



PM Modi and CM Yogi to inaugurate 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship

(Gns).

The city of Kashi, renowned for its religion and culture, is ready to create a new history in the world of sports.

The grand 72nd Senior National Volleyball Championship will be held at the newly constructed Dr. Sampurnanand Sports Stadium in Sigrā from January 4 to January 11, 2026.

Kashi will be bustling with approximately 1,250 top players from across the country.

This is the first time in the history of Kashi that a national championship of this magnitude is being organised.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate this historic

competition, while Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be present to encourage

finalised in high-level meetings of the organising committee. The chairman of the

To make the event a grand success, councillors and BJP workers have been assigned different responsibilities. Ayush Minister (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', BJP Regional President Dilip Patel, MLC and BJP's District President Hansraj Vishwakarma, Metropolitan President Pradeep Agrahari, Jagdish Tiwari, and others were present at the meeting. On the other hand, District Magistrate Satyendra Kumar, Municipal Commissioner Himanshu Nagpal, Police Commissioner Mohit Agarwal, along with several senior officers of the Municipal Corporation, district, and police administration, inspected the venue

and reviewed the preparations. Under the supervi-

sion of the chairman of the

the Mayor, the stadium is being given an unpre-

dicted makeover.



age the players.

Uttar Pradesh Volleyball Association President and Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak will be present as the special guest at the inaugural session. Preparations are being

organising committee and Mayor, Ashok Kumar Tiwari, is personally overseeing and monitoring the arrangements. On Friday, he convened a meeting of councillors and BJP workers to review the preparations.

drinking water supply, leading to a diarrhoea outbreak

turned into a flashpoint between Congress and BJP.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the state administration of ignoring repeated warnings from residents about foul-smelling supply. "In Indore, not water but poison was distributed, and the administration remained in deep sleep," Rahul Gandhi wrote on X, alleging grave negligence by authorities.

Rahul Gandhi said the case showed a wider governance breakdown in Madhya Pradesh, linking it with earlier deaths tied to cough syrup and alleged negligence in government hospitals. He blamed the BJP's "double engine" rule for what he termed a denial of basic rights.

been shared publicly. In Indore, Madhya Pradesh, a water contamination crisis in Bhagirathpura has resulted in at least ten fatalities and over 1,400 illnesses, with sewage mixing into the

and political criticism. The

incident has prompted interventions from the High Court, and significant criticism of the BJP government's handling of the crisis.

The tragedy quickly

innovation Index was 76 which in 2024 has improved to 39th slot".

Singh was also happy about the economic strides the country has taken, India's politics and the politicians.

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India's politics and the politicians.

"I don't make promises, but only try to do what the people ask for. I feel that there is a big gap between making promises to people and doing the deals for them," he averred.

This gap has been growing in the form of a crisis of confidence and faith among the people for the entire India's politics and the politicians.

We are required to accept and face this crisis of credibility-reliability as a challenge the Defence Minister quipped.

On the demand of a Sainik School for Udaipur, Singh said, "The inspection reports for both of the Bhupal Noble's schools for upgrading as Sainik Schools are positive and I would do my best to fulfill the demand.

asserting that by 2030, we would be the world's 3rd largest and fastest growing economy.

Nevertheless, the minister was worried about the crisis of confidence and credibility among the people in the country towards

world," he added.

Empowered by potentials and capabilities of her universities and education system, India has now been emerging as a "Knowledge Economy", he said, adding, "In 2014 India's rank in Global

asserting that by 2030, we would be the world's 3rd largest and fastest growing economy.

Nevertheless, the minister was worried about the crisis of confidence and credibility among the people in the country towards

Hoping that the Election Commission, the mapping app, and the companies that are helping the Election Commission technically will be fair, Yadav asked, "If there is a difference in the figures on voters, the figures of the State Election Commission and the figures of the Central Election Commission are different, what is the meaning of the SIR. Is it not true that at the behest of the chief minister, preparations are being made to indulge in dishonesty."

