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PM Modi Invites Ethiopian PM To AI Impact Summit, BRICS Meet In India

(Gns). Prime Minister Narendra Modi has invited Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali to attend the next AI Impact Summit, scheduled to be held in India in February next year, and the BRICS Summit that India plans to host in 2026, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday.

Briefing the media on the Prime Minister's visit to Ethiopia, MEA Secretary (ER) Sudhakar Dalela said India will assume the chairmanship of the BRICS grouping for a one-year term starting January 1, 2026.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali to the AI Impact Summit in India next year and the 2026

BRICS Summit, as India will assume BRICS chairmanship from January 1, 2026. During his visit to Ethiopia, Modi and Ali discussed cooperation, witnessed the exchange of MoUs, and Modi received the Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia.

Dalela said Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to address a joint session of the Ethiopian Parliament later on Wednesday. During the day, he will also meet the Speaker of Parliament and other senior Ethiopian leaders. As part of his engagements, the Prime Minister will visit the Adwa Museum and pay tribute at the Adwa Victory Memorial.

According to the MEA, Prime Minister Modi arrived in Ethiopia on Tuesday and received a warm welcome.

In a special gesture, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali personally drove Prime Minister Modi to the National Science Museum and Friendship Park in Addis Ababa. Prime Minister Modi was later accorded a ceremonial welcome at the National Palace, where he inspected the Guard of Honour. The two leaders then held detailed bilateral talks covering political, economic and strategic cooperation.

The MEA said Prime Minister Modi thanked Prime Minister Abiy for Ethiopia's strong support to India in the fight against terrorism "in all its manifestations."

Both leaders witnessed the exchange of several Memoranda of Understanding across key

sectors. These include agreements on customs cooperation, training for United Nations peacekeep-

Minister's visit, highlighting the elevation of India-Ethiopia relations to a Strategic Partnership as a



ing missions, and the establishment of a data centre at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dalela said.

Earlier on Tuesday, the MEA released the official outcomes of the Prime

cooperation and mutual administrative assistance in customs matters, an MoU to establish a data centre at Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and an implementing arrangement for cooperation in training for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

India and Ethiopia also signed an MoU on debt restructuring under the G20 Common Framework, reflecting closer coordination on economic and financial issues. Educational cooperation was strengthened with a decision to double scholarships for Ethiopian students under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations pro-

gramme and to offer specialised short-term courses in Artificial Intelligence under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation initiative.

In the healthcare sector, India committed to supporting capacity augmentation at the Mahatma Gandhi Hospital in Addis Ababa, with a focus on maternal and neonatal care.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Modi expressed gratitude after being conferred Ethiopia's highest civilian honour, the Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia, calling it a matter of immense pride and a recognition of the strong and historic ties between

the two countries. Thanking the people and government of Ethiopia and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, he said the honour belonged to the many Indians who have contributed over the years to strengthening bilateral relations. He added that being honoured by one of the world's most ancient civilisations was deeply meaningful.

Ethiopia conferred the award on Tuesday, making Prime Minister Modi the first global Head of State or Government to receive the honour. This recognition marks the 28th top foreign state award bestowed on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India Halts Visa Services in Dhaka Over Threats From Radical Bangladeshi Leaders

(Gns). Amid rising diplomatic strain and mounting security concerns, India has suspended visa services at its Visa Application Centre in Dhaka after a series of radical and hostile statements targeting New Delhi and its territorial integrity.

India suspended visa services at its Dhaka application center due to rising diplomatic strain and security concerns following radical statements against New Delhi, prompting India to formally convey its concerns after the center closed at Jamuna Future Park on the same day. The State Bank of India accepts visa applications across 16 centers in Bangladesh, pro-

cessing approximately 22 lakh annually amidst escalating anti-India rhetoric and the interim govern-



ment's shift, leading to Bangladesh summoning the Indian High Commissioner.

The decision follows strong protests lodged by

India over threats to its diplomatic mission in Bangladesh and inflammatory rhetoric from political

at Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka was shut on the same day India summoned Bangladesh's High Commissioner to formally convey its concerns. The closure was announced citing the prevailing security situation in the Bangladeshi capital.

"In view of the ongoing security situation, we wish to bring to your kind notice that the Indian Visa Application Centre (IVAC) in Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka will be closed at 2 PM today. All applicants who have appointment slots booked for submission today will be given a slot at a later date," the Visa Application Centre said in an official statement.

figures in Dhaka. Visa Centre Closure Announced Amid Security Concerns The Indian Visa Application Centre located

India-Oman FTA to unlock new opportunities across key sectors: Piyush Goyal

(Gns). India-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA) opens significant opportunities across sectors, including textiles, food processing, automobiles, gems and jewellery, agrochemicals, renewable energy and auto components, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, said on Wednesday.

Addressing the India-Oman Business Forum in Muscat, Goyal highlighted Oman's strategic location as a gateway to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa, which offers enhanced market access for Indian businesses.

Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion of Oman, Mr. Qais Al Yousef, in his address, said India has emerged as Oman's third-



largest trading partner and Oman continues to be a key destination for Indian investments across strategic sectors.

He said Indian invest-

ments in Oman have more than tripled since 2020, reaching USD 5 billion, spanning sectors such as green steel, green ammonia, aluminium manufacturing

and logistics. He emphasised that these investments reflect India's confidence in Oman as a long-term operating base.

Goyal also highlighted the forthcoming Free Trade Agreement between the two countries as a defining milestone in the bilateral relationship and noted that it would be the first Free Trade Agreement Oman is entering into in nearly two decades.

