While several teams, including one from the Navy, are engaged in rescue operations, officials have said that the chances of the remaining miners being rescued alive are slim. Some people who were in the mines managed to escape and some others were fortunate not to be working the shift during which the flooding occurred, but they are all desperate for any news because they have friends trapped in the mine.

## Kerala Businessman Detained After Actor Files Sexual Harassment Complaint

**Agencies** : Bobby Chemmanur, a prominent businessman in Kerala, has been taken into custody by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) after sexual harassment charges were filed by Malayalam actor Honey Rose, news agency PTI confirmed citing unnamed officials. An official said he was picked by the cops from Wayanad after a case was registered under non-bailable sections against him. Reacting to the police action, Ms Rose told a news channel it was a peaceful day for her and that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had assured her of strong action when she had raised the issue with him. In a social media post earlier this week, the actor narrated she was being harassed, but did not name anyone. A barrage of cyberattacks soon followed and dozens of arrests were made by the police. "Personally, I tend to ignore such awful remarks from mentally disturbed people with contempt and sympathy, but it does not mean that I am incapable of responding to them," she had said while warning of legal consequences.



## Turkiye threatens military action against Kurdish forces in Syria

**Agencies :** Turkiye has threatened to launch a military operation against Kurdish forces in Syria unless they accept Ankara's conditions for a "bloodless" transition following the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad last month. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told CNN Turk television late on Tuesday that "we will do what's necessary" if the People's Protection Units (YPG) fail to meet Ankara's demands. Turkiye is seeking to make itself a key player as its southern neighbour stabilises. Fidan said "a military operation" could be on the cards, although he added that the new Syrian leadership, for which Turkiye has voiced support, has the power to battle the YPG on its own. Al-Assad's overthrow by opposition rebel forces last month raised the prospect of Turkiye intervening directly against Kurdish forces in Syria, which are accused by Ankara of links to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK has been battling the Turkish government for decades. Turkiye, as well as the United States and the European Union, has long considered it a "terrorist organisation". The conflict is estimated to have killed more than 40,000 people.

## 'Massacres': Women, children killed as Israel bombs Gaza's 'safe zone'

**Agencies :** Many women and young children have been reported killed in Israel's latest attacks on Gaza, with nearly 50 people killed and dozens wounded in a single day as the overall death toll in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory pushes towards 46,000. Medical sources told Al Jazeera that at least 49 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli attacks since the early hours of Tuesday morning. The dead included at least five children killed by Israeli strikes on tents sheltering displaced people in al-Mawasi – a desolate coastal area in southern Gaza designated a "humanitarian safe zone" by the Israeli military. Despite hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinian civilians crammed into makeshift tent camps in al-Mawasi, Israel's military has continually attacked the site, claiming, without providing evidence.

## 'All hell will break out in the Middle East if...' Donald Trump's dire warning to Hamas



**Agencies :** US President-elect Donald Trump has issued a stark warning, stating that "all hell will break out in the Middle East" if hostages held by Hamas are not released by Inauguration Day, repeating the threat multiple times. Trump did not specify the actions he might take if the hostages are not freed by the time he assumes office. The hostages, including some Americans, were seized on October 7, 2023, and officials report that around 100 remain in captivity in Gaza. However, there are concerns that many may have died in captivity. Trump's statement came during a news conference at Mar-a-Lago, Florida, where he emphasized the urgency of the situation. "All hell will break out. If those hostages aren't back, I don't want to hurt your negotiation, if they're not back by the time I get into office, all hell will break out in the Middle East," Trump said. He is set to be sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on January 20.

## 'Girl, you're not...': Elon Musk's sassy reply to Justin Trudeau over US-Canada merger post

**Agencies :** Tech billionaire and Tesla boss Elon Musk took a dig at outgoing Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after the leader rejected the Canada-US merger pitched by US President-elect Donald Trump. Taking to X, which Musk owns, Trudeau denied the possibility of a merger between the two countries. "There isn't a snowball's chance in hell that Canada would become part of the United States. Workers and communities in both our countries benefit from being each other's biggest trading and security partner," he said in his post. Musk, a Trump confidant, who has in the past endorsed his idea of making Canada the 51st state of the US, hit back at Trudeau. "Girl, you're not the governor of Canada anymore, so doesn't matter what you say," he said, replying to his post. Recently, Trump has frequently referred to Trudeau.

