

## Himachal: More than 300 online services will be available on Him Parivar Portal, launched by CM Sukhu

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu launched the Him Parivar Portal during the state-level Statehood Day celebrations held at Baijnath in Kangra district. This initiative will provide a centralized platform to all the families of the state to access documents, government services and welfare schemes. The portal aims to bring transparency in availing government schemes and promote them. Through the portal, citizens can avail more than 300 government services from their homes. A video showcasing the Him Parivar project was presented on the occasion. The Chief Minister released the Him Parivar booklet. He also distributed Him Parivar cards. The Chief Minister also awarded the National Award 2024 to Kangra Police Station for its outstanding performance. The police station has performed well in crime control, grievance redressal, public cooperation, administrative efficiency, use of modern technology and performance of staff. The Chief Minister awarded Inspector Sanjeev Kumar, SHO of the police station. Apart from this, Nurpur Police District got first place for excellence in law enforcement and administrative efficiency and this award was received by Superintendent of Police Ashok Ratan. Kullu district secured second position, Superintendent of Police Sakshi Verma received the award.

## Himachal's maize flour prepared through natural farming will be sold across the country

**Diary Times Desk :** Maize flour prepared from natural farming will now be sold across the country. After the depots, Himbhog Maize flour will now be available for sale online as well. Its sale will soon begin on Him Era, an e-commerce website developed by the Rural Development Department, which was launched recently. So far, 90 percent of the orders on the Him Era website have come from other states. As compared to Himachal, people of other states are showing interest in buying products prepared naturally. The demand for maize flour prepared from natural farming is increasing. As soon as the supply reached the depots, the packaging of flour was sold out immediately.



## India, Indonesia Decide To Boost Defence And Trade Ties

**Agencies :** India and Indonesia on Saturday decided to work jointly in defence manufacturing and supply chains, diversify two-way trade basket and boost maritime security ties with Prime Minister Narendra Modi describing the Southeast Asian nation as an "important partner" of New Delhi in the Indo-Pacific. Following wide-ranging talks between Modi and visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, at least five pacts providing for cooperation in areas of health, maritime security, culture and digital space were signed. In his media statement, Modi said both sides are committed to maintain peace, security and a rules-based order in the region and that freedom of navigation must be ensured in accordance with international laws. The assertion came amid China's growing military muscle-flexing in the South China Sea as well as in the Indo-Pacific. The Prime Minister also said that both sides emphasised on cooperation in maritime security, cyber security, counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation.



## First Sikh CJI Khehar, Suzuki's ex-CEO Osamu, folk singer Sharda, cricketer Ashwin among Padma awardees

**Agencies :** First Sikh Chief Justice of India Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar, late Suzuki chief Osamu Suzuki and folk singer late Sharda Sinha and former cricketer R Ashwin are among 139 eminent people given Padma awards on the eve of the 76th Republic Day on Saturday. The set of civilian awards announced includes seven Padma Vibhushan, 19 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri decorations. "Twenty-three of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of foreigners, NRI, PIO, OCI and 13 posthumous awardees," the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement. Former CJI Justice (retd) Jagdish Singh Khehar has been given the Padma Vibhushan, while Suzuki's ex-CEO Osamu Suzuki, folk singer Sharda Sinha and M T Vasudevan Nair earned the honour posthumously. Dinamalar publisher Lakshmiopathy Ramasubbaier has been awarded Padma Shri for literature, education and journalism. Former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Modi, economist Bibek Debroy, gazal singer Pankaj Udhass have been given Padma Bhushan posthumously. Former Maharashtra chief minister and ex-Lok Sabha speaker Manohar Joshi (posthumous) and film-maker Shekhar Kapur have been given Padma Bhushan. The awards are given in various disciplines and fields like art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of high order and Padma Shri for distinguished service in any field. Telugu superstar Nandamuri Balakrishna has earned Padma Bhushan.

## Jarange begins indefinite fast for Maratha quota, demands death penalty for sarpanch's killers

**Agencies :** Activist Manoj Jarange on Saturday launched a fresh indefinite hunger strike, his seventh in the last 16 months, demanding reservation for Marathas under the OBC quota. In addition to his quota demand, Jarange has sought capital punishment for the accused involved in murdering sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh. Jarange has been demanding the implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as 'sage soyare' (blood relatives) of Maratha community members for granting reservation to the latter under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. Santosh Deshmukh, the sarpanch of Massajog village in Beed district, was abducted, tortured, and killed on December 9, 2024. Police have so far arrested seven persons. Speaking to reporters in Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna.

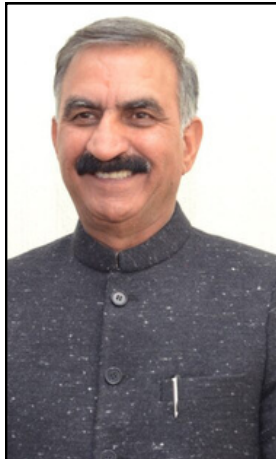
## KCCB Loan Scam: Government approached High Court to cancel Bains' bail, presented status report

**Diary Times Desk :** The state government on Friday presented a status report in the Himachal Pradesh High Court in the Rs 20 crore loan fraud case. It was told that the petitioner is not cooperating with the investigating agencies during interrogation. The government verbally requested the court to cancel the bail of accused Yudh Singh Bains. The case was heard by the court of vacation judge Bipin Chandra Negi on Friday. The state government told the court that an application will be filed to cancel the interim bail within one to two days. Now the hearing of this case will be held on January 31. The petitioner has currently got interim bail from the court. The hearing of this case will now be held on January 31. Let us tell you that the Vigilance Bureau has registered a case in the matter of taking a loan of Rs 20 crore by presenting wrong documents from Kangra Central Cooperative Bank of Una district of Himachal Pradesh. The Vigilance Bureau has filed a case against Bains and some bank officials for violating the rules.