He recalled the centuries-old maritime links between the two countries, including historical trade exchanges through ports such as Lothal, underscoring the enduring nature of India-Oman ties.

Goyal also underlined the potential for collaboration in services such as professional services, accounting, business process re-engineering, research

CM stresses introduction of artificial snow to prolong skiing season in Kashmir

(Gns). Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday laid stress on introducing artificial snow so as to start skiing early and to prolong the duration of skiing calendar in Gulmarg which would also help in mitigating the effects of climate change resulting in lesser and delayed snowfalls.

The chief minister was addressing the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) in Srinagar. The four-day national event is aimed at positioning Jammu & Kashmir as a leading global destination for adventure tourism.

noted that Jammu and Kashmir has remained pioneer in adventure tourism notably, in skiing mountaineering, trekking etc all across the globe. The chief minister emphasised that integration of technology is essential to promote and realise advanced adventure tourism potential in Jammu and Kashmir.

He underlined all necessary measures the Jammu and Kashmir government is taking to ensure the continued growth of the tourism sector despite challenges faced during the

current season. He also appreciated the leadership of ATOAI for providing Jammu and Kashmir an opportunity to host the prestigious national convention.

The chief minister said climate change and global warming were real issues which need to be talked about and we need to take steps to conserve our environment for posterity. "We won't be able to showcase Gulmarg without snow and our glaciers have also started receding at an alarming rate," he contended. The CM said white

water rafting, mountaineering, trekking, paragliding, rock climbing are key adventure tourism activities which can be promoted but cautioned operators to ensure high standards of safety and quality equipment to make adventure tourism safe and comfortable.

He said that adventure tourism opens up new avenues of tourism in J&K and expressed hope that partnering with ATOAI will help to develop this sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the inaugural ceremony, the chief minister launched the Adventure Tourism Roadmap and Toolkit for Jammu and Kashmir.

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Editorial

Time to step up!

It is with great pleasure I would like to announce that I am now a father. Both mother and child are fine. Thank you to anyone who sends their blessings and keeps us in their prayers. But as I hold my newborn in the sterile safety of the hospital room, looking out at the grey haze of Delhi, my joy is tempered by a terrifying reality. For the past few days, my world has shrunk to these corridors, and while awaiting this miracle, I have been haunted by what I see in the wards around me. I watch doctors rush to attend to newborns who are too small, too fragile, and struggling too hard for every breath.

I see parents, their eyes hollow with exhaustion, peering into incubators where their babies are fighting a battle they did not choose. It is a stark realization: in Delhi, our children are not just born into a polluted world; they are being shaped by it in the womb. The Silent Emergency in the Womb: We often talk about air pollution as a “winter menace” or a “respiratory irritant.” But standing here with my baby, I see it for what it truly is: an obstetric emergency. Recent reports and medical experts confirm what is unfolding before my eyes—air pollutants are crossing the placental barrier, impacting foetal development in real-time. The statistics are no longer just numbers on a page; they are the tiny faces I see in the nursery. Studies indicate a 70 per cent increase in the chance of premature birth when pregnant women are exposed to high levels of air pollution, with North India faring the worst.

These are babies born before their lungs are fully developed, forcing them into longer, agonizing stays in the nursery just to survive. We are seeing a generation entering the world with a deficit, their biological start compromised by the very air their mothers breathed. A Legacy of Vulnerability: The damage does not stop at birth. The medical consensus is chilling: exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) during pregnancy is linked to low birth weight and restricted growth. These are not temporary setbacks. Low birth weight is a harbinger for a lifetime of health challenges, from reduced lung function to an increased risk of chronic diseases later in life. As a new father, this terrifies me. We did everything right – we followed the diet charts, we attended the check-ups, we took the vitamins.

But how do we protect our children from the air? We cannot ask our wives to stop breathing. The “gas chamber” of Delhi is not just an outdoor hazard; it is infiltrating our biology. We are witnessing a slow-motion health catastrophe where the most vulnerable – the unborn and the newborn – are paying the highest price. A Demand for Accountability: This is not a plea for sympathy; it is a demand for a radical shift in how we handle this crisis. We can no longer treat air pollution as a seasonal inconvenience to be managed with “odd-even” schemes or temporary construction bans. We need a Health Action Plan that treats this as the medical emergency it is. First, we must demand accountability from our healthcare systems. Just as blood pressure and sugar levels are recorded, air quality exposure data should be integrated into prenatal and patient medical records.

Doctors need to treat respiratory distress in newborns not just as a clinical symptom, but as a direct result of environmental toxicity. Second, we need immediate, strictly enforced Low Emission Zones (LEZs) around hospitals and schools. It is unconscionable that the very places where life begins and thrives are engulfed in idling exhaust and road dust. Our hospitals should be sanctuaries of clean air, not islands in a sea of smog. A Father's Promise: They say a parent's instinct is to protect. Right now, holding my child, I feel a fierce resolve rising above the helplessness. We, the parents of India, are done waiting for “better AQI days” that never come. We are done listening to politicians make vague promises while our children struggle to breathe.

We demand city-specific clean air action plans that are executed, not just announced. We demand a future where “survival” does not depend on how many air purifiers you can afford. To the policymakers, I say this: Do not come to us for votes if you cannot promise our children the basic right to breathe. To my fellow parents, I say: Wake up. This fight is for their survival. I look at my newborn, and I make a promise: I will not be silent. I will fight for your blue skies. Because if I don't fight for your breath, who will?