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Editorial

Path of Exhaustion

Wars often end not with a decisive victory but with exhaustion. In the Ukraine conflict, that exhaustion is now being carefully measured, counted, and paradoxically exploited. Recent patterns in battlefield deaths suggest that as diplomatic activity intensifies, the fighting has become deadlier rather than restrained. This contradiction exposes a brutal logic at work: casualties themselves have become a negotiating instrument. The surge in Russian losses is not accidental.

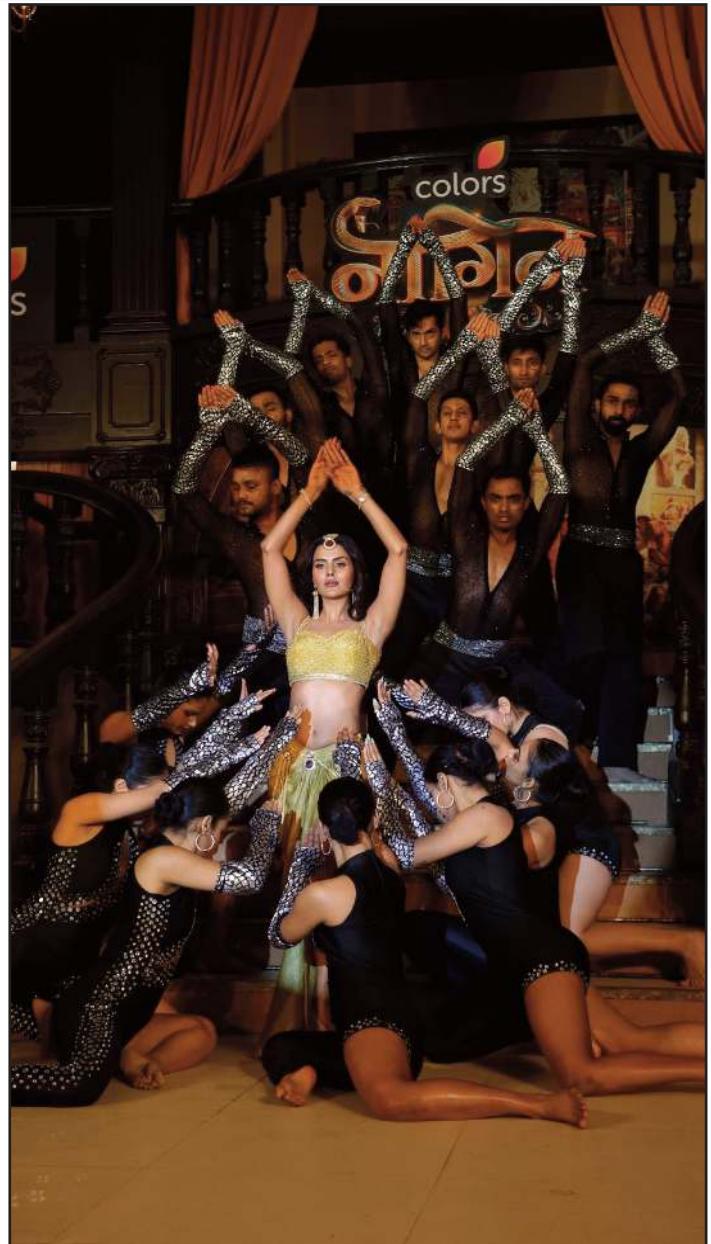
It reflects a strategic choice by the Kremlin under President Vladimir Putin to treat territory and momentum as leverage. When negotiations loom, pressure increases at the front. The message is simple ~ any settlement must account for "facts on the ground," even if those facts are purchased at extraordinary human cost. War, in this framing, is not a failure of diplomacy but its extension by other means. What makes this phase of the conflict particularly grim is who is dying. A growing share of Russian casualties comes from men who had no military background when the war began: prisoners, indebted civilians, students, and those facing legal or economic coercion.

Many entered the battlefield believing the war was nearing its end, that a contract signed now would translate into freedom or financial security later. Instead, they found themselves trapped in an open-ended conflict where contracts renew automatically and exit is largely illusory. This system has allowed Moscow to avoid the political risks of mass mobilisation while sustaining an industrial scale of attrition. High pay-outs, selective pressure, and the targeting of socially marginal groups have kept dissent muted. But this is not resilience; it is deferred instability. A state that treats human lives as replenishable inputs may sustain war longer, but it also hollows out its social fabric in ways that no ceasefire can easily repair.

