

**Modi off to Kuwait to strengthen ties after four decades**

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to make a landmark visit to Kuwait on December 21-22 marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Gulf nation in 43 years. The visit, at the invitation of Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, underscores the deepening ties between the two nations and the strategic importance both sides place on their relationship. Rekindling Historic Relations

India and Kuwait share a historically close relationship rooted in trade, culture, and people-to-people connections. These ties have evolved into a robust partnership underpinned by economic cooperation and a significant Indian expatriate presence. With approximately one million Indians residing in Kuwait, the community represents the largest expatriate group in the Gulf state. Their contributions to Kuwait's economy and society have been a key pillar of the bilateral relationship.

Prime Minister Modi's visit comes at a time when bilateral ties have gained significant momentum, as demonstrated by the establishment of a Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) at the Foreign Ministers' level earlier this month.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the JCC on December 4, 2024, has paved the way for a more structured and comprehensive framework to enhance cooperation across various sectors.

The Joint Commission for Cooperation aims to streamline and expand collaboration in key sectors, including:

**Trade and investment:** With bilateral trade reaching \$10.47 billion in FY 2023-24, there is significant scope for further growth. Indian exports to Kuwait have seen a notable increase, rising from \$1.56 billion in 2022-23 to \$2.1 billion in 2023-24. The visit provides an opportunity to explore new trade avenues and attract Kuwaiti investments in Indian sectors such as technology, agriculture, and infrastructure.

**Energy collaboration:** As a major oil supplier, Kuwait plays a crucial role in India's energy security. Discussions are likely to focus on deepening energy ties, including exploring renewable energy opportunities.

**Education and technology:** The establishment of new Joint Working Groups under the JCC in education and technology reflects a shared commitment to

fostering innovation and skill development.

**Health and agriculture:** Building on existing cooperation, both nations aim to enhance partnerships in these critical sectors to address mutual challenges and ensure sustainable growth.

**Cultural and people-to-people ties:** Recognising the vital role of the Indian community in Kuwait, Prime Minister Modi's visit will include interactions with Indian expatriates, further strengthening cultural and social bonds.

The visit is the culmination of a year marked by high-level engagements and strategic dialogues. During his September meeting with the Kuwaiti Crown Prince in New York, Prime Minister Modi highlighted the importance of advancing economic and cultural ties. Similarly, the 6th round of India-Kuwait Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in July 2024 emphasized trade, investment, health, and education as priority areas.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya's visit to New Delhi earlier this month reinforced the commitment of both nations to enhance their partnership. Prime Minister Modi's acknowledgment of Kuwait's support for

the Indian community, especially during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, further highlights the mutual respect and goodwill underpinning the relationship.

Prime Minister Modi's visit holds significant strategic value for India. It reaffirms India's role as a key partner in the Gulf region, where strong ties with Kuwait can serve as a counterbalance to other regional influences. The visit is also an opportunity to deepen energy security, attract investments, and bolster India's trade presence in the Middle East.

For Kuwait, the visit reinforces its commitment to diversifying its partnerships beyond traditional allies. India's growing economic and technological prowess offers Kuwait an opportunity to engage with a dynamic and emerging global power.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Kuwait is more than a diplomatic milestone; it is a strategic investment in a partnership that promises mutual growth and prosperity. By focussing on areas of shared interest and leveraging the strength of people-to-people ties, India and Kuwait are poised to chart a new chapter in their historic relationship.

more than 35 and engulfing over 30 vehicles in flames as thick black smoke filled the sky. Eyewitnesses reported spotting the flames from nearly a kilometre away as ambulances and fire brigade vehicles rushed towards the crash zone. A school van driver on his way to pick up students recounted with horror the sight of a man engulfed in flames.

Rajasthan health department officials told PTI that seven people died in the crash while more than 35 were injured. Police said there are chances that some people could not get out of their vehicles and got burnt inside. The situation will become clear once all the vehicles are thoroughly checked, they said.