Ageas Federal Life Insurance Unveils its New Brand Identity

Mumbai, Ageas Federal Life Insurance, today, announced the launch of its new brand identity, marking a significant milestone in its transformation journey. Rooted in the 200-year global legacy of the Ageas Group and the century-old trust of Federal Bank, the new identity reflects the company's ambition to simplify insurance, build deeper emotional connections and make financial protection more accessible across the nation.

The new brand was unveiled by Mr. Jude Gomes, Managing Director & CEO of Ageas Federal Life Insurance, in the presence of brand ambassador and cricket legend Mr. Sachin Tendulkar.

The company's new logo represents new beginnings and renewed hope, echoing the belief that every meaningful journey starts with clarity and optimism. The logo features two unifying arcs, symbolising protection, underscoring the company's purpose of supporting customers at every stage of life.

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Jude Gomes, Managing Director & CEO of Ageas

Federal Life Insurance, said, “This new identity reflects who we are and what we strive to become for the people of India - an enabler of possibilities. ‘Alba’ embodies care and optimism, while our brand promise Har Wada Mumkin - Promises Made Possible reflects our commitment to turn every promise into a possibility. This milestone accelerates our aspiration to address India's evolving financial protection needs and build a brighter future for millions.”

The refreshed identity arrives at a time when India's life insurance industry is experiencing significant transformation, with increasing awareness around financial protection, rapid digital adoption and growing demand from emerging customer segments including MSMEs and young savers. With this foundation, Ageas Federal is poised to be a catalyst for trust, access and innovation in a market that remains



Cheques worth ₹2,800 crore presented for the holistic development of the state's municipal corporations and municipalities in an event held in Ahmedabad

Under the Smart Cities initiative and inspired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Gujarat ranks among the country's leading states in the City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain programme: Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel.

Deputy Chief Minister, Urban Development Minister, and the Minister of State for Urban Development graces the event.

Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel:-

With visionary leadership and a strong commitment to development, and with adequate financial resources, Gujarat has shown the nation how rapidly urban development can be achieved under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi.

Amid the challenges posed by climate change, the state's cities have emerged as leaders in green spaces, green growth, green mobility, as well as solid waste management and the Swachh Survekshan.

Priority should be given to quality and cleanliness in all development works.

By the time Gujarat marks 75 years of its formation in 2035, there is an opportunity to develop the state's cities into some of the best-equipped cities in the country.

Today, the entire country is progressing along the path of development initiated by Shri Narendra Modi from Gujarat, Deputy Chief Minister Shri Harsh Sanghavi.

Let us make it a priority to ensure that every development work is completed on time and with high quality: Urban Development- Minister Shri Kanubhai Desai.

(Gns).

Gandhinagar, 17 December 2025: Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel stated that under the Smart Cities initiative, Gujarat ranks among the leading states in the coun-

try in the City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain programme inspired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

In this context, he said that to tackle the challenges of climate change, towns and cities across the state have taken the lead in green spaces, green growth, green mobility, as well as solid waste management and cleanliness surveys. Furthermore, to accelerate the circular economy, focused attention has been given to the four “R”s—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover.

He said that at a time when urbanisation was seen as a challenge in the country, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, as Chief Minister of Gujarat, launched the Urban Development Year in 2005 and laid a strong foundation for basic infrastructure to develop an urban development model aligned with the state's heritage.

CM stated that with visionary leadership, a strong commitment to development, and adequate financial resources, Gujarat has set the best example of how swiftly urban development can be achieved under the guidance of Shri Narendra Modi, beginning with the Urban Development Year.

He said that following two decades of success since the Urban Development Year 2005, modern urban development has undergone a major transformation. To further accelerate this progress, the state government has designated 2025 as the Urban Development Year, aiming to develop cities that are all-inclusive and comprehensive.

Chief Minister distributed cheques totaling ₹2,800 crore to the state's municipal corporations and municipalities for various holistic developmental projects on the occasion of Urban Development Year 2025, at an event held in Ahmedabad.

As part of this cheque distribution, Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Shri Harsh Sanghavi, Urban Development Minister Shri Kanubhai Desai, and Minister of State Smt. Darshna Vaghela allocated ₹2,132 crore to 8 municipal corporations of the state, and ₹360 crore for infrastructure development to 9

newly formed municipal corporations at ₹40 crore each. Additionally, ₹308

Minister said that even before India becomes fully developed in 2047, there is

Deputy Chief Minister added that three decades ago, citizens had to endure

Mukhyamantri Swarnim Yojana in 2005.

Continuing in the same direction, Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel has raised the budget of the Urban Development Department from ₹22,000 crore to ₹30,000 crore. He stated that the department is consistently engaged in constructing urban development projects, including roads, sanitation, drainage, and stormwater systems, and stressed to all office-bearers of municipal corporations and municipalities the importance of completing every development project on time.

On this occasion, Minister of State for Urban Development Smt. Darshna Vaghela, while delivering the welcome address, stated that the state government remains fully committed to developing infrastructure facilities in areas under the state's municipal corporations and municipalities.

She stated that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, during his tenure as Chief Minister, had consistently prioritized the holistic development of the state's municipal corporations and municipalities. Continuing in the same spirit, under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, the state government has demonstrated its commitment to enhancing public welfare by steadily increasing the budget and support for development initiatives.

On this occasion, a film highlighting the holistic development of various urban areas across the state was also screened.