For the United States, the push for negotiations under President Donald Trump has introduced another distortion. The promise of a rapid deal has not reduced violence; it has reshaped incentives. Each diplomatic signal becomes a reason to fight harder now, before terms are frozen. Peace, when framed as imminent but undefined, can perversely raise the short-term value of escalation. Ukraine, under President Volodymyr Zelensky, faces its own attritional dilemma. While defending territory remains existential, prolonged fighting strains manpower, morale, and society.

The longer the war is framed as a test of endurance rather than strategy, the greater the risk that Ukraine's losses ~ less visible but no less real ~ become politically normalised abroad. The deeper truth is unsettling: diplomacy that rewards battlefield gains incentivises bloodshed. As long as negotiations are shaped by who advanced last and at what cost, violence will spike whenever talks approach. Ending the war will therefore require more than meetings and proposals. It will demand a shift in the underlying arithmetic ~ one where restraint, not escalation, improves a side's position. Until then, the path to peace will continue to be paved with

"Kudos to the OG Naagin Mouni Roy," says Priyanka Chahar Choudhary on carrying forward the legacy in COLORS' 'Naagin 7'



In the current track, Purvi remains blissfully unaware of her true identity as the Serpent Queen. As deadly challenges emerge and mysterious forces close in, her hidden powers begin to awaken. With danger at every turn and her destiny unfolding, audiences are left on the edge of their seats with one burning question: Will Purvi discover her real identity before it's too late? Watch 'Naagin 7' every Saturday-Sunday at 8:00 PM only on COLORS and JioHotstar.

Every year, many of us bravely announce our resolutions for the new year. A glass of champagne on New Year's Eve might add to our confidence in our ability to do better in the coming year and save more, spend less, eat better, work out more, or binge-watch less. But most of our resolutions fail. Even within the first weeks after New Year's Eve, the majority of people have given up on them.

Yet, not all tales of failure are the same, because the way you talk about the failure matters for your own motivation and other people's confidence in your ability to try again. So what can we do after we've given up on our resolution? We've announced our good intentions to friends and family and now must admit failure. Research has shown the way you word your failed resolution can affect how people view it. And understanding the reasons most resolutions don't work out can help us see it through in the future. Indeed, you can talk about your resolutions in a way that will make your failure more understandable and will sustain your motivation

to keep going. A constructive way to discuss your failed resolution is to focus on the controllability of the failure. Research shows that most resolutions will require some investment of time and of money. For example, getting in shape takes time for exercise and also normally requires money for a gym membership or for workout equipment. Because both of these resources are essential for pursuing our goals, many failed resolutions are due to the lack of either time or money, or both. When talking about a failed resolution in the past, I've showed in my own research that we should focus on how lack of money contributed to this failure, rather than lack of time. In my 2024 study, people read about fictional as well as real panel participants who failed either due to lack of money or lack of time.

Most participants felt the person whose failure was caused by lack of money would have more self-control going forward and was going to be more reliable at pursuing their goals. This effect occurred because lack of money is seen as

something that cannot be controlled very easily, so if this caused the failure, there wasn't very much the person who failed could have done about it. In this

Research also shows the way we view time matters when it comes to failure. For the past, it's better to think about things outside of our control that can



research, most of the failed resolutions were related to weight loss, better eating, or working out in the gym. Participants felt the same whether the person who failed was a man or a woman, presumably because it's plausible that everyone needs some time and some money to pursue various goals regardless of gender or the specific resolution. The role of controllability takes a different form when it comes to thinking about how we can do better next time.

Help to take the negativity out of failure and bolster the belief that we can do better. This can mean, for example, to consider how our failure was due to lack of money or other resources outside of our control. For the future, however, take an active perspective on time. Look at your schedule and make active decisions how to allocate time to your goal pursuit, by scheduling gym sessions or blocking time to prepare healthy meals. This can help to give us the

Deregulation must be Odisha's 2026 mantra

(Gns). Odisha enters 2026 with a rare opportunity. The state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is projected at Rs 10.63 lakh crore, with a growth rate of nearly 12 per cent – among the fastest in India. Yet, beneath this headline figure lies a familiar problem: regulatory bottlenecks that choke enterprise, delay projects, and reduce the vibrancy of its start-up ecosystem.