## HP Statehood Day: Plan to create and fill 25 thousand new posts, CM made 10 big announcements on full statehood day

**Diary Times Desk :** State level function on the occasion of full statehood day of Himachal Pradesh was celebrated at Baijnath on Saturday. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu hoisted the national flag at 11:00 am and took salute from the contingents of Police, Home Guards, IRB Bassi, IRB Sakoh, SSB Sapri, District Police Kangra, Traffic Police, NCC Cadets, Scouts and Guides and Police Band. A splendid march past was presented under the leadership of Parade Commander IPS (Probationer) Ravinandan. After this, the CM addressed the public and made many big announcements. While extending his best wishes on the 55th full statehood day, the CM recalled the immense contribution of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the first Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Dr. YS Parmar. The Chief Minister announced to make Chadhiyar sub tehsil a tehsil, open a new sub division of Public Works Department at Chadhiyar and establish a digital library. He also announced to develop the hot water springs of Tatwani and Kheer Ganga Ghat as tourist places with a detailed plan.



## Sri Lanka appoints committee to review Adani wind power projects in Mannar, Pooneryn

**Agencies :** The Sri Lankan government on Saturday said it has appointed a committee to review the Adani Green Energy wind power projects in Mannar and Pooneryn districts. At the same time, it said there was no decision to cancel the projects awarded to the Indian conglomerate. Speaking to reporters here, government spokesperson Nalinda Jayathissa clarified that the government decided against signing an agreement based on the power purchase prices negotiated by the previous administration in 2023. "There was no decision to cancel the Mannar and Pooneryn projects, but rather to appoint a committee to review them. The committee has started its work, and once the review is complete, we will determine what changes need to be made," he said. The previous government of Ranil Wickremesinghe in May last year signed a 20-year power purchase agreement.

## Shimla: Governor Shukla said- cannabis should be used only for medicinal purposes, the state has to be made drug-free in any case

**Diary Times Desk :** On National Voter's Day, a function was organized at Gaiety Theater in Shimla. Himachal Pradesh Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla attended it as the chief guest. During this, while talking to the journalists, the Governor congratulated and wished all the people of the state on the full statehood of Himachal. He said that in 1971, Himachal Pradesh became the 18th state of the country. Today is an important day for the people of Himachal Pradesh. Everyone should work with full dedication towards the state and also make their families aware that this state is ours. On National Voter's Day, he said that new voters have been added, we wish them good luck too. The Election Commission of India is an independent and impartial commission. It has been praised not only in India, but also by other heads of state outside the country for conducting such a big election. Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla has said that the government needs to pay special attention that cannabis should be used only for medicinal purposes. Talking to journalists during a program organized at Gaiety on Saturday on National Voter's Day, he said on the issue of recognition of cannabis cultivation in Himachal that the state was once proud that it has Malana and its fame increases in foreign countries.

## Bring back Nirav Modi, Dawood: Sanjay Raut on Tahawwur Rana's possible extradition

**Agencies :** The United States Supreme Court denied the petition of Tahawwur Hussain Rana, convicted for his role in the Mumbai terror attacks, paving the way for his extradition to India. Reacting to this, Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday said it was time that Nirav Modi — who is facing charges of fraud and money laundering — be brought back to India. He added that other fugitives, including gangster Dawood Ibrahim and Tiger Memon, must also be brought back. "This is a judicial process. Such processes keep going on. Now Nirav Modi, Dawood and Tiger Memon must be brought back. The list is long," Raut told reporters. Communist Party of India (Marxist) politburo member Hannan Mollah welcomed the decision while appreciating the US Supreme Court for giving permission to extradite the co-conspirator in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. "Those criminals committed crime in India and are staying there. The Indian government has asked for their extradition."

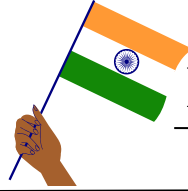
## Union Budget: Himachal's eyes are fixed on the increase in import duty on apples, the state government has sent a letter to the Finance Minister

**Diary Times Desk :** Himachal's orchardists are once again expecting an announcement of increasing the import duty on apples from the Union Budget. In a letter sent by the state government to the Union Finance Minister, a demand has been made to increase the import duty on apples. The orchardists of the state have also raised the issue of import duty on apples before the committee constituted by the Supreme Court. The orchardists of Himachal have also raised the issue at their own level before the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and have also received assurance of a positive decision from the ministry. Currently, there is a 50 percent import duty on apples imported from abroad, the orchardists are demanding to increase it to 100 percent. In 2018, the Government of India had imposed a 20 percent retail tariff (retaliatory duty) on American apples, due to which the import duty on Washington Apple increased from 50 to 70 percent. But last year, during his visit to America, Prime Minister Modi took the decision to withdraw the retail tariff, after which the orchardists of Himachal are facing losses due to increased apple imports from America. Apples are imported every year from around 144 countries across the world. Iran, Turkey, Chile, Washington, Italy, France, New Zealand etc. are the major countries among these. Fifty percent import duty is imposed on apples in all these countries. According to the agreement of the World Trade Organization, import duty can be imposed up to 75 percent. Only 50 percent import duty is imposed on apples. Harish Chauhan, convener of Himachal Pradesh Joint Farmers Forum, says that apples being imported from abroad are becoming a challenge for Himachal's apples. T

## Karnataka court accepts closure report in bribery case against CM Siddaramaiah

**Agencies :** A special court to try criminal cases against elected representatives has accepted the closure report filed by the Karnataka Lokayukta police in a bribery case involving Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The case was based on allegations made by a BJP leader, who accused Siddaramaiah of receiving Rs 1.3 crore during his previous tenure as CM in exchange for appointing a steward at the Bengaluru Turf Club (BTC). In its ruling on January 18, the court stated, "The closure report filed by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Karnataka Lokayukta, Bengaluru, dated 12.9.2024, is hereby accepted." The court further observed that while records indicated that "Accused No.1 Mr Siddaramaiah had received a sum of Rs 1,30,00,000 from Accused No 2 L Vivekananda, the same cannot be held to be an act of quid pro quo towards his nomination as steward of BTC." Previously, the special court had instructed the Lokayukta police to reopen and investigate the case. However, following the inquiry, the Lokayukta police filed a closure report, which has now been accepted by the court.





## Himachal: In Himachal, one got President's Police Medal, four got Police Medal

**Diary Times Desk :** The Union Home Ministry on Saturday announced the medals to be awarded for distinguished and outstanding services. Himachal has received one President's Police Medal and four Police Medals this time. Sudesh Kumar Rana of Bahalu village of Sandhol in Mandi district will be awarded the President's Police Medal for distinguished services on Republic Day. Sudesh is on the second command post at the ITBP headquarters. Earlier in the year 2014, he has been awarded the Police Medal for commendable services on Republic Day. Baldev Kumar of Sarpara village of Rampur, posted as Inspector in CBI, will be awarded the medal for commendable service. Baldev started serving as a constable in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police in the year 2002. He became a sub-inspector by passing the competitive examination in the year 2007 and was promoted to the post of Inspector in 2010. In 2023, he was promoted to the post of Subedar Major. For his professional skills, outstanding performance and commendable services he has also been awarded several prestigious awards like Police Special Duty Medal, United Nations Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, 75th Anniversary of Independence Medal and three Director General Insignia.



