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Omar calls for...

particularly acknowledged the solidarity and continued support extended by Maharashtra-based travel agencies in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack last year, noting that their confidence helped restore tourist inflow and trust in the destination.

"Maharashtra has always been one of the strongest source markets for Jammu & Kashmir tourism. The support shown by the travel fraternity, especially during challenging times, reflects a deep and enduring partnership," the Chief Minister said.

The event, organised as part of the Maharashtra and Gujarat Travel Fraternity Outreach in Mumbai, also witnessed the felicitation of prominent travel agents and associations for their contribution towards promoting Jammu & Kashmir tourism. The Chief Minister highlighted the diverse tourism offerings of the region, including leisure, adventure, pilgrimage and wellness tourism, and reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring safety, infrastructure development and a tourist-friendly environment.

The outreach programme was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani; Member of Parliament Gurinder Singh Shammi; MLA Gulmarg Peerzada Farooq Ahmed Shah; Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta; and heads and representatives of major travel bodies from Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The interaction provided a platform for dialogue, collaboration and renewed commitment to position Jammu & Kashmir as a preferred destination for domestic and international tourists alike.

CM explores collaboration...

ecosystem and advanced technology infrastructure. As part of the programme, he attended a curated audiovisual presentation at the Rangayan Preview Theatre, which showcased IICT's vision, academic framework, and capabilities in creative and immersive technologies.

This was followed by a live demonstration at the Anubhuti Drishya Immersive Studio Lab, where applications of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR) were showcased through hands-on experiential interactions.

The visit also featured a Digital Twin demonstration at the Photogrammetry Studio, where a live 3D photogrammetry scan was conducted to create a digital avatar, highlighting the practical applications of emerging immersive technologies.

A strategic discussion session was held to deliberate potential areas of collaboration between IICT and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir. The discussions focused on student exchange and institutional cooperation, particularly in skill development and capacity building in AVGC and emerging creative technologies; digital heritage and cultural preservation through immersive tools; and the development of a collaborative startup incubation and innovation ecosystem aimed at empowering youth from Jammu & Kashmir.

Speaking during the interaction, the Chief Minister said, "If we want Jammu and Kashmir to become an attractive destination for filmmaking, then human talent and post-production capability must be created locally. That is where a relationship with an institution like IICT becomes important for us." Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Vishvas Deoskar, CEO, IICT said that they look forward to exploring meaningful collaborations that can benefit students and young talent from Jammu & Kashmir by enabling skill development, fostering innovation, and creating sustainable employment and entrepreneurship opportunities." Following the discussions, the Chief Minister was escorted to the NFDC Bharat Pavilion and Museum, which chronicles India's cinematic and creative heritage. The visit highlighted the role of the NFDC Museum as a national cultural repository dedicated to preserving, presenting, and celebrating India's film and creative legacy, before the Chief Minister proceeded to his onward engagements at the NFDC campus.

Modi calls on...

Outlining a slew of government measures to boost artificial intelligence, Modi said the more a nation leads in AI innovation, the greater is its advantage.

"We need to work on new ideas. Today, many such domains are emerging, which will play an important role in economic security and strategic autonomy in the future. An example of AI is in front of us. The more the nation will be ahead in the AI revolution, the higher the advantage it will have," Modi said.

He said that IndiaAI mission has onboarded more than 38,000 GPUs to address challenge of high computing cost related to the AI development.

"We are also making sure that Indigenous AI should be developed by Indian talents on Indian servers. Similar efforts are being made in semiconductors, data centers, green hydrogen and many other sectors. Friends, as we move forward, our ambition should not only be of partnership. We have to aim for global leadership," Modi said.

He asked startups to work on new ideas and solve problems.

"In the past decade, we have done great work in the digital startup and service sector. Now is the time for our startups to focus more on manufacturing. We have to make new products. We have to make products of the best quality in the world," Modi said.

Modi said while new heights will be reached through hardwork, efforts also need to be supplemented with courage and risk-taking ability.

The PM said, earlier, risk-taking was discouraged in the country but it has become mainstream now and those who think beyond their monthly salary are not only accepted, but also respected.

"I have always emphasised risk-taking because it is an old habit of mine. The work that no one is ready to do, the work that the previous decade old governments did not touch, because they were afraid of losing the elections," Modi said.

The PM said he used to take upon the task that others used to avoid as they were perceived to have high political risk.