The solution is clear and urgent: a De-Regulation Cell dedicated to deregula-

tion and compliance reform. Odisha Asmita must evolve beyond nostalgic rhetoric (ad nauseum moralisers)

lapping compliances. A Deregulation Cell could streamline approvals, attract foreign direct investment, and accelerate exports, turning Odisha into a global mineral hub. The second pillar is agriculture, which remains the backbone of the state, employing close to 60 per cent of the population.

Despite significant allocations in irrigation and rural support, farmers continue to face challenges in accessing markets and modern technology. Deregulation – particularly through initiatives like AgriStack for smart supply chains and market linkages – can simplify land-use permissions, reduce middlemen, and directly raise farmer incomes. While these funds and awards highlight Odisha's rising profile in agriculture, the real challenge lies in deploying resources wisely.

Investments must prioritize farmer-centric outcomes: improved productivity, sustainable practices, and resilience against climate risks. Funds should strengthen digital infrastructure and last-mile delivery, ensuring that technology translates into tangible benefits for small and marginal farmers. Transparent monitoring and accountability will be crucial to prevent inefficiency or misallocation. In this way, Odisha can transform recognition into lasting impact, making agriculture not just a sector of survival but a driver of pride and prosperity – an authentic expression of Odia Asmita.

The third pillar is the blue economy, encompassing ports, fisheries, and coastal trade. By aligning with Prime Minister Modi's reform vision, Odisha can gift itself a new year of renewal – where Asmita is not just remembered, but lived through courage, creativity, and collective advancement. The Prime Minister, at the 5th National Conference of Chief Secretaries (Dec 2025), urged states to set up deregulation cells to accelerate reforms and improve ease of living. He reminded the nation that India has boarded the "Reform Express," powered by its young workforce. Odisha must seize this moment. Worldwide, deregulation has been the lever for growth.

Bangladesh's garment sector, after trade simplifications, now contributes over 11 per cent of GDP. India's telecom deregulation in the 1990s transformed it into the world's second-largest mobile market. Indonesia's mining deregulation attracted billions in FDI, boosting exports. Odisha, with its mineral wealth, fertile plains, and coastline, mirrors these economies. A Deregulation Cell can replicate such success by cutting redundant compliances and speeding approvals.

Odisha's economy rests on four dominant pillars, each with immense potential waiting to be unlocked through deregulation. The first and most visible pillar is mines and minerals. Odisha contributes nearly 20 per cent of India's total mineral output, making it one of the country's richest resource states. Yet, the sector is often slowed by clearance delays and over-

GSDP), signalling intent. Yet, private investment is constrained by licensing complexities and slow PPP approvals. Deregulation

here could open doors for world-class universities, hospitals, and tourism ventures, positioning Odisha as a services powerhouse alongside its traditional strengths. Together, these four pillars – minerals, agriculture, blue economy, and services – form the foundation of Odisha's economic health. A Deregulation Cell in 2026 would act as the lever to unlock each of them, ensuring that growth is not just projected but realized. Leading pharma companies in India have begun approaching the Odisha government to adopt specific regions of the state for targeted interventions in child and maternal health.

These partnerships aim to deploy innovative healthcare models – combining medical expertise, technology, and community outreach – to address persistent gaps in nutrition, prenatal care, and early childhood development. The

India's cities today reveal a contradiction that can no longer be brushed aside as a passing phase of growth. Flyovers gleam, metro lines stretch across skylines, and terminals

resemble global showcases. Yet, at street level, daily life is increasingly marked by toxic air, broken roads, overflowing drains, and the quiet normalization of civic disorder. The problem is not that Indian cities are short of money or ambition. It is that they are structurally incapable of governing themselves.

Urban India has expanded at a pace the Constitution never anticipated. Towns have morphed into megacities, and villages into dense urban corridors, without a corresponding evolution in political authority. Power over

motivation to try again because we're not victims of our busy schedules.