## Manali: Tourist from Haryana dies in a private hotel in Manali

**Diary Times Desk :** A tourist from Haryana died in a private hotel in Lohgats area under Thana Manali of Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. The tourist was found unconscious in his room. When he was taken to the hospital, the doctor declared him dead. According to the police, Trivendra Kumar son Sanjay Kumar was staying in a hotel on Plot No. 45 village Sarangpur Dhurkara Ambala Haryana Lohgats road. On January 25, at around 10:00 am, the hotel employee found him unconscious in his room. He was taken to Civil Hospital Manali. Where the doctors declared him dead. DSP KD Sharma said that the family members of the deceased have been informed. Postmortem will be conducted on their arrival. Prima facie, his death appears to be due to heart attack.

## Kangra: Paragliding center and hotel complex opened in Beed, inaugurated by CM Sukhu

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhu inaugurated the Beed Paragliding Centre and Hotel Complex in Kangra district. The complex has been constructed by Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of the Tourism Department to promote adventure tourism in the state. The total cost of construction of the complex is about Rs 9 crore. The building is located in the heart of Beed. The building has office rooms, lecture rooms, conference rooms, hostels, single bed rooms, a dining hall and a modern kitchen, which can accommodate several tourists and trainees at the same time. The complex also has lift facilities. On this occasion, the Chief Minister said that adventure sports and tourism are becoming increasingly popular, which are a unique blend of excitement, challenge and cultural exchange.

## Himachal: A young man who went hunting was murdered, his torso was burnt in a cave and his head was buried in the forest

**Diary Times Desk :** A case of a heart-wrenching murder has come to light in Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Here a person was murdered and the body was cut into two parts and then the head was found in Solan and the torso in Sirmaur. A young man who had gone hunting in the forest adjoining Solan city was shot dead in the head. After committing the crime, the accused separated the head of the deceased from the torso and burnt it in a cave in Vasni, Sirmaur. The head was buried in the forest of Sultanpur, Solan. Police have arrested two accused on the basis of mobile location. Police have registered a case under section 103 (1) and 3 (5) of BNS and started investigation. The deceased has been identified as Som Dutt alias Sonu. According to the complaint received by the police, Som Dutt alias Sonu (38), resident of village Palhech, Tehsil Pachhad district Sirmaur had come to his brother-in-law's house in Saproon, Solan. On January 21, Somdutt went to the forest adjoining his house saying that he was going to bring wood, but did not return.

## Drug Alert: Samples of these 38 medicines including diabetes, migraine made in Himachal failed, stock recalled

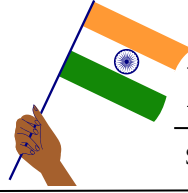
**Diary Times Desk :** 38 medicines including those for diabetes, migraine, high blood pressure, stomach gas, vitamin D-3 and infection manufactured in Himachal Pradesh were found to be substandard. Migraine medicines are supplied only to government hospitals. Samples of two batches of this have failed. Samples of 135 medicines across the country have been found to be substandard. Medicine samples were taken in December by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization and the State Drug Controller. State Drug Controller Manish Kapoor said that notices have been issued to the companies whose medicine samples have failed and their stock has been recalled. The process of cancelling the license has also been started. Two samples of Divalproex manufactured at Biodil Pharmaceutical Nalagarh have failed. At the same time, Betahistine of CMG Biotech Kangra, Okamate of Cipla Company Nalagarh, Pentaprazole of Adamed Pharma Baddi, Zinc Sulphate of Orchid Medlife Company Baddi, Amoxicillin of Wedsp Pharmaceutical Jhadmajri, Pantoprazole of Kegen.

## Shimla: Two teachers from Himachal will receive the National Innovative Teacher Award

**Diary Times Desk :** For doing excellent work in the field of education and promoting innovative education, two teachers of Shimla district, Dr. Devendra Chand Sharma and Dr. Vedprakash Sharma will be honored by Shiksha Sagar Foundation Madhya Pradesh on February 2. They will be given this honor in Dr. Abdul Kalam National Innovative Teacher Award Ceremony. Dr. Devendra Chand Sharma is working as Associate Professor of Political Science in Government College Chail Koti. Dr. Ved Prakash is Associate Professor of Political Science in National Law University Shimla. Both the teachers have done PhD in Political Science from Himachal Pradesh University and have done post doctorate from ICSSR New Delhi. Both have contributed to the academic world in various research works. They have also written dozens of research papers and one book each.

## HP Horticulture News: This year too, chilling hours are a challenge for a good apple crop

**Diary Times Desk :** Chilling hours may prove to be a challenge for a good apple crop this year as well. Due to the change in the trend of snowfall due to climate change, not getting enough snowfall on time is becoming a cause of concern for the orchardists. Orchardists believe that apple production has been declining for the last three years due to the non-completion of chilling hours. This year too, there was drought for about three months before winter and now there is no rain and snowfall as per the requirement. In apple producing areas of Himachal below 7000 feet, on an average 500 to 700 hours of chilling hours have been completed so far. In areas above 7000 feet, 800 to 900 hours of chilling hours have been completed. The speed of completion of chilling hours is better in shaded areas as compared to areas which receive direct sunlight. However, in some areas where the temperature is suddenly increasing, chilling hours have also started decreasing. Some progressive orchardists have installed weather stations in their orchards which record the details of chilling hours. In some orchards at an altitude of 5000 feet.



## Voters Should Rise Above Narrowmindedness, Allurements: President Murmu

**Agencies :** Voters should have the resolve to rise above narrowmindedness, discrimination and inducements while exercising their franchise, besides having faith in democracy, President Droupadi Murmu said on Saturday. Enlightened voters make democracy stronger, she asserted while addressing a 15th National Voters' Day event in the national capital. Delivering her address in the presence of Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and SS Sandhu, and representatives of political parties, she lauded the poll panel for using new technologies and the latest software to improve and make more transparent the poll process. The President said she was confident that Indian democracy would continue to set examples for the global community. "Besides having faith in democracy, voters should have firm resolve that they will rise above narrowmindedness, discrimination and inducements while exercising their franchise ... Enlightened voters make democracy stronger," she asserted.