The event was attended by Deputy Chief Whip of the Legislative Assembly, Shri Jagdish Makwana, and Ahmedabad Mayor Smt. Pratibha Jain, local MLAs, Principal Secretary for Urban Development M. Thennarasan, Commissioner of Municipalities Smt. Remya Mohan, Additional Commissioner of the Municipal Finance Board, Smt. Veena Patel, as well as officials and office-bearers of municipal corporations and municipalities from across the state.



Mannat Returns Stronger, Vikrant Returns Changed. 7-Year Leap Shakes Up COLORS' ‘Mannat Har Khushi Paane Ki’

COLORS' emotional drama 'Mannat Har Khushi Paane Ki' is taking a powerful 7-year leap, starring Ayesha Singh and Adnan Khan as Mannat and Vikrant in a chapter where the past refuses to stay buried. Split apart by Aishwarya's manipulation and Vikrant's real mother Vishakha's lie that Mannat betrayed him, the two now live in separate worlds ruled by grief and deception. The leap promises an explosive reunion filled with unresolved pain, hidden truths, and a dangerous quest for justice.

Seven years later Mannat lives in Indore with Dhairya, raising Vikrant and her daughter Dua while she pursues the truth about her mother Shruti's killer. Meanwhile, Vikrant remains trapped in a web of lies spun by his ex-wife Malla and Vishakha, believing he's found happiness with Yashika, his obsessive partner and little Yuvi, whom Malla introduces as her illegitimate son. When a high-stakes cooking competition forces Mannat and Vikrant to face off, long-buried secrets threaten to explode. Vikrant's new business partner Arzoo enters as the story's ultimate wildcard, who harbours dangerous knowledge about Malla and Vishakha's darkest sins. The upcoming chapter explores the fragile line between love and

vengeance. As Mannat and Vikrant's fractured worlds collide in the heat of competition, long-buried

story. The leap becomes truly intense when Mannat comes face to face with Vikrant after 7 years. Old

where he's living a life that looks complete from the outside but is built on half-truths and emotional com-



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Dr. Jitendra Singh Says SHANTI Bill Retains Strong Safety and Liability Safeguards Amid Lok Sabha Debate

Statutory Status for Nuclear Regulator, Updated Liability Framework at Core of SHANTI Bill: Dr. Jitendra Singh
Private Participation Needed to Meet India's 2047 Clean Energy Goals, Minister Tells Lok Sabha
Lok Sabha Hears Minister's Detailed Reply on SHANTI Bill, Emphasising Safety, Accountability and Clean Energy Goals

(Gns). Union Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh on Tuesday replied to the debate in the Lok Sabha on the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill, 2025, addressing concerns raised by Members and outlining the government's rationale for introducing a comprehensive new nuclear law. Responding to

points cutting across party lines, the Minister said the Bill seeks to modernise Dr. Jitendra Singh underlined that the proposed legislation consoli-



India's nuclear framework in line with contemporary technological, economic and energy realities, while retaining and strengthening core safety, security and regulatory safeguards that have been in place since the Atomic Energy Act of 1962 .

dates existing laws and upgrades the regulatory architecture by giving statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, which until now functioned through an executive order. He stressed that safety norms, security controls over fissile material, spent

fuel and heavy water, and periodic inspections remain firmly under government oversight, regardless of private participation. The Minister clarified that private entities will not have control over sensitive materials, and that spent fuel management will continue to be handled by the government, as has been the practice for decades .

On liability, a central theme of the debate, the Minister said the Bill does not dilute compensation to victims. He explained that operator liability has been rationalised through graded caps linked to reactor size to encourage newer technologies such as small modular reactors, while ensuring that full compensation is available to affected persons through a multi-layered mechanism.

throughout the competition. I am happy that this evolution of the sports sector will keep bringing more laurels for the country," the Hon'ble Minister added.

India's top squash players have also benefited from Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) support, which has played a crucial role in strengthening their preparation through sustained high-performance inputs, international exposure and expert guidance.

Youngster Anahat Singh credited the crowd support throughout the Chennai meet. "I played at a World Cup for the first time ever alongside my seniors. It was a great learning experience and I thank the Chennai crowd for the continuous support," the 17-year-old said.

Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya felicitates Indian Squash Team after maiden World Cup triumph in Chennai

India is doing so well in sports sector. One after another, we are creating milestones: Dr. Mandaviya

(Gns). Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya felicitated the historic World Cup winning Indian Squash team on Wednesday.

The mixed team, comprising Joshna Chinappa, Abhay Singh, Velavan Senthilkumar and Anahat Singh, scripted history in Chennai last Saturday.

The win marked India's maiden Squash World Cup title, improving on their previous best finish of a bronze medal at the 2023 edition.

India registered a 3-0 victory over top-seeded Hong Kong in the final of the tournament, and became only the fourth

nation to win the Squash World Cup, joining an elite list featuring Australia,

another, we are creating milestones. Our women's cricket team also won the



England and Egypt.

Congratulating the players, Dr. Mandaviya mentioned it was a "proud moment for Indian sport".

"India is doing so well in sports sector. One after

World Cup recently," he said.

"Our Squash team winning the World Cup at our own soil is a great moment of pride. The team also didn't lose a single match

Kerala Governor tells Supreme Court consensus reached on appointment of two Vice Chancellors

(Gns). File Photo: IANS

The Kerala Governor, who is also the Chancellor of universities in the state, has informed the Supreme Court that the Chancellor and the state government have reached a consensus on the appointment of Vice Chancellors (VCs) to two universities.

The Governor has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court stating that a consensus has been reached on appointing Vice Chancellors to APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University (KTU) and Digital University Kerala (DUK).