A study published in October 2025 that focused on how a lack of time contributed to failures showed that people can get back a sense of control by talking about "making time," instead of "having time." People who discussed their failures as an issue of not having made the time felt like they could do things differently in the future, and were more motivated to do so. This is because "making time" suggests active control over one's time and schedule, instead of "having time" that leaves us passive.

For example, if you say you didn't make the time to work out, that means you can make the time in the future if you choose to do so. In contrast, if you say you didn't have time to work out, it feels like this lack of time is outside of your control and could happen again, preventing you from pursuing your exercise goals. Another reason so many people struggle to keep to their new year resolution may be because they were too ambitious, or they neglected that joy and

innovation. Global Competitiveness : Odisha can position itself as a deregulation-driven hub for minerals, agriculture exports, and maritime trade. Odisha stands at a crossroads. With strong GSDP growth but weak entrepreneurial momentum, the state risks stagnation if regulatory bottlenecks persist.

Between Jan-Mar 2025, just 85 new start-ups were recognized and 26 incubated at O-Hub. Compared to Karnataka or Maharashtra, this is modest. The truth is stark: Odisha's start-up story has been reduced to tokenism. A Deregulation Cell can change this by streamlining compliance, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and creating a transparent environment for investors. Without it, Odisha risks losing entrepreneurial talent to other states. PM Modi's emphasis on human capital, ease of doing business, and next-generation reforms directly resonates with Odisha's needs. His call for deregulation cells is not abstract – it is a blueprint for states. For Odisha, this must become the single-point agenda in 2026.

Unlocking All Sectors: From mines to services, deregulation will cut red tape and unleash productivity. Human Capital Development: By reducing compliance burdens, resources can be redirected to skill-building and

Unbuilt Cities

planning, staffing, budgets, and even minor operational decisions remains concentrated in state capitals. City governments exist, but largely as implementers, not decision-makers. The

Roads disintegrate because utilities dig them up without coordination, or concern for public expenditure. Flooding recurs because drainage planning is fragmented across agencies that answer to different political masters. No single office is truly accountable, and therefore none is compelled to fix the system end-to-end. India's urban challenge is often framed as a capacity problem. In fact, it is a

power problem. Mayors are weak, councils are underfunded, and city administrations are staffed by officials whose incentives are shaped by state-level career paths, not urban outcomes. Leadership becomes episodic, dependent on individual bureaucrats rather than durable institutions. When those individuals move on, reform moves with them.



result is a permanent mismatch between responsibility and authority: cities are blamed for failure but denied the tools to succeed. This imbalance explains why headline infrastructure projects coexist with collapsing basics. Waste management fails not because technology is unavailable, but because municipal bodies lack control over land, contracts, and long-term

Trump's "Locked and Loaded" Warning Raises Stakes With Iran

(Gns).

Donald Trump warned Iran against using lethal force on protesters as demonstrations over economic collapse spread nationwide. Trump said the United States was "locked and loaded and ready to go" if peaceful demonstrators were shot, raising pressure on Tehran while reports of deaths and arrests continued to emerge from several provinces.

Iran was hit by its largest protests in three years, with unrest fuelled by a steep fall in the rial and soaring prices. Demonstrations began with shopkeepers and traders and then widened to cities across the country, where clashes, detentions and at least several deaths were reported by state media and rights groups.

Donald Trump warned Iran against using lethal force on protesters amid nationwide demonstrations over economic issues like the falling rial and rising prices, mentioning that the U.S. was ready to intervene; protests spread to several cities and provinces, with casualties reported in Lorestan province, and led

to the resignation of Iran's central bank head.

strict hijab rules. Now, discontent centred on living



Trump delivered the warning in a post on Truth Social. Trump wrote: "If Iran shoots and violently kills peaceful protesters, which is their custom, the United States of America will come to their rescue. We are locked and loaded and ready to go. Thank you for your attention to this matter! President DONALD J TRUMP." The message followed days of rising violence.

The protests recalled the 2022 nationwide unrest after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody. Then, outrage grew over actions by Iran's morality police and

costs and currency collapse, though slogans and anger again targeted authorities in multiple cities and provinces.

Iranian outlets and advocates reported deaths in several regions, though figures were still unclear.