## 'Most dishonest': Anurag Thakur hits out at Arvind Kejriwal over AAP's poster

**Agencies :** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Anurag Thakur on Saturday hit out at Arvind Kejriwal after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) released a poster featuring leaders of its opposition parties, labelling them as "dishonest". The AAP poster featured Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath and other prominent BJP and Congress leaders. A poster released by the AAP on its social media account referred to Kejriwal as being "honest". The poster read, "Kejriwal's honesty will prevail over all the dishonest people." "My only question is this: is Delhi Chief Minister Atishi dishonest? Why is her face missing from the poster? Kejriwal is against women. He only sees himself. However, the people look at him and laugh that the biggest dishonest person in Delhi is him, who thinks of himself as 'Delhi ka Shehensha'," Thakur, also featured in the AAP poster, told ANI. "I am saying this because he did the liquor scam. Their ministers, MLAs and MPs went to jail and he shamelessly puts his face on the poster. People of Delhi will not elect someone who thinks about governing from behind."

## World Economic Forum: Team India bags investment commitments worth ₹20 lakh crore in Davos



**Agencies :** India reportedly brought home investments commitments totalling over ₹20 lakh crore from the five-day World Economic Forum Annual Meeting which concluded on Friday, reported news agency PTI. Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, led the largest ever Indian delegation to the forum, with five Union ministers, three chief ministers and several other state leaders. Vaishnaw said that trust and talent were the two key factors which attracted investments from the rest of the world to India. "Team India" showcased their potential across two pavilions with all states and central government departments sharing space. A joint press conference was also held for the first time, comprising of state and Union ministers from various political parties. "We are in Davos at a very important juncture in our global geopolitical and geo economic scenario."

## Uniform Civil Code to be implemented in Uttarakhand on January 27, says CM's aide

**Agencies :** Uttarakhand will implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on January 27, chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama's secretary Shailesh Bagoli has said. The move will be implemented a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to arrive in Dehradun, reported ANI. Bagoli said the UCC portal will launch at 12:30 pm on January 27 at the Secretariat. UCC refers to a common set of laws that will subsume customary laws across faiths and tribes and govern issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and maintenance. In the Constitution, it is a part of the non-justiciable directive principles of state policy. Uttarakhand will be the first state in independent India.

## "Take That World-Famous Dip": Amit Shah's Yamuna Dare To Arvind Kejriwal

**Agencies :** Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah has taken a dig at Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Arvind Kejriwal over the "unfulfilled promise" of cleaning up the Delhi stretch of River Yamuna to make it look like Britain's River Thames. With voting in the Delhi assembly election less than two weeks away, Mr Shah aimed for one of the weakest points of the national capital - pollution, both air and water. "He [Mr Kejriwal] promised he would purify River Yamuna in seven years and modify it just like London's River Thames," Mr Shah said at a rally. "He even said he would take a dip."

## Vijayasai Reddy Resigns From Rajya Sabha, 4th YSRCP MP To Quit Since 2024 Polls Rout

**Agencies :** YSRCP leader V Vijayasai Reddy on Saturday resigned as a member of Rajya Sabha and announced he was quitting politics due to "personal reasons", the fourth party MP to short-terminate their terms in the Upper House since its rout in the 2024 Assembly elections. He met Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at his residence and submitted his resignation. Reddy, a chartered accountant by profession who represented Andhra Pradesh in the House, later told reporters he still had three-and-half-years left in his second six-year term, but he was resigning due to personal reasons. He said he would be focussing on agriculture and delivering guest lectures at universities henceforth. "I have submitted my resignation to the vice president and the chairman of the Rajya Sabha, and he has accepted it," Reddy told reporters after meeting Dhankhar. "I, hereby, voluntarily resign from my seat."

## Vande Bharat's Successful Trial Run On World's Highest Rail Bridge

**Agencies :** In a boost to Jammu and Kashmir's rail connectivity, the India Railways on Saturday successfully conducted the first trial run of the specially designed Vande Bharat Express train. The train, which travelled from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra (SVDK) railway station to Srinagar railway station, passed through the Chenab bridge - the world's highest rail bridge. It also ran through Anji Khad bridge - which is India's first cable-stayed railway bridge. The train briefly halted at Jammu around 11:30 am where it was welcomed with slogans and praises for the Indian Railways.

## "Promises To Redefine Good Governance": President Backs One Nation, One Poll

**Agencies :** Calling it a reform that will "redefine the terms of good governance", President Droupadi Murmu said the 'One Nation One Election' bill will help check "policy paralysis, mitigate resource division, and reduce financial burden". "Reforms of such magnitude require an audacity of vision. Another measure that promises to redefine the terms of good governance is the Bill introduced in Parliament to synchronise election schedules in the country. The 'One Nation One Election' plan can promote consistency in governance, prevent policy paralysis, mitigate resource diversion, and reduce the financial burden, apart from offering many other benefits," said President Murmu addressing the nation on the eve of 76th Republic Day. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has frequently emphasised the need for simultaneous polls, arguing that the country incurs significant costs and disruptions from ongoing election seasons. Former president Ram Nath Kovind, who headed a panel on 'one nation, one election', has said that the idea of simultaneous polls was perceived by the framers of the Constitution and therefore it cannot be unconstitutional. He pointed out that the first four Lok Sabha and assembly polls were held together till 1967, asking how could synchronised polls be dubbed as unconstitutional.







## "Stick To The Catholic Church, Fix That": Trump's Border Czar Homan, To Pope

**Agencies** : The war of words between US Border Czar Tom Homan and Pope Francis has escalated, with Homan firing back at the Vatican's leader over his criticism of President Donald Trump's deportation policies. In a televised interview, Homan accused Pope Francis of hypocrisy, pointing to the Vatican's own robust security measures, including a wall around the Vatican. "They have a wall around the Vatican," Homan said. "If you illegally enter the Vatican, the crime is serious. You'll be charged with a serious crime and jailed. So he can protect the Vatican where he lives. He can build a wall where he lives, but the American people are not allowed that." Homan also called on Pope Francis to focus on addressing issues within the Catholic Church, saying "The Pope ought to stick to the Catholic Church and fix that. That's a mess." Pope Francis has been a vocal advocate for migrant rights, criticising restrictive immigration policies. Nearly a decade after calling Trump "not Christian" for his plans to build a US-Mexico border wall, the pontiff reiterated his stance during an appearance on the Italian talk show Che Tempo Che Fa.