Copies of the orders appointing Ciza Thomas as VC of APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University and Saji Gopinath as VC of Digital University Kerala have been attached along with the affidavit.

The affidavit states that

the agreement was reached during the Governor-Chief Minister meeting held on the 14th of

Ciza Thomas as VC of KTU and Saji Gopinath as VC of DUK.

Ciza Thomas and Saji



this month. It further notes that Justice Dhulia was informed of the decision as per the court's instructions.

Earlier on Wednesday, after a months-long standoff, Governor Rajendra Arlekar and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan finally reached a consensus on the appointment of Vice Chancellors to the two universities. Following this, the Governor's Secretariat issued orders appointing

Gopinath were the candidates preferred by the Governor and the state government, respectively.

The breakthrough comes in the wake of the Supreme Court's recent directive to the Dhulia Committee to make the selections independently.

In the midst of the Governor-government standoff, the Supreme Court had constituted search-cum-selection com-

mittees headed by Justice (Retd.) Sudhanshu Dhulia to shortlist VC candidates. As per the court's directive, the committee was required to shortlist four or five names for each university, after which the Chief Minister was to recommend them in order of preference.

However, the Governor did not accept the names recommended by the Chief Minister — C Sathish Kumar for KTU and Saji Gopinath for DUK. The Governor's preferred candidates were Ciza Thomas and Priya Chandran.

On December 11, the Supreme Court reviewed the developments and directed the Dhulia Committee to submit a final recommendation. The committee was instructed to consider both the Chief Minister's letter and the Governor's reply, and to select one final name for each university.

with approximately 1384 tons of cement. This is the first time a goods train loaded with cement has arrived at Chhann Arorian Goods Shed, which will strengthen the local economy, said Uchit Singhal, senior divisional commercial manager.

The continuous operation of inward/outward rakes at this goods shed will usher in a new era of trade and logistics, benefiting businesses and traders. "This goods shed has become a major freight loading/unloading point for the railways, promoting the movement of grains, cement, and other materials. This will strengthen the food security and supply chain of the region", he added.

Ambala Division successfully arrived at Chhann Arorian Goods Shed in the Jammu region.

The rake was loaded



rying military logistics on Tuesday show it crossing the Chenab Bridge which is Asia's highest arch rail bridge.

Eknath Shinde slams former Maha CM Prithviraj Chavan's claim about 'Operation Sindoor'

(Gns). Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has criticised veteran Congressman and former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan's statement that Pakistan succeeded in gaining the upper hand against Indian armed forces during 'Operation Sindoor'.

Talking to media persons on Wednesday, Shinde questioned Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan's statement and said, "Do these people who talk about India's defeat want Pakistan's victory? They speak Pakistan's language. The Congress party's love for Pakistan is only increasing. They speak against India. What kind of Indians are they? What kind of patriotism is this? What kind of nationalism is this? This is treason. It is a betrayal of the country, it is dishonesty to the country. Therefore, I con-

demn those who make such statements".

Shinde also targeted the Leader of Opposition in the

destroying terrorist bases". "India gave Pakistan a befitting reply after the Pahalgam attack. The



Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, by saying, "When 'Operation Sindoor' happened, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi repeatedly asked for evidence. He wanted to know how many drones were lost, how many planes were lost and how much damage was caused. But our armed forces took decisive action against Pakistan by

entire nation is proud of this. The public will teach a lesson to those who question 'Operation Sindoor' and speak like this. Those who say such things to dig PM Narendra Modi's grave will end up digging their own graves," Eknath Shinde said.

Shinde's statement came after Prithviraj Chavan issued a controver-

sial statement on Tuesday (December 16), saying that "We (India) suffered a complete defeat on the very first day of Operation Sindoor." Chavan said, "We were completely defeated in the half-hour air battle on May 7, whether people accept it or not. Indian aircraft were shot down. The Indian Air Force was completely grounded".

Later on Wednesday, Chavan refused to apologise for his remark about Operation Sindoor, that India was "defeated on Day 1" of 'Operation Sindoor' in May. "I will not say sorry. I haven't said anything wrong and have nothing to apologise for," he said.

"I don't want to say anything more now, but I will not apologise. There is no need. I did not make any wrong comment. The Constitution gives me the right to ask questions. I will talk in detail later," Chavan said.

Two Odisha men get jail term for dishonouring tricolor

(Gns).

Pronouncing the verdict of an offence committed 21 years back, a Court in Kendrapara district found two individuals guilty of dishonouring the tricolor during the observance of Independence Day function and sentenced the duo to

two-year imprisonment.

The Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) , Rajnagar, Shibani Mlshra convicted Sheikh Aiuddin (45) and Sheikh Nashiruddin (47) under Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, said

prosecution counsel, Nalinikanta Mangaraj.

The convicted duo had defaced the national flag hoisted at Government-run Binapani Primary school at Kanakanagar village under Rajnagar police station jurisdiction on 15 August 2004.

Another accused-Sheikh Mouddin -who perpetrated the offence in company of the convicts passed away in 2020. The Court awarded the sentence on the strength of material evidence and deposition of eight witnesses, concluded Mangaraj.

National Council of Science Museums Conferred with Two Prestigious National Awards 2025

One for the "Har Ghar Museum" initiative and another for the "Waste to Art" publication

(Gns).

The National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), an organisation under the Ministry of Culture, has received two prestigious PRSI National Awards 2025 from the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI). The honours include one award for the Har Ghar Museum initiative in the Best Use of social media in a Corporate Campaign category, and another for the "Waste to Art" publication under the Special/Prestige Publication category.