## Biden Promised A Peaceful Transition Of Power But Trump Thinks Otherwise

**Agencies :** On January 6th, the outgoing president Joe Biden condemned the Capitol attack which happened the same day in 2021. "We should be proud that our democracy withstood this assault...And we should be glad we will not see such a shameful attack again this year," Biden wrote, in an opinion post in The Washington Post. Biden noted that the certification would proceed peacefully without the violence seen in 2021, and highlighted the contrast between that chaotic day and the orderly transition planned for this year. However, President-elect Donald Trump does not believe so. US President-elect Donald Trump has publicly accused President Joe Biden of intentionally making the presidential transition difficult, citing recent executive orders on climate change and other official acts taken during Biden's final weeks in office. Trump, who is set to be sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on January 20, claimed that Biden is doing everything possible to hinder the transition process.

## "We'll Be Changing Name Of Gulf Of Mexico To Gulf Of America": Donald Trump

**Agencies :** Donald Trump threatened military action to secure the Panama Canal and economic force against neighboring Canada, in a meandering press conference Tuesday a day after Congress certified his election victory. The Republican president-elect had gathered reporters at his home in southern Florida to announce a \$20 billion Emirati investment in US technology, but his remarks quickly became a rally-style rant as he returned at length to familiar campaign themes. "Since we won the election, the whole perception of the whole world is different. People from other countries have called me. They said, 'Thank you, thank you,'" Trump said as he set out his agenda for the coming four years. The billionaire announced he was going to rename the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America" and threatened the US's southern neighbour again with massive tariffs if it does not halt illegal border crossings. "We're going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to Gulf of America, which has a beautiful ring," he told reporters, adding that "It's appropriate. And Mexico has to stop allowing millions of people.

## Ukraine stages drone attack on Russia's Saratov region, causing big fire

**Agencies :** Ukrainian drones struck deep inside Russia overnight and attacked the Saratov region, causing a major fire in the city of Engels, the local governor said on Wednesday. The region hosts a major air base for strategic bomber planes that form part of Russia's nuclear forces. Ukraine has attacked the base with drones before, but there was no word on whether it had been targeted on this occasion. Russian news reports said the fire was at an oil facility. Unverified videos and photos published on social media showed a large fire burning with orange flames, sending thick clouds of smoke into the night sky. Regional governor Roman Busargin said the cities of Saratov and Engels, on opposite sides of the Volga river, had been subject to a "mass drone attack" and there was a fire at an industrial site, but that there were no known casualties.



## MP Amritpal's father under house arrest



**Agencies :** Jailed pro-Khalistan activist and Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh's father Tarsem Singh was detained at his house in Jallapur Khera village by the Amritsar police on Tuesday to prevent him from taking part in a protest by the Qaumi Insaaf Morcha in Mohali. Following his house arrest, Tarsem Singh recorded a video message and called upon people to join the Morcha in large numbers. He also condemned the police action and targeted Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann for the 'oppression'. Tarsem Singh had recently announced plans to launch a new political party, the name of which would be announced at Maghi Mela in Muktsar. Tarsem Singh alleged that the government was weakening democracy by creating an atmosphere of fear in the village. "Police forces have been deployed throughout the village since Monday night. By denying people the right to voice their anger, the Bhagwant Mann government is undermining democracy," he added. The police let him off in the afternoon. Some other Sikh activists, including Ranjit Singh of Damdami Taksaal, were also reportedly detained to stop them from joining the morcha.

