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Committed to provide quality facilities to Shri Amarnathji pilgrims: LG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday reiterated the commitment of the Shrine Board for providing quality facilities to the Shri Amarnathji pilgrims to make their pilgrimage a memorable experience.

"Shri Amarnath Ji yatra is a symbol of our rich spiritual and cultural heritage. The aim of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board and all those associated with Langar Seva work is to make the holy pilgrimage divine and hassle free. It is the responsibility of all of us to put all our energy into this noble cause," the Lieutenant Governor said while felicitating the members of Langar Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) participated in offering Food, Langar (Community Kitchen) and other services to pilgrims during Shri Amarnath Ji



LG Manoj Sinha speaking during felicitation programme at New Delhi on Sunday.

► **Felicitates members of Langar Organisations, NGOs for their valuable contribution during Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2024**

► **Aim of SASB, and all those associated with Langar Seva work and voluntary organisations is to make holy pilgrimage divine, hassle free.**

► **All individuals, organizations whom we recognize are real-life contributors to traditions of selfless service**

Yatra-2024. At a felicitation ceremony held at Resident Commission's office, the Lieutenant Governor

expressed his gratitude to all the stakeholders for their selfless service and making valuable contribution to devotees' well-being during

the pilgrimage. "All the individuals and organizations whom we recognize and honour today are real-life contributors to the traditions of selfless service," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the successful conduct of Yatra 2024 was a result of the collaborative efforts of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, various government departments and agencies, J&K Police, Security Forces, sewadars, voluntary

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Pakistani drone with narcotics seized near IB

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Pakistani drone carrying nearly half a kg of high-grade narcotic substance was seized by the Border Security Force near the International Border here, officials said on Sunday.

The quadcopter entered India from across the border and was seized from the Chinaz Border Outpost area in the Arnia sector

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17 vehicles used for illegal mining seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KULGAM: Police on Sunday seized 17 vehicles, including 11 excavators, used for illegal mining in a river in Kulgam district.

An official spokesperson said information about illegal mining was received by police, following which teams were formed to take action.

"Acting tough against those involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, police

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Omar tells Congress to stop whinging about EVMs, accept poll results

'When You Get 100 MPs, You Celebrate...'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Opening another point of friction with an important ally, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has dismissed the Congress party's vehement objection to Electronic Voting Machines, and echoed the BJP's defence -- you can't accept election results when you win, and blame EVMs when you lose.

"When you get a hundred plus members of Parliament using the same EVMs, and you celebrate that as sort of a victory for your party, you can't then a few months later turn around and say... we don't like these EVMs because now the election results aren't going the way we would like them to," Abdullah told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Told that he sounded suspiciously like a BJP spokesman, Abdullah reacted



with "God forbid!" He then added: "No, it's just that... what's right is right."

He said he speaks based on principles rather than with partisan loyalty and cited his support for infrastructure projects like the Central Vista as an example of his independent thinking.

"Contrary to what everybody else believes, I think that what's happening with

this Central Vista project in Delhi is a damn good thing. I believe constructing a new Parliament building was an excellent idea. We needed a new Parliament building. The old one had outlived its utility," he said.

He said parties should not contest elections if they do not trust the voting mechanism.

"If you have problems with the EVMs, then you should be consistent in those problems," he said while replying to a question about whether he thinks that the opposition in general and the Congress, in particular, is barking up the wrong tree by focusing on EVMs.

After its loss in the Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly polls, the

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Modi to inaugurate Rs 40,000-Cr project to link 11 rivers in Rajasthan: C R Patil

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SURAT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate a project worth about Rs 40,000 crore to link 11 rivers in Rajasthan that is projected to make it a water-surplus state, Union Minister C R Patil said on Sunday.



future.

"Rajasthan faces severe water crisis. The project that Modi Saheb is going to dedicate there on December 17 will link 11 rivers. This project, worth about Rs 40,000 crore, will be announced by Modi Saheb. After this, Rajasthan will have maximum water," Patil said.

He said people have saved enough money to even take care of their seven generations but there is a need

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Give up arms or face strong action: Amit Shah to Naxals

'If Naxalism ends in Bastar, it will attract more tourists than Kashmir'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAGDALPUR: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday appealed to Naxals to give up arms and join the mainstream, or else they will have to face the strong action of security forces.