**CM MKS allocates additional Rs. 400 cr for Kalaingar's dream housing scheme**

Chennai Dec 20 2024: A deadly collision involving a gas tanker and multiple vehicles turned a

stretch of the Jaipur-Ajmer highway here into an inferno on Friday morning, killing seven people, injuring

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**CM launches 559 completed projects, lays foundation for 222 new projects in Erode**

Chennai Dec 20 2024: The Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, inaugurated 559 completed projects worth Rs.951.20 crore and laid the foundation for 222 new development projects valued at Rs.133.66 crore. Additionally, welfare assistance worth Rs.284.02 crore was distributed to 50,088 beneficiaries in a government function held in Erode on December 20, 2024.



Municipal Administration and Water Supply: Drinking water schemes in 22 rural localities at Rs.482.36 crore. Solid waste incineration unit in Vairapalayam for Rs.1.70 crore. Bus station renovation projects in Erode at

Rs.45.33 crore. Foreign language training center at Erode Government Engineering College for Rs.1 crore. Indoor sports complex at Rs.8.54 crore.

Various infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, drainage systems, and water supply expansions, totaling Rs.44.42 crore.

Multi-storey housing and office complexes under the

Tamil Nadu Housing Board and Urban Livelihood Improvement Board totaling Rs.165.21 crore.

Temples restoration, commercial complexes, and amenities, including a new pond at Kari Varadaraja Perumal Temple.

Regulated markets and cold storage units totaling Rs.29.73 crore.

Integrated seed certification and extension centers in Anthiyur and other locations for Rs.5.55 crore.

Construction of additional classrooms and facilities in various schools at Rs.36 crore.

This multi-faceted investment aims to boost infrastructure, improve education and housing, enhance rural and urban living standards, and support cultural heritage preservation.

**TN Assembly commences on Jan 6 with Governor's address**

Chennai Dec 20 2024: The Tamil Nadu Assembly session is set to begin on January 6, 2025, with the Governor's address. The Speaker, M. Appavu, announced that the Governor R.N. Ravi would deliver his speech at 9 a.m. on that day.



Earlier, the Assembly had convened for two days on December 9 and 10, during which various legislative bills were passed. However, the session was adjourned without a date for the next meeting. Subsequently, the Governor issued an order concluding the session.

Regarding the upcoming session, Speaker Appavu expressed hope that the

Governor would deliver the entire address this time, as in the previous session, the Governor had read only the first and last pages of his speech.

The winter session earlier lasted just two days, a situation not unprecedented due to challenges like elections and floods. The Tamil Nadu government, however, aims to conduct

Assembly sessions for 100 days annually. The number of days the session will continue will be determined in administrative review meetings.

The Speaker also clarified that the Governor is permitted to deliver only the prepared address in the Assembly and not personal opinions. According to

democracy, only the 234 elected members of the Assembly are authorized to express opinions during the sessions. This rule applies uniformly to all legislative bodies.

The first Assembly session of 2025 is expected to commence with significant anticipation for a comprehensive address by the Governor.

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## Lanka will never be threat to India's security: Prez Anura

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Visiting Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disسانayake stated that Sri Lanka will never allow its territory to be used in a way that threatens the security of India and the stability of the region, during his talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.



In his first bilateral visit to India after taking over his post in September, President Disسانayake thanked India for the aid provided and reassured India of Sri Lanka's commitment to safeguard Indian interests. "I have also given an assurance to the Prime Minister of India that we will not allow our land to be used in any way in a manner that is detrimental to the interest of India. The cooperation with India will certainly flourish and I want to reassure our continued support for India," he said in his media statement.

In a post on X after his talks with PM Modi, the Sri Lankan President posted: "It is a privilege to visit

India on my first overseas trip as President and I am grateful to PM @narendramodi for supporting Sri Lanka during the economic crisis and for aiding debt restructuring.

"We discussed trade, defence, energy, BRICS, UNCLCS, and stopping illegal fishing during our meeting today. I invited PM Modi to visit Sri Lanka and assured India that Sri Lanka's territory would not be used against India's security interests." During the talks, the Sri Lankan president broached the contentious issue of Indian fishermen using bottom trawlers and fishing in Sri Lankan waters.

"We want to find a durable and sustainable solution to

the fishermen's issue that has become a plague for both our countries. There are bottom trawling systems being adopted by the fishermen in that area and that needs to be put an end to because that will spell doom to this industry," he said in his media statement.