Reuters said it could not immediately verify those claims.

The semi-official Fars news agency reported that three protesters were killed and 17 injured in Lorestan province after a crowd attacked a police station and set vehicles on fire during clashes with officers.

Earlier, Fars and rights group Hengaw reported fatalities in Lordegan city in Charmahal and Bakhtiari

province. Officials confirmed one person died in the western city of Kuhdasht. Hengaw separately reported another death in the central province of Isfahan and said a protester was shot dead there on Wednesday, adding to the sense of spreading unrest.

A separate demonstration on Wednesday night reportedly led to the death of a 21-year-old Basij volunteer from the Revolutionary Guard's force. State-run IRNA confirmed the Guard member's death but did not share further details.

Student News Network, which is viewed as close to the Basij, blamed protesters, citing comments by Saeed Pourali, a deputy governor in Lorestan province.

The city of Kuhdasht, about 400 kilometres southwest of Tehran, saw intense unrest.

According to the judiciary's Mizan news agency, local prosecutor Kazem Nazari said 20 people were arrested there. Nazari added that calm had returned after the arrests, though reports from activists suggested tension remained high in parts of the region.

Punjab Education Revolution: 1,700+ Students to Receive Free IIT, NIT, AIIMS Coaching

(Gns).

Punjab's brightest government school students soaked in knowledge at Winter Residential Coaching Camps organised under Punjab Academic Coaching for Excellence (PACE) program. Over 1700 students benefited from the transformative program designed to democratise access to high-quality competitive exam coaching, informed Punjab's Education Minister S. Harjot Singh Bains.

Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains informed that these camps, aimed at preparing government school students for the India's top professional education institutions like IITs, NITs and AIIMS, saw 1728 students participation across three centres: Bathinda (601 students comprising 359 Girls, 242 Boys), Ludhiana (573 students: 327 Girls, 246 Boys) and SAS Nagar (Mohali) (554 students: 367 Girls, 187 Boys).

Under the Punjab Academic Coaching for Excellence (PACE) program, over 1700 government school students participated in Winter Residential Coaching Camps across Bathinda, Ludhiana, and Mohali, preparing them for competitive exams like JEE and NEET, as informed by Education Minister S. Harjot Singh Bains; the initiative, led by Chief Minister

Bhagwant Singh Mann, included comprehensive arrangements, expert facul-

formance in standardized mock tests, conceptual clarity, academic consisten-

recreational activities ensured the student's well-being. Secure, fully residential facilities provided a conducive, distraction-free environment to the students," he highlighted.

He expressed confidence that the Winter Residential Coaching Camps would significantly enhance competitive exams outcome by providing critical early exposure to Class 11th students and boost the final preparation of Class 12th aspirants. "Last year, 265 government school students cleared JEE Mains, 45 cracked JEE Advanced and 847 cleared NEET, proving the state government schools are now premier launchpads for the country's top professional careers," he highlighted.

The Education Minister said that the camps offered a comprehensive learning experience, led by expert faculty from top coaching organisations like Physics Wallah, Vidya Mandir and Avanti Fellows. "A structured curriculum focuses on concept strengthening and advanced problem-solving aligned with JEE and NEET patterns. Daily doubt-clearing sessions, one-on-one mentoring and holistic development modules on stress management, career guidance and

cy and teacher recommendations, ensuring that only the most dedicated aspirants made the cut from the cohort. The program is committed to inclusivity, reserving 20% seats at each centre for students from other government schools and drop-year aspirants, extending benefits beyond Schools of Eminence and Residential Schools for Meritorious Students," he added.

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their long-term importance. To improve classroom practices and learning outcomes, he suggested organising district-wise teachers' conferences with structured presentations aimed at promoting effective teaching methodologies.

Emphasising accountability and ground-level monitoring, Kundra instructed that Tehsildars, SDMs, and other officers must mandatorily inspect remote schools to assess their condition, with the findings reflected in their Annual Confidential Reports, to ensure sustained improvement in school education across the UT.

He laid strong emphasis on developing end-to-end entrepreneurship models in Ladakh. He instructed the departments to ensure registration with Startup India and to organise a large-scale startup conclave to promote innovation and enterprise.