He said the rehabilitation of the surrendered Naxals is the responsibility of the government.

Addressing a sporting event -- 'Bastar Olympics' -- in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur, Shah also said the country would be free of Maoists by March 2026.

"I appeal to Naxals, please come forward. Give up arms, surrender and join the main-



stream. Your rehabilitation is our responsibility," he said.

He said if the Maoists do not listen to the appeal of surrender, they will be

crushed by the security forces.

"Chhattisgarh Police is committed to fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

resolve to make India Naxal-free by March 31, 2026," he said.

The Union home minister said the Chhattisgarh government's rehabilitation policy is the best in the country.

"If you surrender and join the mainstream, you will contribute for the development of Chhattisgarh and India," he said.

Shah said when the Congress was in power in Chhattisgarh before the BJP assumed charge a year ago, the action against the Maoists became slow.

"But after our government came to power in Chhattisgarh, action against

the extremists speeded up resulting in killings of 287 Naxals in last one year, arrest of 992 Naxals and surrender of 836 others," he said.

Shah said since the Modi government assumed charge, there has been a 73 per cent reduction in the casualties in security forces and 70 per cent decline in civilians' deaths.

"If Naxalism ends in Bastar (Chhattisgarh), it will attract more tourists than Kashmir due to its natural beauty," he said.

He further said those who know the process of

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BJP seizes on Omar's defence of EVMs to target Cong, Rahul

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Sunday seized on Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's rejection of his ally Congress' doubts on Electronic Voting Machines to slam the main opposition party and Rahul Gandhi.

BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said on X, "Now Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, throws the Congress and Rahul Gandhi under the bus, on the EVM issue."

"EVMs can't be good when Congress wins and bad when they lose. Rahul

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Couple held with heroin

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A man and his wife were arrested on Sunday on drug peddling charges and 28 grams of heroin was seized from them, a police official said.

A police patrolling party intercepted Rahul Singh Jamwal and his wife Shagun Chandel at Channi Himmat as they roaming in the area raising suspicion, the official said. They were frisked, leading to the recovery of 28 grams of heroin from them, he said, adding initial investigation revealed that they were working as drug peddlers.

The two accused have been arrested and booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the police official said. Further investigation is underway to unearth their forward and backward linkages, he added. The police urged people to assist the force in its anti-narcotic drive by sharing any information related to drug abuse or peddling. "The identity of the informer will be kept confidential," the police said.

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 18.6°C Min: 6.6°C

Humidity
Max: 69 Min: 68

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 7.1°C Min: -3.4°C

Humidity
Max: 86 Min: 63

Sunset : 17:32 Hours
Sunrise : 07:26 Hours

Maharashtra: 39 ministers take oath

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NAGPUR: A total of 39 legislators from Mahayuti allies were sworn in on Sunday in the first cabinet expansion of the 10-day-old Devendra Fadnavis-led ministry including 16 new faces, while 10 former ministers were excluded.

Hours before the cabinet expansion ceremony, Deputy CM and NCP leader Ajit Pawar said that some of those who took oath will have a tenure of two-and-a-half-years, underlining constrains in accommodating aspirations of hopefuls.

While 33 legislators were sworn in as cabinet ministers, six took oath as ministers of state.

The new council of ministers reflects Fadnavis' efforts in balancing caste equations including sections of Marathas, OBCs, SCs, and STs and striking a regional balance.

With the new inductees, the strength



of the Fadnavis-led ministry has gone up to 42, including the CM and his deputies Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena) and Ajit Pawar (NCP). One berth was kept vacant.

While the BJP secured 19 ministerial berths by virtue of being the largest among allies, Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party were allotted 11 and 9 berths, respec-

tively. Governor C P Radhakrishnan administered the oath to the new ministers at a ceremony held on the eve of the state legislature's winter session in Nagpur.

The allocation of portfolios is awaited. The BJP, which won the maximum 132 seats in the assembly elections, got the largest chunk of 16 ministers of Cabinet rank and

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Changes in foreign policy needed amid changing landscape: Jaishankar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said there must be "a foreign policy for Viksit Bharat" as he underlined that changes in foreign policy are needed amid a changing landscape.