## "Won't Allow Taiwan To Separate": China Asks US To Handle Issue "Prudently"

**Agencies** : Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Friday told US Secretary of State Marco Rubio that Washington needs to approach the issue of Taiwan "prudently", the ministry in Beijing said, as the pair held their first talks since Donald Trump took office. "We will never allow Taiwan to be separated from China," Wang said, adding that Washington "must not betray its promise" to abide by the one-China policy, according to a readout of their telephone conversation provided by his ministry. While Beijing had "no intention of surpassing or replacing anyone", it maintained its "legitimate right to development", he said. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has threatened to use force to bring the self-ruled island under its control. The United States is a longtime supporter of Taiwan and its largest supplier of weapons, but does not formally recognise it diplomatically.

## "Zelenskyy Decided I Want To Fight": Trump Blames Ukraine President For War

**Agencies** : President Donald Trump suggested that Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy should not have resisted Russia's invasion, citing the significant power imbalance between the two nations, in a Fox News interview. "Zelenskyy was fighting a much bigger entity, much bigger, much more powerful," Trump said, emphasising that Russia's superior military might made resistance futile. "He shouldn't have done that, because we could have made a deal". Trump's stance on the conflict is rooted in his belief that Zelenskyy should have negotiated a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin to avoid the war. "I could have made that deal so easily, and Zelenskyy decided that 'I want to fight,'" Trump claimed, implying that Zelenskyy's decision to resist was misguided. This perspective is in stark contrast to that of former President Joe Biden, who consistently supported Ukraine's right to defend itself and imposed sanctions on Russia in response to the invasion.



## Israel releases 200 Palestinian prisoners after Hamas frees four hostages



**Agencies** : The Palestinian militant movement Hamas released four female Israeli soldier hostages on Saturday in return for 200 Palestinian prisoners, in keeping with the ceasefire agreement in the 15-month-old war in Gaza. The four Israelis were led onto a podium in Gaza City amid a large crowd of Palestinians and surrounded by dozens of armed Hamas men. They waved and smiled before being led off, entering Red Cross vehicles to be transported to Israeli forces. Soon after, buses carrying released Palestinian prisoners were seen departing from the Israeli Ofer military prison in the occupied West Bank. Israel's Prison Service said all 200 had been released. The releases on either side were greeted by cheering crowds, including Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv and Palestinians assembled in Ramallah. The swap was the second to take place under the truce, following an initial release on the ceasefire's first day, Jan. 19.

## Donald Trump admin freezes all foreign aid by US, including that to Ukraine; Israel exempted

**Agencies** : In a sweeping order, the newly sworn in Donald Trump administration in US on Friday reportedly froze all foreign aid, including that to Ukraine, with exceptions only for Israel and Egypt. The United States, world's biggest donor, has not frozen emergency food and military funding for Israel and Egypt, according to a news agency AFP report. In an internal memo, cited in the report, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "No new funds shall be obligated for new awards or extensions of existing awards until each proposed new award or extension has been reviewed and approved." The move is in line with US President Donald Trump's vow of an "America First" policy of tightly restricting assistance overseas. The order is expected to affect everything from development assistance to military aid -- including to Ukraine, which received billions of dollars.

## Ricky Gill, Saurabh Sharma, Kush Desai: Indian-Americans Part Of Trump 2.0

**Agencies** : US President Donald Trump has brought on board three Indian-Americans for key roles in his second term. Ricky Gill will take on responsibilities concerning South and Central Asia at the National Security Council (NSC) as the Senior Director. Saurabh Sharma has been appointed to the Presidential Personnel Office, focusing on staffing and appointments. Former journalist Kush Desai steps in as Deputy Press Secretary for a role in the White House's communications strategy. Ricky Gill, an expert in international relations, has returned to the National Security Council (NSC), where he previously served as Director for Russia and European Energy Security during Trump's first term. In addition to his work at the NSC, he served as a Senior Advisor in the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations. Bengaluru-born Saurabh Sharma most recently served as the President of American Moment, a conservative organisation focused on personnel development, according to Politico. Kush Desai, an experienced communicator, has held several key roles in Republican campaigns and organisations. Most recently, he was Deputy Communications Director for the 2024 Republican National Convention. Before this, he served as Communications Director for the Republican Party of Iowa.

## Barack Obama spotted dining along amid divorce speculation, Jennifer Aniston romance rumours

**Agencies** : Amid the speculations of the separation of Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, a new rumour has cropped up linking the former president to the Friends actor Jennifer Aniston. A magazine earlier did a cover story on this linkup, but recently, social media has been rife with discussions, with some claiming that they are dating each other. A new photo amid this has attracted people's attention. It shows Obama dining at a DC restaurant. Reportedly, the photo was taken before he attended Donald Trump's second inauguration. An event in which his wife, Michelle Obama, didn't accompany him. According to the New York Post, the diners at the restaurant couldn't control their excitement after the former US president walked inside. They cheered for him at the hip Washington, DC restaurant.



## Pannun is a fugitive hiding like a scared mouse in USA: Punjab Police

**Agencies :** The Punjab Police termed designated terrorist Gurpatwant Pannun a fugitive hiding like a mouse in the USA, from where he's issuing threats to intimidate the public. This comes after Pannun attempted to dissuade people from participating in Republic Day celebrations. As part of the revised strategy, Patiala DIG Mandeep Singh Sidhu, in a video message, challenged Pannun to stop misleading youths with promises of money and foreign settlement in exchange for disturbing law and order. Sidhu asserted that Pannun is scared of the Punjab Police and will soon be brought to justice. The strategy gained ground in a meeting of senior police officials under DGP Gaurav Yadav in Chandigarh, where it was decided to combat his threats via social media with strong reply from the force. Pannun, leader of the banned pro-Khalistan group Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), has been accused of promising immigration to youths in exchange for carrying out his orders, including painting graffiti on walls in Punjab. The USA authorities are reportedly set to deport illegal immigrants and criminals like Pannun involved in illegal immigration. Earlier, several schools in Patiala received emails allegedly from SFJ.