Recalling India's help during the financial crisis, Disسانayake said, "We faced an unprecedented economic crisis some two years ago and India supported us immensely to come out of that quagmire. It has also helped us immensely after that, especially in the debt-free structuring process. I know that Sri Lanka secures a very significant place in the foreign policy of India. PM Modi assured us full support

and he also assured us that he will always protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka." Following the talks, the two sides signed some outcomes.

Financial assistance scheme to 100 new students each annually from University of Jaffna and Eastern University until the end of academic courses of the beneficiaries; Grant assistance of USD 14.9 million for the signaling project in Maho-Anuradhapura section; Protocol Amending the Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of India for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income; and MoU between National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), Government of India and Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Civil Servants of Sri Lanka.

## EU membership Turkey's strategic goal: Prez Tayyip

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Membership in the European Union remains a strategic goal for Turkey, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday during a joint press conference with the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Ankara.

"We are leaving behind a year in which

contacts with the European Union and its member states have increased. First my minister of foreign affairs [Hakan Fidan] participated in the informal meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs ministers after an interval of five years, then we [Erdogan] met with madame President von der Leyen at the European Political

Community Summit that was held in Budapest. Both in these meetings and in the context between our institutions we have always stated the following, European Union membership remains a strategic goal for Turkey," Erdogan said.

Turkey signed the Ankara Agreement, or the Agreement

Creating an Association Between the Republic of Turkey and the European Economic Community (EEC, the predecessor of the EU), in 1963 and applied for full membership in 1987. The negotiations on Turkey's accession to the EU began in 2005 have been repeatedly suspended due to disagreements.

## France to continue training Ukraine army

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron have agreed to continue training of the Ukrainian armed forces in France and discussed the possible deployment of Western troops in Ukraine, Zelenskyy said on Thursday.



Zelenskyy and Macron held a meeting in Brussels on Wednesday. During his visit, the Ukrainian president also met with other European

leaders, as well as NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, whom he thanked for supporting Kiev.

I expressed gratitude [to Macron] for France's preparation of one brigade for our army, and we agreed to continue this

cooperation and prepare one more brigade. We hope other partners will join this effort by contributing to equipping additional Ukrainian brigades," Zelenskyy said on X.

The two leaders continued to elaborate on Macron's initiative of deploying Western

troops to Ukraine "that could contribute to stabilising the path to peace," the Ukrainian president added.

Macron said after a conference on Ukraine hosted in Paris in February that Western leaders had discussed the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine, adding that a consensus had not yet been reached, "but nothing can be ruled out." Although some EU leaders dismissed the proposal, Macron reiterated that the option should remain on the table.

## ISRO's maiden space docking mission SpaceX satellite from the SHAR Range on December 30

Chennai Dec 20 2024: In what could herald yet another milestone in its space journey, and a game changer for future missions, including Chandrayaan-4, the fourth Lunar mission and Gaganyaan, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is all geared up for its maiden space docking mission SpaceX satellite from the SHAR Range on December 30.

ISRO will be using its reliable and workhorse launch vehicle PSLV-C60 for the mission which in all likelihood will take place from the First Launch Pad at the spaceport of Sriharikota.

In a post on X, ISRO said Spaceflight on X: "Through internal sources, we have confirmed that in addition to SPADEX, ISRO is set to also conduct their tethered satellite capture via robotic arm experiment on their very next mission - PSLV-C60!"

"So far, what we already know about this experiment is that it will involve some sort of a free flying cubesat tethered to the POEM platform, which will be captured with the help of a robotic arm fitted on POEM", it said.

"Demonstrating

this technology will be an important step towards ISRO's future plans to develop space debris capture and deorbit, as well as in-orbit spacecraft servicing and refueling capabilities," ISRO posted.

"As of this writing, PSLV-C60 is expected to lift off on December 30," the space agency said.

The Space Docking Experiment (SpaDEX), comprising two satellites, will mark India's first mission to showcase the autonomous docking technology in space.

The mission also proposed to demonstrate technologies vital for India's future human spaceflight, the maiden Gaganyaan mission, scheduled likely in 2025-26.

The SpaDEX mission comes in the backdrop of successful launch of European Space Agency's Proba-3 two-satellites formation flying mission using PSLV-C59, which had achieved its launch objectives by precisely injecting both the spacecrafts in the intended orbit on December 5. At that time, ISRO Chairman S.Somanath said the space agency was gearing up for the next

mission, the SpaDEX using PSLV-C60 and the preparatory works had already started and the launch will take place later this month.