"I do those things as my responsibility for sure. Like you, I also believe that the work that is necessary for the country, someone has to do it. Someone has to take the risk. If there is a loss, it will be mine. If there is a gain, it will benefit millions of families in my country," Modi said.

He noted that Startup India has fostered a new national culture, democratising entrepreneurship and bringing business aspirations to those living in smaller cities, towns, and rural villages. "First, new businesses and new ventures were only brought by children from rich families. Because they were the ones who got funding and support easily. Most of the middle class and poor children were only able to dream of a job. But Startup India has changed this thinking. Now Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities and even villages are launching their startups," Modi said.

The Prime Minister shared that daughters have been instrumental in reshaping the culture of innovation and startups.

"Today, more than 45 per cent of the recognised startups have a female director or partner. In the case of women-led startup funding, India has become the second largest ecosystem in the world," he said.

If something happens...

a geographical region, but the character of the country," Bhagwat said.

He said those who believe in assimilation and harmonious coexistence represent the true character of Hindu society and, by extension, the character of the country.

"This tradition has been preserved over centuries despite invasions and destruction, and people ensured the underlying values and dharma were not allowed to perish. Such people are called Hindus, and the land of such people is known as Bharat," Bhagwat asserted. Bhagwat further said if people strive to be good, firm and honest, the country would also reflect those qualities on the global stage.

The world expects something from Bharat and the country would be able to contribute meaningfully, provided it has adequate strength and influence, he emphasised. "Power comprises not only armed strength but also intellect and principles, and moral values gain wider acceptance when backed by strength," said the RSS chief.

Radicalisation in Kashmir...

the outfit functioned as a front for separatist and terror-linked activities.

The court will hear arguments on quantum of sentence on January 17, with prosecution seeking punishment that may extend to life imprisonment, signalling the State's resolve to deal decisively with those who weaponise ideology to undermine peace and order.

SFs fully prepared...

incident -- the Pahalgam attack -- the overall security situation in 2025 was largely under control. This reflects the strong response and operational effectiveness of the security forces, which achieved significant successes," Dulloo said.

At least 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed and over a dozen injured in the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, on April 22 last year.

Spelling out the security scenario, Dulloo said there was a visible dominance of security forces across the region and several significant successes were achieved during the year.

"If we look around on all sides, there was a strong dominance of the security forces. Several successes were also achieved by security forces whether it was Operation Mahadev or busting the module that was involved in the attack in Delhi. There were many success stories credited to the security forces," he said.

On the recent high-level security review meetings chaired by the Union Home Minister and followed by the Union Home secretary on Thursday, Dulloo said such reviews are a regular and ongoing process.

"The security situation is assessed from time to time, new developments are examined and upcoming challenges are kept in view. Based on this, security processes function under a defined strategy, which has resulted in the successes achieved so far," he said, noting future strategies are continuously being formulated.

Addressing concerns about challenges in 2026, the chief secretary said adversarial elements would attempt to create trouble but preparedness on the ground remains strong.

"Every effort is being made to ensure effective control and domination by security forces so that terrorists do not achieve any success," he added.

Referring to Pakistan-sponsored drone activities along the Indo-Pakistan border, Dulloo said the use of drones to smuggle weapons and narcotics poses a serious threat but is being effectively countered.

"Our Army, BSE, police and other security forces are fully capable of handling these challenges and are taking all necessary steps. Attempts to push drugs, which are being used to fund terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, are also being tackled," he said.

On the terror ecosystem active in Jammu and Kashmir, the chief secretary said it has significantly weakened over time.

"Recruitment into terrorist ranks is now almost negligible. Incidents like stone-pelting and shutdowns, which were common earlier, are no longer seen, and support to such calls has virtually dried up," he said.

He added that people are increasingly moving away from the terror ecosystem and any attempt to revive or strengthen it will be dealt with firmly.

"Our police, security forces and intelligence agencies are fully capable and will ensure that peace is not disturbed and that people continue to experience an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity," Dulloo said.

Somnath temple symbol...

build is much more than those who destroy.

The Somnath temple is a symbol of the "eternity" of Sanatan Dharma as well as the "immortality" of the core elements of Indian culture, Shah said.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the entire country observed the Somnath Swabhiman Parv from January 8-11, and the coming year will be celebrated as 'Somnath Swabhiman Varsh' across the nation, Shah said.