In his address at the launch of 'India's World' magazine here, he also said "when we speak about changing foreign policy, if there is talk of a post-Nehruvian construct, it should not be treated as a political attack".

Foreign policy expert C Raja Mohan chairs the editorial board of the magazine.

The external affairs minister said there are "four big factors" which should cause people in India to actually ask themselves as to "what are the changes which are necessary in a foreign policy".



"One, and I happened, by coincidence, to speak about it yesterday, for many, many years, we had what someone else very pithily summed up as the 'Nehru development model'. That was book released yesterday by Dr Arvind Panagariya," he said.

A 'Nehru development model', inevitably produced a 'Nehru foreign policy' and "we seek to correct that

abroad", just as efforts being made to "reform" the consequences of the model at home, Jaishankar said on Saturday, in his virtual address at the launch of the book 'The Nehru Development Model'.

In his address at the Sunday's event, he reiterated that a 'Nehru development model' produced a 'Nehru foreign policy'.

"I mean, it was obvious. And, it wasn't just what was happening in our country, there was an international landscape in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and the 1970s which was bipolar. Then there was a unipolar landscape. And, both those landscapes have also changed," the EAM said.

On top of it, in the last two decades or so, there has been a "very intense globalisation", a strong interdependence with countries. "In a way the relationship, the behaviour of states towards each other have changed," he said.

Finally, if one looks at technology, technology on foreign policy, technology on state capability, "technology on our daily existence, that too has changed", he added.

"So, if the domestic model has changed, if the landscape

has changed, if the behavioural patterns of states have changed, and if the tools of foreign policies have changed, how can foreign policy remain the same," he argued.

"So, my point to you today is when we speak about changing foreign policy, if there is talk of a post-Nehruvian construct, it should not be treated as a political attack. I mean, it didn't require Narendra Modi to do it, Narasimha Rao started it," Jaishankar said.

"So, I think, we need to be grounded, we need to be realistic, we need to be practical in this country, and the foreign policy discourse within track 2, and between track 2 and track 1 will certainly improve, if we move in

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Tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain passes away

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain passed away at the age of 73 in the US on Sunday, December 15. The musician was hospitalised in the US due to serious health concerns, with an update shared on social media.

According to a PTI report, Zakir was admitted to the ICU following heart-related problems. His close friend, flautist Rakesh Chaurasia, had confirmed the news. A source also had mentioned that the 73-year-old musician has been facing blood pressure issues.

Rakesh Chaurasia told PTI that Zakir Hussain was receiving treatment at a hos-



pital in San Francisco for a heart-related issue over the past week. He shared that Zakir was unwell and currently in the ICU, and everyone was deeply concerned about his health.

Zakir Hussain, son of the legendary tabla virtuoso Ustad Alla Rakha Khan, is a renowned figure in both Indian and global music. He began his tabla journey at the age of seven and was already performing across India by 12. Throughout his career, he has made remarkable contributions to both Indian classical and world music.

He has composed and performed for numerous acclaimed Indian and international films, showcasing his exceptional tabla skills. About four decades ago, he relocated to San

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Respite from intense cold wave in Kashmir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Kashmir saw a slight respite from the intense cold wave conditions as minimum temperatures rose across the valley, though they remained below the freezing point, the meteorological department officials said on Sunday.

The summer capital, Srinagar, recorded a low of minus 3.4 degrees Celsius, an improvement from minus 4.6 degrees Celsius the previous night, the Met department said.

It said that Gulmarg, a tourist destination popular for skiing, registered a minimum of 3.8 degrees Celsius, marking a rise of nearly four degrees.

Pahalgam, the base camp for annual Amarnath Yatra, logged a low of minus 4.8

degrees Celsius, three degrees higher than the previous night, the weather office said.

Konibal, a hamlet on the outskirts of Pampore town, was the the coldest place in the valley with the mercury dipping to minus 5.2 degrees Celsius, it added.

The minimum temperature in Qazigund, the gateway to Kashmir, was minus 4.0 degrees Celsius, 3.7 degrees in Kupwara of north Kashmir and 2.8 degrees Celsius in Kokernag of south Kashmir, it said.

According to the Met office the weather is likely to remain mainly dry till December 21.

However, the minimum temperature is predicted to fall further in the valley and there will be a cold wave over many stations during the next three days, it said.