## Farm bodies to hold third round of unity talks on February 12

**Agencies :** Farm groups protesting at Punjab's border points with Haryana will hold on February 12 their third round of unity talks with the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of farmer unions that had led a year-long stir in 2020-21 against the now-scrapped three central agriculture laws. Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leader Raminder Singh Patiala said the meeting is likely to take place in Chandigarh. The meeting is scheduled to take place two days before the protesting Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) and Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) are to hold talks with the Centre over their demands. Earlier, two rounds of discussions between the farmer groups remained inconclusive as differences emerged among them over the common strategy for their joint stir against the Centre. While the current protest has remained restricted to the demands, including debt waiver and a law assuring a minimum support price (MSP) for crops, the SKM had been claiming that the MSP is secondary to the draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing as it contains provisions of the now-scrapped three Central farm laws. The SKM representatives have also not been invited by the Centre for the meeting called to discuss.

## Chandigarh court quashes Rs 28 lakh recovery decree against 'Maa Tujhe Salaam' producer

**Agencies :** A Chandigarh court has provided relief to renowned film producer Mahendra Dhariwal by setting aside a decree passed by the Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division) dated March 22 against him for recovery of Rs 28.53 lakh. The decree was filed by city-based financier Samdarshi Kashinath Jaiswal. Dhariwal, who produced the 2002 film "Maa Tujhe Salaam" starring Sunny Deol, Tabu, and Arbaaz Khan, was accused of failing to repay a loan of Rs 1.10 crore taken from Jaiswal for financing several films. However, Dhariwal's counsel, Harish Bhardwaj, denied the allegations, claiming that the agreement was forged and fabricated. The trial court had partly allowed the suit against Dhariwal, ordering him to pay Rs 28.53 lakh with interest. However, Additional District Judge Rajnish Garg, set aside the decree, stating that Jaiswal was a money lender and did not have the necessary licence or permit to file the suit. Jaiswal filed the suit for the recovery of Rs 3 crore through his legal heir on the basis of alleged agreements dated January 19, 2002 and May 17, 2005, and a cheque allegedly issued by Dhariwal. Jaiswal expired during the pendency of the trial.

## 128 CCTV cameras installed at 19 locations from Ambala border to Kundli border

**Agencies :** Taking a significant step towards road safety and crime control, Haryana DGP Shatrurjeet Kapur on Saturday inaugurated 128 CCTV cameras installed at 19 locations on the National Highway (NH)-44 from Ambala border to Kundli border in Sonapat from the CCTV control room in Karnal. Now, all vehicles passing through this highway will be under a strict watch of the Haryana Police and challans will be issued automatically to drivers violating traffic rules. This CCTV control room has been set up at the office of the Additional Director General of Police, Traffic and Highways. Kapur said the Haryana Police had started this step with an aim to reduce road accidents and ensure compliance with traffic rules. Of these 128, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras had been installed at 9 places and surveillance cameras at 10. He added ANPR cameras had been linked to the police's Intelligent Traffic Management System so that the complete history of the vehicles could be obtained.



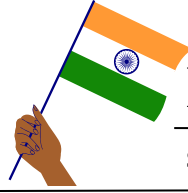
## Haryana gurdwara panel: Newly elected house to co-opt 9 members

**Agencies :** Amid intense lobbying among key Sikh organisations and independent members for control of the Haryana Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (HSGMC), the Haryana Gurdwara Election Commission has announced that the first meeting of the newly elected house will be held to co-opt nine new members. The meeting is scheduled in Panchkula on February 2. These members will be co-opted by the house of the elected representatives, bringing the total strength of the house to 49. However, the date for the oath-taking ceremony is yet to be declared. Following the oath ceremony, the office-bearers will be elected by the 49 members. "The meeting of the newly elected members will be held in Panchkula, during which nine members will be co-opted by the house," said the gurdwara election commissioner, Justice HS Bhalla (retd). As per the Haryana Sikh Gurdwaras (Management) Act, the co-opted members would include two Sikh women, three persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Backward Class categories, two Sikh intellectuals, and two members from the presidents of registered "Singh Sabhas" in the state, he said.

## Haryana Govt allots residential plots to 4,533 beneficiaries under Mukhyamantri Gramin Awas Yojana

**Agencies :** The Haryana Government has allotted plots to 4,533 beneficiaries across 20 districts through a draw under the Mukhyamantri Gramin Awas Yojana 2.0. "The Chief Minister's vision is that no poor person in Haryana should remain without a roof. The government is continuously making efforts in this direction. Following the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the state government is fully committed to its goal of providing houses to the poor and it will be accomplished in a phased manner," said a government spokesperson. In the first phase of the Mukhyamantri Gramin Awas Yojana 2.0, residential plots of 100 square yards have been allotted to all eligible applicants of gram panchayats of Ambala, Bhiwani, Charkhi Dadri, Fatehabad, Gurugram, Hisar, Jhajjar, Jind, Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Narnaul, Nuh, Palwal, Panipat, Rewari, Rohtak, Sirsa, Sonapat and Yamunanagar districts. Similarly, residential plots of 100 square yards have been allotted to all eligible applicants.





## Man gets 15-yr jail for drug trafficking

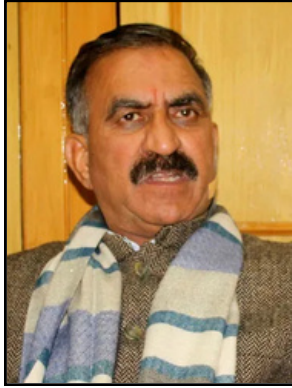
**Diary Times Desk :** In a significant development, Id Special Judge-II of Kullu, Amit Mandyal, has convicted an individual, Chuveshwar, for his involvement in drug trafficking under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The convict, a resident of Sanad village in Kullu, has been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 15 years and fined Rs 1 lakh. In the event of non-payment of the fine, Chuveshwar will face an additional one year of rigorous imprisonment. The case dates back to January 13, 2021, when the police received a tip-off about a large quantity of charas being delivered near GharatGad in Banjar. The police team led by then SP Gaurav Singh set up a naka to intercept the drug traffickers. At 1:45 AM on January 14, 2021, three individuals were spotted carrying sacks on their shoulders, which they abandoned and attempted to flee upon seeing the police.