## Morcha activists clash with UT police, 4 cops hurt

**Agencies :** A clash between members of the Quami Insaaf Morcha and the UT police occurred on the Sector 43/52 road as protesters attempted to march towards the Punjab Chief Minister's residence. The confrontation left four police personnel, including an Inspector, injured. The UT police used teargas shells and water cannons to prevent the protesters from marching towards the CM's house. They also resorted to lathi-charge to disperse the morcha activists. Four police personnel, Inspector Jaiveer Singh, ASI Ramesh, ASI Gurjeet Singh and Constable Jaspreet Kaur, were injured. The protesters were demanding the release of Sikh prisoners, referred to as Bandi Singhs. In anticipation of the protest, the police had strengthened security with a heavy deployment of forces along the UT border. A group of protesters breached the barricades.

## 6 months on, 80 shopkeepers opt to operate 24x7 in city

**Agencies :** Nearly 80 registered shops and commercial establishments have opted to operate 24x7 here in the past six months. These shops, primarily in the grocery and food business, are being run by over 12 multinational companies. The city has more than 100 markets. The authorities claim they receive nearly three applications every month. In a move aimed at enhancing the ease of doing business for shopkeepers and traders, the Labour Department issued a notification in June last year allowing shops and commercial establishments registered under the Punjab Shops & Commercial Establishments Act 1958 to operate 24x7 throughout the year without requiring specific permission from the department. Only the shops and commercial establishments registered with the department can avail of this facility. Traders have to submit a self-undertaking on the online portal (labour.chd.gov.in).

## SAD panel to meet on Jan 10 to consider Sukhbir's resignation



**Agencies :** Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Working President Balwinder Singh Bhundar has convened a meeting of the party's Working Committee on January 10 to take a decision on the resignation submitted by SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal. It will also decide on holding a membership drive to pave the way for restructuring of the party by holding organisational elections. Announcing this, senior party leader Daljit Singh Cheema said the meeting of the Working Committee would be held at the party head office here. He said that besides considering Badal's resignation, the party would also announce the schedule for the membership drive besides discussing all important issues related to the state.

## No purpose in ordering reunion when marriage is dead: HC

**Agencies :** The Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear that purpose would not be served in attempting to reunite a couple when the marriage has become "unworkable and totally dead". The assertion came even as a Division Bench of the high court asserted that it was undoubtedly an obligation on the court to maintain the matrimonial bond as far as possible. The assertion by the Bench of Justice Sudhir Singh and Justice Alok Jain came on an appeal filed a decade back by an Air Force officer. He had challenged the judgment and decree dated March 7, 2014, passed by an Additional District Judge, whereby his petition under Section 13 of the Hindu Marriage Act was dismissed. "Indisputably, the parties have been living separately since 2007. In the absence of any resumption of matrimonial obligation and cohabitation between the parties for a long period, there is no possibility of their reunion. Undoubtedly, it is an obligation on the part of the court that matrimonial bond should as far as possible be maintained.

## Court raps DHBVN for 'regressive' approach to electrocution relief

**Agencies :** The Punjab and Haryana High Court has admonished Dakshin Haryana Biji Vitran Nigam (DHBVN) Limited for exhibiting a "lacklustre and completely regressive attitude" in repeatedly passing mechanical orders on compensation pleas in electrocution cases. Justice Vinod S Bhardwaj of the high court also made it clear that such tendency was required to be curbed. The court also imposed Rs 25,000 costs on DHBVN's executive engineer operation for passing orders in "a mechanical manner without any application of mind" and without taking into consideration the objectives of the government's no-fault compensation policy. The censure and the direction came in a case where the policy stipulating no-fault compensation in electrocution cases was alleged to have been conveniently ignored. Taking up the matter, the bench ruled that the amount, directed to be deposited with Haryana Legal Services Committee, might be recovered from the officer who passed the order. "This court is being repeatedly approached by the claimant aggrieved of mechanical orders being passed repeatedly by the executing officers without any reference to or meaningful interpretations of the policy notified by the government, thus denying and depriving the victims of the compensation to which the law entitles them. Such a tendency shows a lacklustre and a completely regressive attitude on the part of the authorities in shedding responsibility which needs to be curbed," Justice Bhardwaj asserted.