ISRO will be again using its XL version for the Spadex Mission.

SpaDEX or Space Docking Experiment is a twin satellite mission developed by ISRO to mature technologies related to orbital rendezvous, docking, formation flying, with scope of applications in human spaceflight, in-space satellite servicing and other proximity operations.

SpaDEX campaign would consist of two IMS class-2 class (400 kg) satellites, christened Chaser and Target.

Both would be launched as co-passengers or auxiliary payloads and would be injected into slightly different orbits in two components which will then reunite in space, essential for enabling spacecraft refueling, besides extending their operational life, and transferring critical systems between vehicles in orbit.

The objectives of the mission was Autonomous rendezvous and docking Controlling one spacecraft with

Attitude Control System of other spacecraft while in docked configuration, besides Formation flying and Remote robotic arm operation.

Reports said with preliminary studies done in 2016, Space Docking Experiment was approved by the Union Government and cleared in 2017. In June 2019, ISRO was looking for proposals to study remote robotic arm operation, rendezvous and docking related technologies on its PSLV fourth stage (PS4) orbital platform called POEM.

The Space firm Ananth Technologies Limited finished the satellite assembly, integration, and testing for ISRO, delivering them to the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC).

The docking is a crucial component of Chandrayaan-4 and that ISRO intended SPADEX as a forerunner.

Satellites for the SPADEX mission are further tested and finished and complete simulation demonstration was performed on it.

Both the planned Bharatiya Antariksha Station and Gaganyaan space flights hinge on this mission's success.

## UK, Italy, Japan JV for supersonic jets

Chennai Dec 20 2024: The UK defence contractor BAE Systems, Italy's Leonardo and Japan Aircraft Industrial Enhancement (JAIEC) launched a joint venture on Friday to develop a next-generation supersonic fighter jet, which will replace the Eurofighter Typhoon.

"BAE Systems (UK), Leonardo (Italy), and Japan Aircraft Industrial Enhancement Co Ltd (JAIEC), have reached an agreement to form a new company under a business joint venture for the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP)," the joint statement read.



The venture will be responsible for the design, development and delivery of the next-generation combat aircraft and will provide maintenance throughout its service life, which is expected to extend beyond 2070.

The venture is expected to be established by mid-

2025. Each company will hold a 33.3% share in it, with the branches located in each of the three countries. The first CEO will be from Italy.

In December 2022, the leaders of Japan, Italy and the United Kingdom agreed on a joint development of a new fighter jet to replace the F-2 jets in

Japan and the Eurofighter Typhoons in Italy and the UK. In December 2023, the UK, Italy and Japan inked an international agreement within the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) military program to develop a stealth fighter with supersonic capability that is expected to enter service by 2035.

## U.S. Government Launches Children's Book Series to Promote Gender Empowerment

Chennai Dec 20 2024: U.S. Ambassador to India Eric M. Garcetti reaffirmed the U.S. government's commitment to girls' education by launching a new children's book series to promote gender-equality, and fosters inclusivity, with a special focus on gender diversity and inclusion.



The U.S. Ambassador to India Eric M. Garcetti said, "As Ambassador to India, I have prioritized girls' education, recognizing it as one of the most transformative investments a society can make. Educating girls not only provides them with knowledge, but also unlocks their potential to drive positive change within families, communities, and nations. The books we launch today represent a shared vision—a vision of inclusive education that challenges these barriers, fosters empathy, and inspires

young girls to succeed."

This book launch exemplifies the enduring U.S.-India education partnership, which has strengthened education systems, empowered students and teachers, and fostered inclusive learning environments. By expanding inclusive, quality education, our partnership continues to serve as a model for international cooperation, advancing a vision of opportunity and progress in an interconnected world.

## Lok Sabha adjourned sine die

Chennai Dec 20 2024: The Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die on Friday (December 20, 2024) amid protests by the Opposition and treasury benches over the alleged insult to B.R. Ambedkar and directions by Speaker Om Birla to members against holding demonstrations at any

gate of the Parliament. As soon as the Lok Sabha convened for the day (December 20, 2024), the Speaker called Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to present a resolution for setting up a Joint Committee of Parliament to examine the Bills related to 'one

Even before the House proceedings began, the Congress members started raising slogans "Jai Bheem, Jai Jai Bheem". Amid the slogans by the Opposition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered the Lok Sabha chamber.