After Independence, leaders such as Saradar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Maharaja of Jannagar, Kanhaiyalal Munshi and Dr Rajendra Prasad resolved to rebuild the Somnath temple into a grand and magnificent structure, Shah said.

"Now, a magnificent Somnath temple stands at that very place, with its flag touching the skies," he said.

"Those who demolished it - Mahmud of Ghazni, Mahmud Begada, Alauddin Khilji - are nowhere to be seen on the world map today, while the Somnath temple stands proudly and with dignity at the same location before the entire world," Shah said.

The Somnath Swabhiman Parv and the Somnath Swabhiman Varsh provide an opportunity for all Indians to once again reaffirm their resolve to make their culture unshakable, steadfast and immortal, the home minister said.

Three terrorist hideouts...

security forces, resulting in an exchange of fire that continued throughout the night, they said.

During the search operation on Wednesday, one terrorist hideout was detected, from which the following items were recovered: two M4 empty cartridges, a plastic box containing desi ghee, a polythene packet containing almonds, hand gloves, a cap, a blanket, a tarpaulin sheet, a small pouch and a polythene bag, they said.

In continuation of the ongoing search operation on Thursday, two more terrorist hideouts were busted by the joint teams in the Kalikhad and Kalaban areas of Billawar, they said. From the hideouts, security forces recovered a cooking gas cylinder, cooking oil, charger wire, hand gloves, utensils, an empty oil gallon, large plastic bags, a torch, blankets, a container, wrappers of eatables and other miscellaneous items, they said. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Kathua, Mohita Sharma said the search operation is still underway.

BJP triumphs over...

elections in Mumbai and 28 other municipal corporations, held on January 15, commenced Friday morning and continued till late in the night.

Results in 2833 of the 2868 seats in these 29 civic bodies where polling was held on Thursday were available till 11 pm on Friday.

The BJP won 1400 and ally Shiv Sena bagged 397 seats, while Shiv Sena (UBT) got 153 and MNS 13 seats in the state. The Congress bagged 324 seats.

The BJP-led alliance, which has so far bagged 114 seats, was set to surpass the 114-seat majority mark in the 227-member BMC, which is India's richest civic body, whose budget for 2025-26 is a whopping Rs 74,427 crore.

The State Election Commission said the polling percentage in the 29 civic bodies was 54.77.

Coupled with a decent performance by Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, the BJP is now in the driver's seat to govern the cash-rich Mumbai civic body.

The high-stakes battle for BMC saw the Thackeray cousins reunite after two decades, only to see their hopes dashed as the results announced so far indicated.

In Pune and neighbouring Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal corporation polls, the BJP is heading towards a massive victory, way ahead of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and NCP (SP) alliance.

Fadnavis has emerged as the man of the moment, with the BJP under his leadership surpassing its previous high of 82 seats in the 2017 BMC elections.

The success of BJP's 'Mission Mumbai' has now firmly established it as the key political force in the financial capital.

The result marks a significant shift in Mumbai's power structure. For years, the BMC was considered the invincible fortress of the Thackeray-led Shiv Sena.

With the BJP's victory, the narrative of Mumbai politics has moved from the traditional identity-based 'Marathi asmita' to a mandate for the BJP's plank of vikas' (development) and urban infrastructure.

Maharashtra minister and BJP leader Nitesh Rane said the BJP and Shiv Sena's strong showing in the BMC polls amounted to a clear mandate for its Hindutva pitch during the campaign, as the alliance surged ahead in the race.

"Hindutva has always been our soul; one cannot differentiate our Hindutva from development," Fadnavis said.

Shrikant Pangarkar, an accused in the 2017 murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh, was elected a corporator in the Jaina Municipal Corporation, winning the elections as an independent candidate.

In Nagpur, home turf of CM Fadnavis and Union minister Nitin Gadkari, results showed the Congress struggling to make significant inroads despite an aggressive campaign.

Results of all the 151 seats in the 151-member Nagpur civic body have been declared. The BJP got 102 seats, while the Congress got 34 seats.

The Congress, which contested the polls in alliance with the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, won elections to the Latur Municipal Corporation, bagging a clear majority with 43 seats in the 70-member body, leaving the BJP a distant second at 22.

In a significant political turn of events ahead of the elections, Uddhav and Raj Thackeray reunited last month and rival NCP factions - the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and NCP (SP) headed by Sharad Pawar, also forged a local alliance in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad.

The BJP won 96 seats in Pune, while the NCP bagged 20 seats and NCP (SP) managed to secure just three.