## Man shoots friend's father in Gurugram

**Agencies :** In a tragic incident here, a 45-year-old man was injured after being allegedly shot at by his son's friend inside his house after he scolded him, the Gurugram police said on Tuesday. According to the police, the accused, Tanmay of Gurgaon village, committed the crime after the victim, Sandeep Kumar, a resident of the same village, scolded him not to visit his house, following which the accused developed enmity with the victim and shot him in the stomach and fled on Tuesday morning. As per the police, Gurugram Sector-5 police station received information that a firing incident took place in Gurgaon village on Tuesday morning. Upon receiving the information, a police team reached the spot, but by then, the injured was taken to a private hospital for further treatment.

## Deputy CM raises concerns over vehicle scrapping policy

**Diary Times Desk :** Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri today raised the issue of financial implications of the Vehicle Scrapping Policy in Himachal considering the state's topographical constraints and sparse vehicle population. Agnihotri today participated in the national-level meeting of Transport Ministers and 42nd meeting of Transport Development Council held under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari today at New Delhi today. "Scrapping of vehicles in Himachal would prove to be both costly and cumbersome," he said. He sought the Centre's support in addressing various issues concerning the transport sector in Himachal Pradesh. Gadkari assured that the Central government would carefully consider the issues raised by Himachal Pradesh and other states. He emphasized that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) was committed to providing necessary support to address these challenges, particularly in the areas of vehicle scrapping, infrastructure development and the promotion of cleaner, more sustainable transport solutions.

## Minister Chauhan opens Patwar Circle building

**Diary Times Desk :** Harshwardhan Chauhan, Minister for Industries, Parliamentary Affairs and Labour and Employment, inaugurated the newly constructed Patwar Circle building in Kamarau today and laid the foundation stone for a Primary Health Centre (PHC) building, which will be built at a cost of ₹1.37 crore. Earlier in the day, he also initiated the construction of the Chiloun-Chowki-Mirgwal road. Speaking at a public gathering held in the community hall of Chowki village, Chauhan emphasized that the demand for the Patwar Circle office and a PHC in Kamarau had been longstanding. He expressed satisfaction at being able to inaugurate the Patwar Circle building and assured that the PHC building would be completed and operational within a year. The minister further highlighted the importance of the Chiloun-Chowki-Mirgwal road project.

## Himachal's first drug-testing laboratory begins operations



**Diary Times Desk :** Eight years after receiving funds from the Centre, the state's first drug laboratory, equipped with the state-of-the-art testing facilities, became functional at Baddi on Wednesday. The functioning of the lab will give a boost to high-quality drug manufacturing as the drug inspectors will now be able to step up the sampling of drugs. Earlier, such samples were sent to labs in Chandigarh, making the task time-consuming. Its work has been outsourced to Panchkula-based ITC Labs, who will be paid Rs 6 crore annually by the state government to operate this lab. It has deputed 30-40 technicians and 10 administrative officials while the state government has provided two government analysts to oversee its functioning. The Rs 32 crore lab will cater to 650-odd industrial units. Earlier, only limited drug testing was undertaken in the absence of a lab. With 15 sophisticated HPCL machines and other paraphernalia, the preliminary testing was undertaken on 70 drug samples on Wednesday.

## Process of recruitment of 1,226 police constables, 30 SIs underway: CM

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today said registered police post would be authorised to register FIRs by integrating Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) in these police posts. While presiding over review meeting of Police Department here today he said the state government would soon formulate Anti-Drug Act to combat the drug peddlers in an effective and efficient manner. "A data warehouse and clearing agency would be set up in the police department to store and organise data from multiple agencies for analysis and decision making," he said. He stressed the need for adopting cutting edge technology to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency. The Chief Minister said that the state government would also address the issue of staff shortage by filling up the vacant posts. He said that the process of recruitment of 1,226 police constables and 30 Sub Inspectors was underway. "Police reforms are essential for enhancing public services and the State Government was also ensuring stringent laws against criminals," he said. The Chief Minister assured that all possible assistance would be provided.