## Blue Cloud Softech Solutions Ltd. Successfully Completes AIoT Project in the United States

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Blue Cloud Softech (BCS) a leading provider of cutting-edge AIoT solutions, proudly announces the successful completion of its latest international project in the United States.



The project involved the implementation of BLURA is an artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled media communication platform With a project cost of USD 150,000, this initiative demonstrates the company's technological prowess in delivering transformative solutions with advanced content verification capabilities on a global scale.

platform employs advanced duplicate detection technology to identify and flag identical or near-duplicate content, helping organizations maintain information authenticity. Its source verification system cross-references content with reliable sources, ensuring the accuracy and credibility of shared information.

BLURA is an AI-driven enterprise and media communication platform developed by BCS that revolutionizes information integrity through sophisticated content verification algorithms. The

The platform's intelligent content analysis framework examines internal consistency, detecting contradictions and suspicious patterns within texts. This robust verification system, combined with personalized content delivery, ensures employees receive not only relevant but also verified information tailored to their roles and interests.

BLURA's white labelling capabilities enable organizations to customize the platform with their branding elements while maintaining strict content verification standards.

Ms. Janaki Yarlagadda, Chairperson of Blue Cloud Softech Solutions Ltd, emphasized the transformative role of AI in content verification. "AI is revolutionizing how we verify and consume information across every sector, driving innovation in content integrity and communication efficiency. As we integrate AI-driven verification systems into our daily operations, we empower organizations to

## Caution for Investors

Chennai, Dec 20 2024: It has been brought to the notice of the Exchange that certain individuals are offering assured returns on stock market investments, providing stock tips, and offering to handle investors' trading accounts by asking them to share their Login ID and password. Investors are advised to exercise caution and refrain from engaging with such individuals or sharing sensitive account credentials to avoid financial risks or fraud.

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- Investors are advised to take note of the above.

## CSK launches 9th edition of Junior Super Kings inter-school T20 tournament



Chennai, Dec 20 2024: Chennai Super Kings on Thursday launched the ninth edition of the Junior Super Kings Inter school T20 tournament.

The competition will see 108 schools from across 23 districts in Tamil Nadu and three other states participating.

The tournament is recognised by the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) and the title is sponsored by Surf Excel and co-

sponsored by Equitas Small Finance Bank and Super Kings Academy.

The tournament was launched in an event graced by K S Viswanathan (CEO, Chennai Super Kings), Mukesh Choudhary (Chennai Super Kings player), Gurjapneet Singh (Chennai Super Kings player), RN Baba (Assistant Secretary, TNCA), Louis Mariano (Operations Head, Super Kings Academy), Vignesh Murali (Head of Marketing, Equitas

Small Finance Bank) and S Sriram (Head of Finance, Chennai Super Kings).

The first phase of Junior Super Kings 2024-25 will be held for teams from Chennai and 22 other districts. Matches will be conducted in Chennai, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Trichy, Ariyalur, Salem, Namakkal, Erode, Vellore, Krishnagiri, Madurai, Dindigul, Sivagangai, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari.

Chennai Super

Kings CEO K S Viswanathan said, "CSK has always taken pride to tap talent at the grassroots level. The Junior Super Kings was started in 2012 originally only for the Tamil Nadu state, where we started with city and a couple of districts. Then it spread into more districts, and now, in the second stage we also have teams from Kerala, Goa, Andhra, and Karnataka. So, over the years it is our plan that we will make it an All-India tournament."

## Skydo receives Amazon Payment Service Provider (PSP) approval to Simplify Cross-Border Payments for Indian Exporters

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Skydo, a leading cross border payments platform has received Payment Service Provider (PSP) approval from Amazon. This makes Skydo one of the first homegrown platforms to offer seamless international payments for lakhs of Indian exporters selling on Amazon global marketplaces.

With this, exporters on Amazon can receive their international payouts through Skydo in a secure and cost-effective manner. Skydo is partnered with HDFC Bank and compliant with RBI regulations. Through their payment solutions, Skydo has already empowered over 10,000 Indian exporters to receive their international payments seamlessly.