The "Waste to Art" publication documents a flagship initiative of the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) launched under Special Campaign 4.0 and Swachhata Hi Sewa, capturing the powerful intersection of creativity, sustainability, and public participation. Through compelling visuals and narratives, the publication showcases how approximately 1,250 kg of waste-including metal scrap, electronic components, and discard-

ed containers-was transformed across NCSM units nationwide into meaningful art installations that also

Museums, Ministry of Culture, with the belief that every home preserves a fragment of India's living



functioned as educational exhibits promoting circular economy principles. The publication further highlights hands-on workshops and national-level competitions that engaged students and communities, with selected artworks amplified through NCSM's social media platforms, reflecting the initiative's extensive digital reach and its success in inspiring eco-conscious thinking and creative reuse.

Inspired by the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Har Ghar Museum campaign was launched by the National Council of Science

history - be it an heirloom, artefact, antique, or unique collectible. The nationwide initiative encourages individuals and families to share photographs, videos, and stories of their personal collections, creating a growing digital archive of everyday objects that carry cultural, historical, and emotional value. Through systematic documentation involving images, narratives, and interactions with collectors, the campaign brings people's histories into the national cultural narrative, fosters curiosity and discovery, and strengthens awareness about the importance of

Left Front declares national protest against 'G-RAM-G' Bill, defends MGNREGA legacy

(Gns).

In a major challenge to the Union Government's proposed labour reforms, five Left parties have called for a nationwide protest on December 22. The mobilisation aims to oppose the replacement of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with the newly proposed Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 (VB G-RAM-G Bill).

The joint front—comprising the CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML) Liberation, RSP, and All India Forward Bloc—released a scathing statement on Wednesday, labeling the new legislation a deliberate attempt to dismantle India's rural safety net.

The Left leadership argues that the "G-RAM-G" Bill effectively ends the

"demand-driven" nature of rural employment, which has been a legal right since 2005. A central point of

this move places an "unsustainable" strain on state exchequers while centralising decision-mak-



conflict is the shifting financial burden from the Centre to the States. Under the new proposal, state governments would be responsible for financing unemployment allowances, covering compensation for payment delays, and contributing a significantly higher share of the overall program expenditure. The Left parties contend

ing power in New Delhi.

While the government highlights an increase in guaranteed workdays from 100 to 125, the Left parties dismissed the claim as a "jumla" (empty promise).

They highlighted several restrictive clauses in the new bill:

Seasonal Suspensions: Work can be suspended for up to 60 days during peak

agricultural seasons, which critics say forces workers back into dependency on local landlords.

Job Card Rationalisation: The parties fear large-scale exclusion of rural households under the guise of streamlining records.

Mandatory Digital Attendance: The joint statement called for the removal of digital tracking, which they claim has already led to the denial of wages for many.

"The removal of Mahatma Gandhi's name is not just a rebranding; it is an affront to his legacy and reflects the hostility of the BJP and RSS toward the Mahatma," the joint statement said. The Left parties were instrumental in the original passage of MGNREGA in 2005 while supporting the UPA government from outside.

Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel pays a courtesy visit to Syedna Muffadal Saifuddin Saheb, the spiritual leader of the Dawoodi Bohra community

Gandhinagar, 17 December 2025: Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel paid a courtesy visit to Syedna Muffadal Saifuddin Saheb, the supreme spiritual head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, at Mazar-e-Qutbi during his annual visit to Ahmedabad.

During the meeting, Syedna Saheb highlighted the significance of public welfare, social harmony, and responsible citizenship. He lauded the leader-



ship of Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel for his

focus on the sustained development of Ahmedabad, along with the city's stability, efficient governance, and overall citizens well-being.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister offered floral tributes at the dargah to mark the death anniversary of the 32nd Dai-Al-Mutlaq Syedna Qutubkhan Qutbuddin and appreciated the rich history and heritage of the Dawoodi Bohra community in the city.

Indian Oil Mathura Refinery partners with CIPET, Luckno

'With the investment of Rs 43 lakh under Corporate Social Responsibility 2025-26, 80 children of the district will become empowered, skill development will make the future bright.'

Mathura. Indian Oil Mathura Refinery, since its inception, has believed that true progress is measured not just by industrial achievements, but by the lives we improve. Taking a meaningful step towards shaping the future of the youth, Mathura Refinery, under its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative for 2025-26, has partnered with Central Institute of Petrochemical Engineering & Technology (CIPET), Lucknow, to provide education to the underprivileged youth of Mathura District and surrounding areasFully supported, employment-

oriented training can be provided.Under this initiative, a three-month residential skill development program is being sponsored

dates, and this batch proudly includes five young women, reflecting IndianOil's commitment towards inclusive growth.



Mukul Agarwal, Executive Director and Head of Refinery, in partnership with Central Institute of Petrochemical Engineering and Technology (CIPET), Lucknow.

for two trades – Assistant Machine Operator (Plastic Processing) and Assistant Machine Operator (Injection Molding). The 80-seat program has both male and female candi-

Recently, Mathura Refinery Executive Director and Refinery Head Mukul Aggarwal flagged off the batch of young men and women selected in the skill development program from

Over 30 Students from LegalEdge Lucknow Achieve Remarkable Success in CLAT

Lucknow: LegalEdge (by Toprankers) has once again reinforced its reputation for academic excellence and trusted mentorship with an outstanding performance in the CLAT 2026 results, the national entrance examination for admission to National Law Universities (NLUs). Students from LegalEdge Lucknow delivered an exceptional showing, with over 30 students securing impressive ranks, bringing pride to the city and taking a decisive step toward realizing their aspirations in legal education.