## Andhra tourist dies in paragliding accident near Manali



**Diary Times Desk :** A tourist from Andhra Pradesh died in a paragliding accident in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, police said on Wednesday. The accident happened on Tuesday at Raison, about 20 km from Manali, while Tadi Mahesh Reddy (32) was trying to take off, they said. He was rushed to a hospital but succumbed to the serious injuries sustained in the incident. Police said a sudden wind gust during take-off affected the glider's flight and, instead of going up, it went down. Reddy was initially taken to Harihar Hospital at Bhuntar but as his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to the Medical College in Mandi, where doctors declared him dead. The post-mortem of the body was conducted on Wednesday, police said.

## IMD issues yellow warning for cold wave, dense fog in five Himachal districts

**Diary Times Desk :** The Shimla meteorological station on Wednesday issued a yellow warning for a cold wave, ground frost and dense fog at isolated places in five of the 12 districts in Himachal Pradesh including Una, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra and Mandi. The department also issued a yellow warning for these districts for Thursday with dense fog expected on Friday. Meanwhile, Una district experienced a severe cold wave on Tuesday night, with the minimum temperature hovering around the freezing point at 1.2 degrees Celsius, while Tabo in the tribal Lahaul and Spiti district recorded the coldest temperature at night, dipping to minus 13.6 degrees Celsius. Cold wave was observed in Hamirpur, Mandi and Kangra districts, dense fog was seen in Bilaspur and Mandi, while shallow fog was seen in Kangra. A fresh western disturbance is expected to affect Northwest India from January 11 onwards and the MET office has predicted rain and snow at a few places on Saturday and Sunday. The weather will remain mainly dry until Friday, barring isolated places in the tribal districts of Lahaul and Spiti, and Kinnaur, which may experience snowfall.



## Virat Kohli, Rohit told 'their game will stagnate' as Indian team member backs Gambhir's 'domestic cricket' remark

**Agencies** : Former India cricketers Irfan Pathan and Sunil Gavaskar expressed their concerns, while head coach Gautam Gambhir dropped a subtle message in his Sydney press conference. And now, another member of the Indian team management backed the solution of going back to domestic cricket to find the rhythm amid concerns on Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's form. Kohli scored just 90 more runs barring the century in Perth as he recorded his worst tour of Australia, which subsequently saw him averaging just over 30 since 2022. Rohit, on the other hand, scored just 31 runs in five innings as a woeful average of 6.2, and overall scored 164 runs in his last eight Tests since September, which comprised just one fifty. Following the poor run of form, experts and coach Gambhir urged the two senior batters play in the domestic cricket, with the second half of the 2024/25 Ranji Trophy season slated to begin on January 23. Amid the calls, a member of the team management, in conversation with The Indian Express, admitted that, "while playing domestic cricket cannot fix all the flaws, it can certainly help Test players get into the rhythm needed to play the longest format."



## Stadiums In 'Disappointing State', Entire Champions Trophy To Be Moved Out Of Pakistan If...

**Agencies** : The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is scheduled to begin in Karachi, Pakistan on February 19, which is about 40 days away. The tournament is being played in a hybrid format, with India playing all its matches (knockout rounds included if it qualifies) in Dubai. However, the state of the three stadiums in Pakistan where the matches will be held - Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi - is disappointing, stated a report. In one of the stadiums, even the plaster work is not complete. "It is a very disappointing picture. All three stadiums are far from ready and it's not renovation or refurbishment, but proper construction which is underway. There is so much work left with seats, floodlights, facilities and even the outfield and playing surfaces," a source was quoted as saying by Times of India. "The weather is not ideal for construction and finishing work to happen at a rapid pace. At Gadaffi, even the plaster work isn't completed yet. And most of the time is taken by finishing work because we are talking about dressing rooms etc. They just can't be random rooms/enclosures for an ICC event."