In Pimpri Chinchwad, the BJP won 84 seats, while the NCP was relegated to the second spot, bagging 37 seats. The NCP (SP) could not win even a single seat there.

In Mumbai, a sour insult turned into a sweet victory for BJP candidates that party leader K Annamalai campaigned for in the BMC polls, as they emerged triumphant, in a befitting reply to MNS chief Raj Thackeray's 'rasmalai' jibe against the Tamil Nadu politician.

As many as 19 independents also won from the 29 civic bodies, where elections were held after a gap of several years, with terms of most of them having ended between 2020 and 2023. Of these, nine fall in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), the most urbanised belt in India.

The elections were held in the following municipal corporations: Mumbai, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Navi Mumbai, Vasai-Virar, Kalyan-Dombivli, Kolhapur, Nagpur, Solapur, Amravati, Akola, Nashik, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Pune, Ulhasnagar, Thane, Chandrapur, Parbhani, Mira-Bhayandar, Nanded-Waghala, Panvel, Bhiwandi-Nizampur, Latur, Malegaon, Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad, Jalgaon, Ahilyanagar, Dhule, Jalna and Ichalkaranji.

Mortar shell found...

recovered during a digging work near an Army unit in the Rampur area in north Kashmir, they said, adding the area was secured, and the police were also informed about the recovery.

The shell was safely disposed of by an Army bomb disposal squad in the presence of police, the officials said. There was no loss to life or property during the operation, they added.

JKRERA inspects illegal colonies in Udhampur; issues notices to developers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: In a major crackdown on unauthorized colonies, the Jammu and Kashmir Real Estate Regulatory Authority (JKRERA) conducted a series of on-site inspections across various colonies in Udhampur district.

The inspection team, led by Deputy Secretary JKRERA, Esha Chib identified multiple projects at village Phangyal and Tikri being developed without mandatory RERA registration.

Developers of the illegal colonies have been served notices to explain their non-compliance within a stipulated time frame or face heavy penalties, which can extend up to 10% of the estimated cost of the real estate project.

Pertinently, as per Section 3 of the RERA Act, no promoter can advertise, market, book, sell or offer for sale any plot, apartment or building in any real estate project without registering the project with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority

Long-running absconder nabbed after 13 years

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: In a significant success against crime and absconders, District Police Poonch has arrested an absconder who had been evading arrest for the past 13 years. The arrested absconder has been identified as Mohd Arshad S/o Paiz Hussain R/o Mahra, Tehsil Surankote. He was declared an absconder in FIR No. 65/2013, registered under Sections 341/323 RPC at Police Station Surankote.

Acting on sustained efforts and credible inputs, a police team from Police Station Surankote successfully traced and apprehended the accused. After completing all legal formalities, the arrested absconder was produced before the Hon'ble Court of law. District Police Poonch reiterates its firm commitment to bringing absconders and offenders to justice and emphasizes that no criminal will be allowed to evade the law. The general public is urged to continue cooperating with the police by sharing any information related to criminal activities.

Woman among 2 bootleggers arrested with 17 litres of illicit liquor

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: ASI Arun Kumar along with officials was on routine patrolling towards Langriyal, Khana Chak and during patrolling at about 1725 hours an information received through reliable resources that one person namely Ankush Kumar @ Anku S/o Baru Ram R/o Khana Chak Tehsil R.S Pura District Jammu is selling illicit liquor (Desi) near his house at Khana Chak. On this information ASI Arun Kumar along with officials under the supervision of SHO R S Pura, Inspector Ravi Singh Parihar reached on the spot and found a plastic Gallon of light green colour in his possession from which he is selling illicit liquor (Desi) to his customer. During enquiry the said person disclosed his name as Ankush Kumar @ Anku S/o Baru Ram R/o Khana Chak Tehsil R.S Pura District Jammu. On checking of the said plastic bag Gallon, 15 litres approx. illicit liquor (Desi) have been recovered from his possession. The said person was selling the illicit liquor (Desi) illegally. Therefore, by keeping illegal liquor (Desi) in his possession has committed offence under section 48 (a) Excise Act. In this regard, case FIR No.15/2026 under section 48(a) Excise Act stands registered at Police Station. Police team of Police Station Chenani, while on routine patrolling duty, noticed suspicious movement in the area of Karsund, Chenani.