Under the guidance of LegalEdge, Shaurya Vardhan Trivedi secured All India Rank (AIR) 78, Devansh Verma achieved AIR 192, Kushal Rai Srivastava secured AIR 285, Ribhav Krishna attained AIR 283, Arnab earned AIR 431, Gauri Mishra secured AIR 461, Apurvashri achieved AIR 561, Shaurya Pratap Singh obtained AIR 611, Raghav Nigam secured AIR 615, and Arijit Singh achieved AIR 784.

In category-wise rank-

ings, Apurvashri secured AIR 39 in the OBC category,

to Lucknow, lived in a rented room, and dedicated



LegalEdge Elevates Lucknow's Prestige with Stellar Performance in CLAT 2026

while Divyansh Yadav achieved AIR 187 in the OBC category, marking significant accomplishments.

Beyond the ranks lie powerful stories of perseverance, dedication, and self-belief. Shaurya Vardhan Trivedi (AIR 78) resolved to build his own identity despite his family background and achieved success through sustained hard work and determination. Divyansh Yadav, who chose law over IIT-JEE, relocated from Gorakhpur

himself fully to his preparation—efforts that culminated in his success today. Another deeply inspiring story is that of Apurvashri, who overcame anxiety-related challenges through regular counseling, self-discipline, and strong willpower, emerging successful in CLAT. Her journey stands as a testament to resilience and the importance of mental health awareness.

Commenting on the results, Vishal Sharma,

Director, LegalEdge Lucknow, said that LegalEdge students secured AIR 1, AIR 2, and AIR 3 this year, with seven ranks in the Top 10, establishing a strong national presence. "This achievement is not a coincidence. LegalEdge has produced AIR 1 seven times so far and has secured Top 3 ranks (AIR 1, 2, and 3) four times in the last five years, setting a formidable benchmark in CLAT preparation," he added.

He further attributed this success to students' disciplined preparation, a structured academic framework, a robust test-practice system, and a student-centric approach. According to the institute, these results are the outcome of months of consistent effort, trust in the process, and the resolve to perform under pressure.

LegalEdge congratulated all successful students, their parents, and mentors, and reaffirmed its commitment to guiding future aspirants with the same dedication toward achieving their goals in legal education.

Chhattisgarh CM Sai hails Ethiopia's honour for Modi as testament to India's rising global standing

"The conferment of Ethiopia's highest civilian honour on Prime Minister Narendra Modi symbolises the respect India commands today in the comity of nations," Sai wrote, adding that the recognition was not merely personal but belonged to the country as a whole.

(Gns). Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on being conferred Ethiopia's highest civilian award, describing the recognition as a reflection of India's growing stature and credibility on the global stage.

In a message shared on social media platform X, the chief minister termed the honour — the "Great Honour Nishan of Ethiopia", a moment of national pride and a milestone in India's diplomatic journey. He said the award underlined India's emergence as a

trusted and reliable partner in international affairs, shaped by what he called the Prime Minister's

According to the chief minister, India's expanding global influence has been built on sustained engage-



"visionary and decisive leadership".

"The conferment of Ethiopia's highest civilian honour on Prime Minister Narendra Modi symbolises the respect India commands today in the comity of nations," Sai wrote, adding that the recognition was not merely personal but belonged to the country as a whole.

ment in development partnerships, peace building initiatives and cooperative diplomacy. "Under the Prime Minister's leadership, India has strengthened its voice across continents, particularly in the Global South, by advocating inclusive growth and mutual respect," he said.

Senior BJP leader Anurag Agarwal, in a con-

versation with The Statesman, described the honour as part of a broader trend of international recognition for India's diplomatic outreach, especially in Africa, where New Delhi has sought to deepen economic, cultural and strategic ties. "Such accolades reinforce India's soft power and its role as a bridge between developed and developing nations" he said.

Sai noted that the recognition resonated with citizens across the country. "For 140 crore Indians, it is a matter of immense pride to see the nation being acknowledged with dignity and respect at the global level," he said.

The chief minister said that the honour would further strengthen public confidence in India's future trajectory, calling it "a reaffirmation of the country's steady progress and its expanding role in shaping global conversations."

Fadnavis meets Ajit Pawar after court issues arrest warrant against Maha Sports Minister Kokate

As a result of the court move, Kokate is facing a two-year jail term and a consequent exit from the state cabinet.

(Gns). Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met NCP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday to discuss the political fallout of an arrest warrant issued by Nashik district court against Sports Minister Manikrao Kokate.

As a result of the court move, Kokate is facing a two-year jail term and a consequent exit from the state cabinet. Earlier on Wednesday, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP leader was admitted to the Lilavati Hospital in Bandra West after the court in Nashik ordered his immediate arrest in a 1995 case for forging documents to acquire flats meant for

low-income category people from the chief minister's quota. His hospitalisation is being perceived as an

court does not stay his arrest, Kokate may have to resign as sports minister, according to the



attempt to avoid arrest and buy time from the court.

The development came despite Kokate's lawyer Aniket Nikam challenging his conviction and two-year jail term at the Bombay High Court which is scheduled to hear the case on December 19. If the high

Representation of the People Act.

At Wednesday's hearing, his lawyer informed the high court that Kokate is currently undergoing treatment at hospital without submitting medical documents. Refuting Kokate's medical condition, the peti-

tioners' lawyer Advocate Ashutosh Rathod told the court that the minister was present at the state cabinet meeting.