Amazon has recently announced plans to enable over USD 80 billion in cumulative e-commerce exports from India by 2030, quadrupling its earlier pledge of USD 20 billion by 2025. This highlights the robust demand for 'Made in India' products and the crucial role of payment service providers like Skydo in processing



international payments for India's rapidly growing exports.

As part of their launch offer, Skydo is offering zero forex markup and a USD 1 flat transaction fee to Amazon Global sellers in their first three months of using the platform. Some key features of Skydo include transparent pricing with zero markup over live mid-market forex rates, instant digital onboarding and KYC, dedicated customer support, fast settlements, and simplified regulatory compliance with instant FIRA (Foreign Inward Remittance Advice).

"We believe international payments on global marketplaces such as Amazon should be as transparent and easy as local payments. Our mission is to empower

Indian exporters by eliminating inefficiencies and ensuring convenient and cost-effective cross-border transactions. Skydo's advanced risk, compliance, and fraud prevention infrastructure ensures that sellers can operate with confidence in the global marketplace," said Srivatsan Sridhar, CEO of Skydo.

Managing cross-border payments and navigating export compliance are major challenges for businesses expanding globally. Skydo is addressing these challenges by building a comprehensive ecosystem of services tailored to Amazon sellers. This will help Indian MSMEs and D2C startups focus on growth and extend their reach to global markets.

As India targets

USD 1 trillion in merchandise exports by 2030, initiatives like Amazon's Global Selling program have expanded global market access for Indian businesses, particularly MSMEs and entrepreneurs from key export hubs across states such as Delhi NCR, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. Since its launch in 2015, the program has empowered 1.5 lac Indian exporters to sell over 400 million 'Made in India' products worldwide, reaching major markets like the US, UK, UAE, Canada, Germany, and Australia. These sellers hail from 200+ cities across 28 states and 7 union territories, reflecting the increasing adoption of e-commerce exports across the country.

## Iraq PM Al-Sudani meets Saudi Crown Prince Salma

Chennai Dec 20 2024: Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held a meeting in the Saudi city of AlUla, during which the parties agreed to coordinate actions regarding the events in Syria, the Iraqi prime minister's office said.

"The Iraqi Prime Minister and the Crown Prince agreed at a meeting in AlUla on the importance of coordinating joint actions regarding the consequences of what is happening in Syria and intensifying efforts to counter regional and international challenges in a way that would contribute to strengthening regional security and stability in the entire region," the office said in a statement



on Wednesday.

Al-Sudani "reaffirmed Iraq's desire for the unity of Syrian territories, non-interference in Syria's internal affairs, respect for the free will of the Syrians and ensuring the participation of all representatives of the Syrian people in the fate of the country," the statement added.

In addition, Al-Sudani "expressed

Iraq's readiness to cooperate with its brothers and friends in the region for the sake of its stabilization and security, as well as to eliminate any conflicts in the region," the office said.

Syria's armed opposition captured Damascus on December 8. The Russian Foreign Ministry said that Syrian President Bashar Assad stepped down

and left the country for Russia, where he and his family were granted political asylum.

Mohammed al-Bashir, who ran an Idlib-based administration formed by HTS and other opposition groups, was named interim prime minister last week. He said that the interim government would govern Syria until March 2025.

## Sharvari becomes the face of Godrej Professional as its first-ever Brand Ambassador

Chennai Dec 20 2024:

Godrej Professional, a leading professional hair brand offering hair colour and hair care from the house of Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL), announced Bollywood's rising star Sharvari as its first-ever brand ambassador. The reveal took place at the grand finale of Godrej Professional Spotlight, a platform celebrating hairstylists on a national stage. Known for her standout performances in films like Munjya, Maharaj and Veda, Sharvari perfectly reflects the brand's commitment to style, confidence, and empowerment. Her fashion-forward persona and values align seamlessly with Godrej Professional, making her the ideal face of the brand.

Commenting on the development, Abhinav Grandhi, General Manager, Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL), said, "We are excited to have Sharvari as the very first brand ambassador for Godrej Professional. Being a fashion & lifestyle icon, Sharvari has millions who look up to her for her impeccable sense of style and grace. Her association with Godrej Professional comes at a time as we are growing and continuing to expand our footprint in the hair and beauty industry."