Stressing the importance of future-ready skills, he called for the introduction of advanced skill courses by engaging experts from outside, including focused training in artificial intelligence, noting that technology adop-

Chief Secretary stresses mission-mode push for Pashmina trade in Ladakh

(Gns).

Ladakh's Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra on Friday directed that the pashmina trade be taken up in project mode, with a complete value-chain and mission-mode approach, involving local entrepreneurs to maximise economic benefits for the region.

A day after taking charge of the post, Kundra reviewed the functioning of the School Education, Higher Education, Technical Education, and Skill Development Departments to assess progress, challenges, and future roadmaps for strengthening the education and skill ecosystem in the Union Territory (UT).

Kundra also highlighted the need for specialised training relevant to Ladakh's unique context, such as high-altitude skill development and hotel management.

The Chief Secretary further directed that all developmental and educational initiatives undertaken by the administration be properly documented and visualised for record-keeping and institutional memory, underlining

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their long-term importance.

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Mumbai Ahmedabad Bullet Train Gets Boost as Longest Mountain Tunnel Nears Completion

(Gns).

India's first bullet train project has crossed a major construction milestone with the completion of a key mountain tunnel in Maharashtra's Palghar district. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw confirmed that Mountain Tunnel 5 of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train corridor has been successfully completed, bringing the project closer to reality.

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project includes seven mountain tunnels and one undersea tunnel, making it one of the most technically complex railway projects ever undertaken in India. The Palghar tunnel is the longest and first completed mountain tunnel among the seven planned in Maharashtra.

India's Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project has completed a

Maharashtra, while 352 kilometres pass through Gujarat and Dadra and

mountain tunnel

The newly completed Mountain Tunnel 5 in Palghar measures 1.48 kilometres, or 1.39 kilometres excluding tunnel entrances. It is the longest mountain tunnel in the Maharashtra section of the project and marks a crucial phase in construction through difficult terrain.

Earlier, in September 2025, the project completed its first underground tunnel of nearly five kilometres between Thane and Bandra Kurta Complex, another important breakthrough for the bullet train network. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train will have 12 stations. Bandra Kurta Complex will serve as the Mumbai terminal, while Sabarmati will be the terminal station in Gujarat.

key mountain tunnel in Maharashtra's Palghar district; the 508-kilometer route includes seven mountain tunnels and an undersea tunnel, with 326 kilometers of viaduct construction completed so far.

The bullet train corridor will cover a total distance of 508 kilometres. Out of this, 156 kilometres lie in Nagar Haveli.

Tunnels account for 27.4 kilometres of the route. Around 21 kilometres are underground, while 6.4 kilometres are surface tunnels. Maharashtra alone has seven mountain tunnels, with a combined length of just over 6 kilometres.

Details of the Palghar

key mountain tunnel in Maharashtra's Palghar district; the 508-kilometer route includes seven mountain tunnels and an undersea tunnel, with 326 kilometers of viaduct construction completed so far.

Air India Pilot Held at Vancouver Airport Over Drinking Suspicions Before Flight

(Gns).

On December 23, an Air India pilot was detained at Vancouver airport due to concerns about his fitness for duty, causing a delay for a Delhi-bound flight (AI186); he was later replaced, and is now off flying duties pending an inquiry, while the DGCA issued a show-cause notice to another crew for compliance lapses.

port's duty-free store alerted authorities after either seeing the pilot consume alcohol or noticing the smell while he was making a purchase. Canadian offi-

Air India's response and official statement

In its statement, Air India said the action was taken after local authorities questioned the pilot's fit-

cials then subjected the pilot to a breath analyser test, which he reportedly failed, following which he was detained for further inquiry.

The pilot was scheduled to operate a flight from Vancouver to Delhi, and the intervention came shortly before boarding, disrupting the departure schedule.

What happened at Vancouver airport

According to reports, a staff member at the air-

ness for duty.

"Flight AI186 from Vancouver to Delhi on 23 December 2025 experienced a last-minute delay after one of the cockpit crew members was offloaded prior to departure. Canadian authorities raised concerns regarding the pilot's fitness for duty, following which the crew

member was taken for further inquiry. In accordance with safety protocols, an alternate pilot was rostered to operate the flight, resulting in the delay," the airline said.