Acting swiftly, the police party intercepted a lady carrying a yellow-coloured gallon. On noticing the police, the said lady attempted to flee from the spot but was apprehended. Upon checking, the gallon was found to contain 02 litres of illicit desi liquor. During questioning, the lady disclosed her identity as Binla Devi W/O Vijay Kumar, R/O Raji, Chenani, District Udhampur, who was arrested on the spot.

In this regard, a case FIR No. 07/2026 under Section 48(a) stands registered at Police Station Chenani, and further investigation is underway.

Drug peddler arrested, 3,500 intoxicating capsules recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: Police continues its relentless drive against drug abuse and its menace in society. During routine patrolling duty at Sallian Talab, Udhampur, a police team from Police Station Udhampur, led by the SHO, intercepted one person identified as Danish Jandial S/o Ramesh Chand R/o Sallian Talab, Udhampur. Upon checking, 3500 Pregabalin capsules were recovered from his possession. The accused was arrested on the spot, and the recovered capsules were seized.

In this regard, a case under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Udhampur, and further investigation is underway.

Drug peddler nabbed with 12.07 grams of heroin

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATHUA: In its drive against the drugs & its propagators, J&K Police Kathua under the overall supervision of SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma seized approx. 12.07 grams of Heroin like narcotics & 01 drug peddler was arrested in jurisdictional area of PS Lakanpur. On 15.01.2026, the police team led by SHO PS Lakanpur Insp. Tariq Ahmed under the guidance of Addl. SP Kathua Sh. Rahul Charak JKPS & DySP DAR Kathua Sh. Ritesh Samyal during patrolling in its jurisdictional area apprehended one person enroute from Maggarkhad towards Lakanpur under suspicious circumstances. During further questioning, he disclosed his name as Waseem Akram S/o Mohd Parvez R/o Preta Tehsil Basohli & District Kathua A/P Maggar Khad, Kathua. On thorough checking approx. 12.07 grams of Heroin-like substance recovered from his possession got seized and the said accused person got arrested. Accordingly, a Case FIR No. 06/2026 U/S 8/21/22/ NDPS Act registered at PS Lakanpur and further investigation in the case is going on.

Missing girl traced, reunited with family

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: Doda Police have successfully traced a missing girl and reunited her with her family. A missing report regarding a girl resident Bakhna Tehsil Mohallah District Doda, was entered vide DDR No. 10 dated 19.12.2025 at Police Station Doda. After sustained efforts, the missing girl was successfully traced with the help of technical assistance and human intelligence, and the matter was recorded vide DDR No. 11 dated 16-01-2026. After completing all required legal formalities as per law, the recovered girl was handed over to her legal heirs. Accordingly, the missing report stands closed.

LG, CM extend greetings on Shab Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW)

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday extended his greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Shab-i-Miraj.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor has said: "On the auspicious occasion of Shab-i-Miraj, I convey my greetings and best wishes to all. May this pious occasion guide us on the path of harmony and kindness. I pray for good health, happiness and prosperity for all."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has conveyed his warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Meraj-un-Nabi (PBUH), which commemorates the miraculous night journey and ascension of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

In his felicitation message, the Chief Minister underscored the deep spiritual importance of the sacred night, noting that it reaffirms the truthfulness, greatness and unwavering devotion of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to Almighty Allah. He described Shab-e-Meraj as a powerful reminder of the Prophet's exemplary character, marked by honesty, integrity and spiritual eminence.

The Chief Minister offered prayers for lasting peace, prosperity and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir on this blessed occasion. He also called upon the people to imbibe and follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in order to foster a society founded on compassion, tolerance and unity.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, in a message on the auspicious occasion, said that Shab-e-Meraj holds profound religious and spiritual significance, marking the sacred night of divine blessings.

He noted that the occasion inspires faith and humility with the Almighty and uphold the values of compassion, patience and service to humanity.

He expressed hope that this sacred occasion brings peace, prosperity, inner strength and harmony, and further strengthens the spirit of unity and mutual respect to every household Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting the rich tradition of communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the people of J&K have always stood united, celebrating festivals and auspicious occasions across religious and community lines.

The Deputy Chief Minister prayed for the continued progress, peace and well-being of the people. Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo said that the night of Me'raj is a sacred occasion to seek divine blessings and forgiveness from Almighty Allah. She added that this holy night is of profound spiritual significance, symbolizing faith, devotion and boundless mercy of Almighty Allah.