According to the Representation of the People Act, if a representative of the people is sentenced to jail for two years or more, he will be immediately disqualified. As Kokate has already been sentenced to two-year imprisonment due to which he will no longer be eligible to remain in his ministerial position and even his position as an MLA will be revoked if the Bombay High Court refuses to stay his arrest.

Later on Wednesday, Fadnavis met Pawar, who is Manikrao Kokate's political godfather, to discuss the outcome of his probable exit from the cabinet.

DM formed investigation committee for the horrific road accident on Yamuna Expressway.

Mathura. An investigation committee was formed by District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh to investigate the horrific road accident that took place on the night of 15-16 December at Mile Stone 127 of Yamuna Expressway (on the route from Agra to Noida) under Baldev police station area of Mathura district.

On Wednesday, December 17, Additional District Magistrate Amresh Kumar, Additional Superintendent of Police Rural Suresh Chandra Rawat, Executive Engineer Public Works Department Construction Block I Gulveer Singh, Assistant Divisional Transport Officer



Members of the investigation committee inspecting the incident site.

Enforcement Rajesh Rajput, General Manager (Project) of Yamuna Expressway Authority Rajendra Singh Bhati andThe site of the road accident on Yamuna Expressway was inspected by Anand Singh, General Manager (Operations),

Kanshasnair Jaypee Infratech Limited. Additional District Magistrate Administration has informed that the possible reasons are being investigated through the statements of local people present at the time of the

accident, passengers present in the bus and other vehicles and the driver etc.

Additional District Magistrate Administration has informed that if any person or organization wants to give evidence / information / information regarding the above accident, then he can give it by appearing in the office of Additional District Magistrate Administration / Additional Superintendent of Police Rural on 18 December 2025 and Additional District MagistrateYou can also give it on the mobile number of Magistrate Administration 9454417721 or the mobile number of Additional Superintendent of Police Rural 9454401103

Himachal HC quashes Health Dept's order to withdraw nurse's appointment

The DHS' order stated that she was not eligible to be considered for appointment, as the recruitment was for the 2011 batch.

(Gns). The High Court of Himachal Pradesh has quashed the Director of Health Services (DHS)' order revoking the appointment of a staff nurse hired three years ago.

The DHS' order stated that she was not eligible to be considered for appointment, as the recruitment was for the 2011 batch. On the other hand, Nurse Kajal Mehra graduated in 2014. She was recruited on a contract basis in the OBC-BPL category.

The Selection Committee, after taking note of her educational qualification certificates, recommended her name for appointment to the post of staff nurse, vide office

order dated March 16, 2022. She joined the Department, and after two

ordered the withdrawal of her appointment vide an order dated August 31,



years, a complaint was

lodged with the Vigilance Department alleging that Mehra had been wrongly appointed to a post advertised for the 2011 batch. Initially, she was not given any opportunity, and her appointment letter was withdrawn. After the High Court intervened, the health department served a show-cause notice on her and, following due process,

2024.

She approached the High Court again and submitted that there was no "misrepresentation or fraud" on her part and that the Selection Committee, fully aware that she had acquired the requisite qualification for the post in 2014, recommended her name for appointment.

After hearing arguments, Justice Sandeep Sharma

observed, "No doubt, as per the procedure posts notified for a particular batch can be filled up from the candidates of that batch only, meaning thereby if posts were advertised for the 2011 batch, candidates, who had acquired the requisite qualification for the post in question up till that date, only could have been considered."

The state government informed the court that, for three posts of Staff Nurses reserved for OBC-BPL, four candidates appeared: two from the 2010 batch, one from the 2017 batch, and Mehra from the 2014 batch. Two posts reserved for the OBC-BPL category were filled by candidates from the 2010 batch; however, because Mehra was senior to the other candidate, who was from the 2017 batch, the third post was offered to her.

National Herald case: Vindicated by court's refusal to entertain ED chargesheet, Congress workers protest in Lucknow

(Gns). Congress workers on Wednesday held a protest in Lucknow after a Delhi court refused to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) chargesheet against senior party leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and five others in the National Herald case.

Sabarimala gold loot: SIT arrests former Travancore Devaswom Board administrative officer

(Gns). The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala gold heist case on Wednesday arrested a former Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) administrative officer S Sreekumar in connection with the theft of gold-plated sheets from the dwarapalaka sculptures at the temple. Sreekumar was the

administrative officer in 2019 when the gold plating from the Dwarapalaka

The party termed the court's decision a major victory and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of misusing Central agencies to target political



sculptures at the Sabarimala temple was removed. He was arrested

after being summoned to the Crime Branch office for questioning as part of the ongoing probe. Earlier, his anticipatory bail plea was dismissed by the Kerala High Court.

This is the seventh arrest in the case. After TDB's former president K Padmakumar, was arrested, there was an allegation that the police had slowed down the probe in the wake of the local body polls.

opponents. Hundreds of Congress workers marched from the party's state headquarters to the BJP office raising slogans. However, police stopped the protesters using a five-layer barricading arrangement.

During the protest, a worker alleged that police personnel manhandled protesters and tore his clothes during the scuffle, calling the behaviour "shameful in a democracy."

State Congress president Ajay Rai said the court's decision exposed the BJP government's alleged misuse of the ED. "For a long time, the BJP government has been misusing the ED. Today's outcome proves that the chargesheet had no merit and was only meant to defame our leaders."