While two of the suspects managed to escape in the darkness, the police successfully apprehended Chuveshwar. Upon questioning, he named the other two suspects as Pardeep, alias Murali, and Bittu. The sacks discarded by the accused were inspected and a total of 110.90 kg of charas was seized.

## CM Sukhu promises 25,000 jobs in government sector

**Diary Times Desk :** Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu attended the state-level celebrations of the 55th statehood day of Himachal Pradesh held at Baijnath today. While delivering a speech at the event, Sukhu promised 25,000 jobs in the government sector. He added that the recruitment for the jobs would start soon. The CM said employment generation was a priority for his government. The present government has provided 42,000 jobs in the last two years as compared to 20,000 in five years under the previous BJP government. Over 12,500 posts have been filled in the government sector. In the police department, recruitment for 1,088 constables has begun and results for 2,061 forest guards have been announced. Additionally, 3,000 posts in the Jal Shakti Department.

## Relief package for disaster hit to be extended to Tandi village fire victims



**Diary Times Desk :** The state Cabinet in its meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu at Dharamsala today decided to extend the special relief package introduced for disaster-affected families in 2023. The package has been extended for those impacted by the fire incident in Tandi village in Kullu district. Under this package, affected families of Tandi village will receive Rs 7 lakh for completely damaged houses, Rs 1 lakh for partially damaged houses and Rs 50,000 for the loss of cowsheds. A monthly house rental assistance of Rs 5,000 will be provided to the affected families until June 30, 2025. The Cabinet also approved the procurement of state-of-the-art machinery and equipment for robotic surgery at AIMSS Chamiana, Shimla, and Dr Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College, Tanda, Kangra, at a cost of Rs 56 crore on analogy of AIIMS, New Delhi. The Cabinet approved an amendment to the previous order of the Forest Department, allowing the export of berberis roots (Kashmal) out of state with a cut-off date of February 15, 2025.

## Cabinet gives nod for cannabis cultivation for non-narcotic use

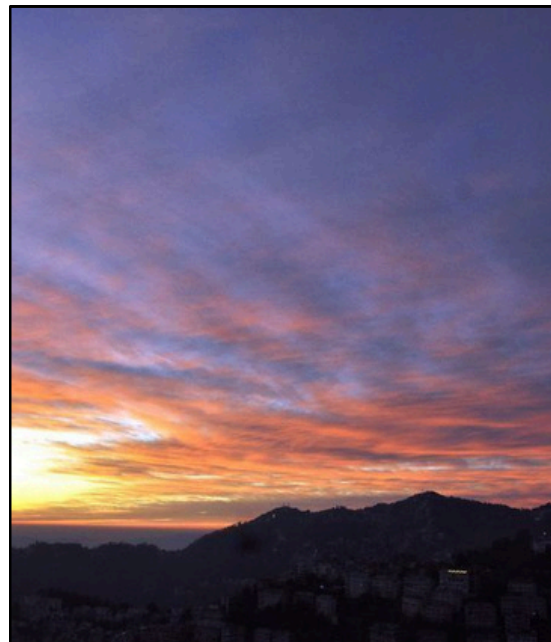
**Diary Times Desk :** Decks have been cleared for the controlled legal cultivation of cannabis for non-narcotic use in Himachal with the Cabinet today giving nod to the proposal of the Revenue Department. The Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu at Dharamsala, has given approval to the plans of the Revenue Department to undertake controlled cannabis cultivation in the state. At present, some of the states like Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh are undertaking cannabis cultivation, primary for use in the pharma sector for preparing medicines. Sources said the Cabinet has made the Agriculture Department the nodal agency which will work out the modalities for starting cannabis cultivation. The Cabinet approved a pilot study on cannabis cultivation to be jointly undertaken by Chaudhary Sarwan Kumar Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Palampur, Kangra district and Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture, Nauni, Solan district. The Agriculture Department has been given six months time to prepare all the modalities and standard operating procedures (SOP), including the selection of cannabis species which is more suited for use in pharmaceutical sector.

## Snow insufficient, winter sports at Manali Carnival postponed

**Diary Times Desk :** The much-anticipated winter sports event at the Manali Winter Carnival has been postponed due to insufficient snow. The winter sports were initially scheduled to take place during the five-day carnival that began on January 20, but organisers have been forced to delay the event due to inadequate snowfall at Solang Nala area where the snow activities were supposed to be held. Ludar Thakur, president of the Himachal Winter Games Association, confirmed the delay, explaining that the dry weather has led to insufficient snow accumulation in Solang Valley. "As soon as we have enough snowfall in the area, we will reschedule the winter sports events. We are hopeful that the weather will change soon and we will be able to offer this thrilling experience to winter sports lovers," he said. The Winter Carnival, which is one of the biggest attractions for tourists visiting Manali during the winter season, has been marked by cultural events and entertainment activities at various locations, including Mall Road and Manurangshala. Despite lack of snow, these cultural programs have continued as planned, drawing large crowds of tourists who are enjoying.

## Maximum temperature registers a surge

**Diary Times Desk :** The maximum temperatures are appreciably above normal at many places in the state, while minimum temperatures at most stations are normal or near normal. The average maximum temperatures are 3.6 degree above normal, with Sundernagar recording the highest deviation from normal by 6.2 degree Celsius. As per the weather department, mainly dry weather is likely to prevail over most parts of the state till January 29. Maximum temperatures are likely to be in the range of 10-18 degree Celsius over many parts of the high hills, except some parts of Lahaul-Spiti where it is likely to be in the range of 8-14 degree Celsius. The temperature will be in the range of 14-20 degree Celsius over most parts of mid hills and in the range of 20-24 degree Celsius over most parts of the lower hills/plains. Meanwhile, minimum temperatures are likely to be normal over many parts of the state, except some parts of Kullu, Kinnaur, Shimla, Mandi and Kangra districts where it is likely to be below normal. In isolated parts of Lahaul and Spiti district, the minimum temperatures will be below normal to appreciably below normal from tomorrow until month end.