It added, "Air India regrets the inconvenience caused to its passengers and is fully cooperating with the local authorities. The pilot has been taken off flying duties during the process of the enquiry. Air India maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any violation of applicable rules and regulations. Pending the outcome of the investigation, any confirmed violation will attract strict disciplinary action in line with company policy. Safety remains Air India's highest priority at all times."

National Textiles Ministers' conference in Guwahati next week

(Gns).

A National Textiles Ministers' Conference will be held in Guwahati on 8-9 January.

The conference will be held under the theme "India's Textiles: Weaving Growth, Heritage & Innovation."

The two-day conference aims to bring together Union and State Ministers of Textiles, senior officials of Union & State Governments to deliberate on a coordinated national strategy for positioning India as a global textiles manufacturing hub.

The deliberations align with the national vision of developing a USD 350 billion textile industry and achieving USD 100 billion in textile exports by 2030.

The Inaugural Session on 8 January will be attended by Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh, Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa Sarma, Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita, along with other dignitaries.

The two-day conference will have sessions focusing on Infrastructure & Investment, Expanding Exports, Competitiveness, Raw Materials & Fibres, New Frontiers, including technical textiles, research & development, Revitalising Traditional Textiles, with emphasis on handloom and handicrafts for modern

markets

Ministers and officials from different states and union territories are expected to participate and share best practices, challenges,

and policy suggestions aimed at strengthening the textile value chain across regions and districts.

A conclave on "Strengthening and Empowering the Textiles Sector of the North-Eastern Region of India" will also be

held on 8 January, with the participation of the Union Minister of Textiles, the Minister of State for Textiles, State Ministers from all North-Eastern States, Members of Parliament and senior officials.

The conclave will focus on silk, handloom and bamboo-based textiles, promotion of women-led enterprises, and branding "Textiles from North-East", aimed at unlocking the region's unique textile strengths and integrating them with national and global value chains.

A special exhibition of Indian handlooms and handicrafts from across the nation is also being organised by the office of DC Handlooms and DC Handicrafts.

CM's office constantly interfering to obstruct Sabarimala gold loot investigation: VD Satheesan

(Gns).

Opposition leader in the Kerala Assembly, V D Satheesan, on Friday, said that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's claim that the Chief Minister's Office did not interfere in the Sabarimala gold loot investigation and did not obstruct the investigation is untrue.

Speaking to media persons in Kochi, Satheesan alleged that the Chief Minister's Office is constantly trying to obstruct the Special Investigation Team's (SIT's) investigation in the Sabarimala gold loot case and is putting pressure on the investigation team.

Emphasising accountability and ground-level monitoring, Kundra instructed that Tehsildars, SDMs, and other officers must mandatorily inspect remote schools to assess their condition, with the findings reflected in their Annual Confidential Reports, to ensure sustained improvement in school education across the UT.

ment is trying to protect CPM leaders," he alleged.

"The investigation in Sabarimala is being conducted under the supervision of the High Court. The opposition has faith in that investigation. But the government is deliberately trying to save the CPM leaders," Satheesan claimed.

Satheesan said the details of the series of thefts committed in the Sabarimala temple since 2019 came to light before the organisers of the International Ayyappa Sangamam at Pampa reached Thiruvananthapuram. If the court had not noticed the theft, they would have stolen even the gold idol of Ayyappa, he said.

Responding to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's statement on Thursday that the main accused in the Sabarimala gold robbery case, Unnikrishnan Potti,

"No one knows whether former Devaswam Minister Kadakampally Surendran was questioned or appeared before the SIT. Will Adoor Prakash be accused of taking a picture with Potti? If so, then Pinarayi Vijayan should also be accused. He should be questioned by the SIT. Pinarayi Vijayan is the one who knows more about Unnikrishnan Potti. It was Pinarayi Vijayan's colleagues who stole Ayyappa's gold along with Unnikrishnan Potti. Is that why the Chief Minister stood with the same Potti? We do not blame the Chief Minister for standing with Potti. But, if Adoor Prakash is being questioned, then Pinarayi Vijayan should also be questioned," said Satheesan.