## Agarkar told to pick between KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant as Test captain: 'Don't kill golden goose Jasprit Bumrah'

**Agencies** : Mohammad Kaif said Jasprit Bumrah is not the right option to replace Rohit Sharma as India's captain simply because he is India's main strike bowler, who is susceptible to injuries and requires breaks from time to time. Bumrah has emerged as the frontrunner to become India's next Test captain after Rohit Sharma decided to drop himself from the fifth and final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Sydney due to his poor form with the bat. Although Rohit later clarified that had no intentions of retiring or quitting as India's captain, his repeated failures with the bat do not paint a rosy picture for his future in the Indian Test side, especially when the next Test match is six months away. Kaif said Ajit Agarkar-led BCCI selection committee should think before killing its golden goose by burdening him with captaincy. BCCI should think twice before appointing Bumrah as full time captain. He needs to solely focus on taking wkts and staying fit. Added leadership responsibility, getting carried away in heat of moment can result in injuries and shorten an outstanding career.

## Clarke lauds Bumrah as 'the best ever' all-format quick

**Agencies** : Former Australia captain Michael Clarke has termed Jasprit Bumrah the best all-format quick bowler, ever after his Player-of-the-Series performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Bumrah took 32 wickets at 13.06 before pulling up injured midway through Australia's first innings at the SCG in the final Test. India's other quicks were able to secure a four-run lead, but in Bumrah's absence, Australia chased down 162 on the third day to win the series 3-1. It meant Bumrah finished two short of equaling Sydney Barnes' 1911-12 record of 34 wickets in a series by a touring pace bowler to Australia. "The thing I've thought about Bumrah, after the series finished and I was sitting and thinking about his performances, I actually think he's the best fast bowler ever across all three formats," Clarke told ESPN's Around The Wicket. "I know a lot of great fast bowlers, Curtly Ambrose, Glenn McGrath, didn't get to play T20 cricket, so I'm not talking about those guys, but in regards to anyone who has played all three formats, I think he might be the best ever. He's actually that good in any conditions, that's what makes him great; any conditions, any format, this guy's a freak."



## Short TAKES

### 'Jack Of Not Being Picked': On R Ashwin's Retirement, Ex-Australia Star Drops Bombshell

**Agencies** : Former Australian cricketer Brad Haddin suggested that legendary spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's retirement in the middle of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy stemmed from frustration over not being selected in the playing eleven. The veteran all-rounder sent shockwaves through the cricketing fraternity by announcing his retirement from international cricket following the draw in the third Test at Brisbane. Notably, Ashwin had not played in that match. He featured in the pink-ball Test at Adelaide Oval, scoring 29 runs across both innings and taking one wicket. Before this series, he was part of India's shocking home Test series loss to New Zealand, their first in 12 years. Ashwin had been one of the key architects of India's dominant Test run at home. Speaking on the Willow Talk podcast, Haddin said, "The first three Test matches, they played three different spinners, so they arrived here not knowing what their game style is going to be around here. It should not be a shock when you get here, they have played here enough, they have success here so the Ashwin retiring mid-series was a funny one. I do not think we have heard the last of that yet. I think he was just jack of not getting picked."

### 'Don't Play God': On Sarfaraz Khan Being 'Completely Dumped' Against Australia, Stern Message Sent

**Agencies** : Two prominent batters, who were completely overlooked in the India vs Australia series despite the batting department not firing in unison, were Sarfaraz Khan and Abhimanyu Easwaran. Sarfaraz Khan showed potential in the six Tests that he has played, Easwaran has been scoring consistently well at the domestic level. Former India star Sanjay Manjrekar has a stern message over the players getting overlooked. "Sarfaraz Khan was rewarded for his tremendous record at the first-class level. He got three 50s and 150, but then got out terribly in the next Test. But then he was completely dumped. I don't think that's quite right," Manjrekar said on ESPNCricinfo. "Even if you feel that Sarfaraz Khan might not succeed on these kinds of pitches, what if he had found a way to get runs, with the third man being his main scoring area? I mean, it was a revelation how he played against England."