## Jammu & Kashmir stun Mumbai to become table toppers



**Agencies :** Jammu and Kashmir pulled off a famous win over Mumbai inside three days to top their group despite Shardul Thakur's heroics on Friday. Following that astonishing partnership between Shardul and Tanush Kotian, Mumbai were able to add only 16 more runs on the third morning as the visitors wrapped things up quickly. As a result, they were set a target of 205 which was still going to be tricky. However, J&K's top order gave their side solid starts especially with the second-wicket stand adding 75. Mumbai had some hope when Shams Mulani bagged three wickets to reduce the opposition to 159/5 but Abid Mushtaq and Kanhaiya Wadhawan ensured there were no more hiccups as they guided their side home. A draw in their last group stage encounter would guarantee J&K a place in the quarterfinals. On expected lines, Gujarat picked up a facile win over Uttarakhand on the third day after the visitors were bowled out for 254. Already reduced to 74/4 by stumps yesterday, Uttarakhand caved in despite Shashwat Dangal's fighting century. Siddharth Desai, who picked nine wickets in the first innings, picked three this time as his side completed the innings win.

## Sophie Devine set to miss WPL as she takes a break from domestic cricket

**Agencies :** Royal Challengers Bengaluru are set to miss the services of senior all-rounder Sophie Devine, one of their retained players, in the upcoming season of the Women's Premier League as she has decided to take a break from domestic cricket. While New Zealand Cricket has mentioned no specific reason for her break, a statement read that she has decided to do so "after receiving professional advice". This will also mean that Devine will miss the Super Smash in New Zealand where in her most recent outing, she had taken a five-wicket haul for Wellington. "Player well-being is paramount to us - it takes precedence over everything else," said Liz Green, Head of Womens High Performance Development. "Sophie's had excellent support from the New Zealand Cricket Players Association and from our own high performance unit staff, and everyone agrees this is the best option available. "The most important thing for NZC is that Sophie has a decent break, receives good support and care, and is fit and well before returning to professional cricket". The statement further added, "A decision on Devine's playing future will be announced in due course."

## "Don't Know What Wrong He Did": Harbhajan Singh Fumes At India Star's Snub

**Agencies :** The competition for places in the Indian team is such that one or two deserving players often miss out, no matter the series or tournament. As the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the squad for the Champions Trophy and England ODIs, wicket-keeper batter Sanju Samson missed out despite his exemplary average in the 50-over format. Harbhajan Singh, former India spinner, admitted being heartbroken to see Samson miss out. While the argument remains, in whose place, should Samson have been picked, Harbhajan feels space could've been made for the Kerala cricketer. "Truly, I feel bad for him. He scores runs but he is dropped.

## Rohit Sharma named captain of ICC men's T20I team of year, Bumrah, Pandya, Arshdeep also in squad

**Agencies :** India captain Rohit Sharma, who led the team to their second ICC T20 World Cup title last June, has been named skipper of the ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2024. The team dominated by Indians also features star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh, along with all-rounder Hardik Pandya. Rohit had an unforgettable 2024, both as a leader and a batter. The seasoned opener amassed 378 runs in 11 matches at an impressive average of 42.00 and a strike rate of over 160. Rohit played a pivotal role in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign, with three half-centuries, including a sensational 92 against Australia in the Super Eight stage. His astute leadership was instrumental in guiding a young Indian side through high-pressure situations, cementing his legacy as one of India's greatest T20I captains. Pandya reaffirmed his stature as one of the world's finest all-rounders, playing a crucial role in India's successful campaign. In 17 matches, Pandya scored 352 runs and claimed 16 wickets, finishing as the top-ranked ICC Men's T20I all-rounder.

## 1st Time Since 1952, Pakistan Spinner Noman Ali Breaks All-Time Record With Hat-trick

**Agencies :** Pakistan spinner Noman Ali registered his name in history books as he became the first spin bowler from the nation to secure a hat-trick for the national team in men's Test history. Noman did so on Day 1 of the second Test against West Indies in Multan, bagging the wickets of Justin Greaves, Tevin Imlach and Kevin Sinclair on three consecutive deliveries. Pakistan, who first played a Test match in 1952, had never seen any spinner from the country, despite possessing some big names, take wickets on three successive deliveries before. Noman put West Indies on the backfoot as the tourists lost 7 wickets for just 38 runs after opting to bat first. It was only the 12th over of the inning in which Noman went on to script history. Pakistan opted for a spin-heavy bowling attack in the Multan Test, but also gave debut to right-arm pacer Kashif Ali who came in the place of Khurram Shahzad. Kashif donned the whites for Pakistan after showcasing impressive form in the domestic circuit. The 24-year-old earned his call-up with consistent performances in first-class cricket, including a standout five-wicket haul for Pakistan Shaheens against Sri Lanka last November. His inclusion marks a significant milestone in his career as he becomes the sole pacer in Pakistan's.

## On Selectors Ignoring Rituraj Gaikwad, CSK Teammate R Ashwin's "Out Of Syllabus" Verdict

**Agencies :** As opening batter Rituraj Gaikwad's omission from India's white-ball squads continues to baffle fans, veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has revealed the reason behind his absence. Gaikwad last played for India in a T20I against Zimbabwe in July 2024, while his last ODI appearance came back against Australia in December 2023 after the 50-over World Cup. Despite scoring consistently in the domestic circuit, Gaikwad struggles to break into India's primary playing XI. He was ignored by the selectors for India's white-ball games against England, as well as the upcoming Champions Trophy. Ashwin, however, suggested Gaikwad's snub is neither the player, nor the selector's fault. Ashwin pointed out that there are too many contenders as far as India's top-order is concerned, and that Gaikwad is down in the pecking order. "India's top order is packed. Up top, we have a lot of contenders. Rituraj, Yashasvi, Shubman Gill... they are either playing one-day cricket or aren't in the scheme of things. In his last T20I, Gaikwad scored a 100, took Maxwell to the cleaners. But he hasn't gotten an opportunity since. It's because there are so many people competing for two spots," Ashwin said on his hindi YouTube channel.

## Smriti Mandhana Among 3 Indians In ICC Women's T20I Team Of The Year, Pakistan Has....

**Agencies :** Star opener Smriti Mandhana, wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh and all-rounder Deepti Sharma were on Saturday named in the ICC Women's T20I Team of Year 2024 which was dominated by the Indians. Besides the three Indians, the ICC team has two South Africans, and one player each from Sri Lanka, England, West Indies, Australia, Ireland and Pakistan. Mandhana and Deepti were also named in the ICC ODI Team of the Year 2024 on Friday. Mandhana had an outstanding 2024, beginning the year with a brilliant 54 against Australia as she finished the year with three consecutive half-centuries against the West Indies at home. Her consistent performances propelled her to the second spot in the ICC Women's T20I batting rankings, amassing 763 runs from 23 matches.