Expressing her excitement about the association, Sharvari said, "It's an honour to be the first-ever brand ambassador for Godrej Professional. Godrej has been a trusted name amongst Indian households for over 120 years and has truly revolutionized the hair colour category in the country. They're known for their innovative and high-quality hair colour range such as Dimension & Colourplay. Hair has



always been a defining part of my style—whether I am embodying a character on screen or turning heads on the red carpet. When approached to represent Godrej Professional, I was thrilled as it resonates with my personal style."

Sharvari dazzled as the showstopper unveiling 2025's trending hair colour and styling looks. The stunning showcase was curated by Godrej Professional's dynamic trio: Gianni Tsapatori, Creative Director - Hair; Shailesh Moolya, National Technical Head; and Najeeb-Ur-Rehman, Technical Ambassador. Godrej Professional also showcased Dimensions and Colourplay range of its hair colours.

Alongside the unveiling of its brand ambassador, Godrej Professional announced the winners of Spotlight, a platform celebrating hairstylists' creativity on a national stage. Out of 400+ entries received; 30 finalists showcased curated hair colour looks in a grand hair show. Bhavin Bavaliya, from Bonanza Beauty Lounge based in Rajkot, won First Place, receiving INR 5 lakh and the chance to collaborate with a celebrity, marking a milestone in their career. Priyanka Sinha of Kaixo Academy from Kolkata secured Second Place with INR 2.5 lakh, while Lalitan Kimi - Luv Salon from Bengaluru took Third Place with

INR 1.5 lakh. A jury including celebrity stylist Gianni Tsapatori, (Creative Director - Hair, Godrej Professional); Monica Bahl (CEO of Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council); and Kanishka Ramchandani (Editor, Professional Beauty Hairdressers Journal India); along with special guest jury - actress Adaa Khan and Helly Shah, selected the winners.

Through Spotlight, the 30 shortlisted hair stylists underwent 'Recognition of Prior Learning' certification program from Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC), an Awarding Body of National Council for Vocational Education & Training (NCVT) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Through this program, the hairstylists received National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) aligned Government of India certification. The 30 hair stylists can now use the certificate to procure loans for professional endeavours. Godrej Professional Spotlight is supported by Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC) as Industry Trade Partner and Professional Beauty Hairdressers Journal India as Trade Media Partner.

Monica Bahl, CEO, Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B & W S S C ),

emphasized the initiative's impact, stating, "Godrej Professional Spotlight is a shining example of how skill development and industry collaboration can drive growth and recognition for hairstylists across India. By partnering with Godrej Professional, we are elevating Indian talent to global standards and creating opportunities that inspire the next generation of salon professionals."

Abhinav Grandhi of Godrej Consumer Products Limited (GCPL), added, "We are incredibly proud of the overwhelming response to Godrej Professional Spotlight. This platform not only offers an opportunity for talented hairstylists to showcase their creativity but also reflects our commitment towards education and training. Through this initiative, we aim to empower stylists with the skills and exposure necessary to excel in an increasingly competitive market. This is just one of our steps towards our long-term commitment to nurture and uplift India's salon professionals."

The Godrej Professional Spotlight event celebrating hair artistry and the spirit of fashion, was attended by over 300 hair stylists. Adding to the glamour, renowned actor Karanvir Bohra hosted the event, making it a memorable celebration of talent and creativity.

## One Nation, One Election Bill referred to Parliamentary Committee

Chennai Dec 20 2024:

The Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla, has referred two constitutional amendment bills related to implementing simultaneous elections across the country to a parliamentary committee. This committee consists of

39 members from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. According to a statement from the Lok Sabha Secretariat, "The parliamentary committee, comprising 27 members from the Lok Sabha and 12 from the Rajya Sabha, will examine the 'One Nation, One Election'

bills and submit its recommendations to the Lok Sabha Speaker."

Earlier, on December 17, amidst opposition protests, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced two bills in the Lok Sabha to facilitate simultaneous elections: the Constitution (129th

Amendment) Bill and the Union Territories Amendment Bill. During the introduction, he assured that these measures would not disrupt the privileges enjoyed by the states. However, opposition parties criticized the move, calling it authoritarian."