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### Major lapse in...

Prime Minister Modi skipped the rally in Ferozepur as there were no crowds and asked the saffron party to introspect. Channi too claimed that the turnout was low at the Ferozepur rally.

Modi who landed in Bathinda had to take the road route to the National Martyrs Memorial at Hussainiwala in Ferozepurb because of inclement weather. When the convoy reached near village Piareana on Ferozepur-Moga road, around 30 km away from the National Martyrs Memorial in Hussainiwala, some protestors blocked the road following which the PM's cavalcade was halted for almost 15-20 minutes on a flyover.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Ferozepur) Inderbir Singh said around 100 farmers suddenly arrived on the spot and blocked the road.

A decision was taken to take the prime minister's convoy back to Bathinda airport after protestors started gathering on the other side of the flyover which could pose a huge security risk, he said.

Protesting farmers had blocked roads at several other places including Tarn Taran, Faridkot and Amritsar.

In the statement, the home ministry said that in view of the contingency plan the Punjab government has to deploy additional security to secure any movement by road, which were clearly not deployed.

"After this security lapse, it was decided to head back to Bathinda airport," the statement said

The ministry also asked the Punjab government to fix responsibility for the lapse and take strict action, the statement said.

Chief Minister Channi claimed that there was a sudden change in Modi's programme and he was scheduled to take a chopper to his destination.

"We respect our Prime Minister," Chani said and added "there was no security lapse of any kind and there was no situation of any attack...There was a sudden change in PM's travel plan from Bathinda to Ferozepur. BJP should not politicise the issue". According to the laid down rules, an alternative arrangement during a VIP's visit has to be ensured, officials in the know of the rules said, adding "if a VVIP is scheduled to travel by air within a state, an alternate route through land has also to be ensured in case of exigencies".

Modi was visiting Punjab after a gap of two years. His government has last month repealed the three central farm laws, which had led to a year-long farmers' stir in the state and at Delhi borders.

Some farmer bodies including the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee had announced that that they will oppose Modi's visit.

BJP president J P Nadda alleged Channi refused to get on the phone to address the matter. "The tactics used by the Congress government in Punjab would pain anyone who believes in democratic principles," Nadda said in a tweet.

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh, who has joined hands with the BJP, too hit out at the Congress government and batted for the imposition of President's rule, while Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal alleged there is a complete collapse of law and order in Punjab.

"If we have to keep our state safe and keep law and order here, then I think President's rule should be imposed," Singh, who formed his Punjab Lok Congress after parting ways with the Congress, told media after addressing a rally in Ferozepur, where Modi too was scheduled to speak.

"We are 10 km away from border in Pakistan, where function was kept (in Ferozepur). If you cannot ensure PM's security, what can you do? We need a strong government," he said.

The prime minister was scheduled to visit the national martyrs' memorial and address the rally in Ferozepur.

He was also scheduled to lay the foundation stones of development projects worth over Rs 42,750 crore, including the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra expressway and a PGIMER satellite centre.

The projects also included four-laning of the Amritsar-Una section, Mukerian-Talwara broad gauge railway line and two new medical colleges at Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur.

"Today's Congress-made happening in Punjab is a trailer of how this party thinks and functions. Repeated rejections by the people have taken them to the path of insanity. The topmost echelons of the Congress owe an apology to the people of India for what they have done," Shah tweeted.

Punjab BJP chief Ashwani Sharma, who addressed the rally in Ferozepur and later interacted with reporters, said democracy has been "shamed" and alleged that state police had been directed to prevent people from joining the BJP rally.

"The prime minister wanted to meet you all, but because of some reasons he is not going to be with us today. The PM has said that these programmes (inauguration) have been postponed and not cancelled," Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said at the event.

The incident not only drew sharp reaction from the BJP but brought to the fore infighting in the Punjab unit of Congress when one of its senior leaders from Punjab Sunil Jakhar said the incident was against the ethos of 'Punjabiya'.

He said a secure passage to the Prime Minister should have been provided for addressing a rally in Ferozepur.

Jakhar also said, what has happened today is just not acceptable.

Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal, who had snapped ties with the BJP over the farm laws, said there is complete collapse of law and order in Punjab. "We have been saying this for long. The CM is incompetent to run the state," Badal tweeted.

### Vivek Bhardwaj given...

Medical Education Department

According to an order issued by GAD, "In exercise of powers conferred under section 4 of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examination Act, 2002, the Government hereby directs that VIVEK BHARDWAJ IAS, Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Health and Medical Education Department shall discharge functions of Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations under the provisions of the Act, in addition to his own duties, as an interim arrangement, till further orders.

### Tech PA to...

as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Kathua, against an available vacancy while Atul Dutt Sharma, JKAS, PA Technical to Excise Commissioner, J&K, has been transferred and posted as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD),

Kishtwar.

### Heavy rain, snow...

avoid venturing out in the Avalanche prone areas," the government has sounded alert for all.



Heavy rain lashes Jammu City on Wednesday.

Snowfall and poor visibility across Kashmir forced cancellation of 37 of the 42 scheduled flights from Srinagar International Airport on Wednesday, officials of the Airport Authority of India said.

The flight cancellations led to chaotic scenes at the airport as hundreds of passengers were left stranded.

"Light snowfall and low visibility today hampered our operations. We had 42 scheduled flights but only five could operate. Other 37 (flights) were cancelled," an official of the airport authority said.

The air traffic to and from Srinagar airport has been severely affected since Tuesday due to snowfall, leading to cancellation of several flights.

Serpentine queues could be seen outside the airline counters as the passengers sought to reschedule their flights out of the valley.

A large number of tourists had come to Kashmir to celebrate New Year amid snowfall that took place around Christmas in most places in the valley.

The Jammu Traffic police officials advised travellers to avoid journeys on the Jammu-Srinagar highway because of snowfall and incessant rain along the highway.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police have established helpline numbers for emergency across the region in view of snowfall and rough weather. Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar has directed all the District Police Chiefs to keep these helpline numbers functional round the clock and render all the required assistance and help to the needy.

### 3 JeM terrorists...

in Chandgam village of Pulwama district which turned into an encounter, a police official said. He said three ultras were killed in the exchange of fire with the security forces.

"Incriminating material, and arms and ammunition, including two M-4 carbines and one AK series rifle, were recovered," he said, adding that it was a "big success for us". A police spokesperson identified two of the three killed terrorists as Mir Owais resident of Ashminder Pulwama and a Pakistani national Talha Yasir linked with proscribed terror outfit JeM. Regarding the third killed terrorist, although the recoveries made from the site of encounter indicate him to be a foreigner, however, his identification is being ascertained.

As per police records, all the killed terrorists were part of group involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on security forces and civilian atrocities. Several terror crime cases were registered against both the killed identified terrorists. Terrorist Owais was involved in killing of a civilian namely Azad Ahmad Dar of Kangan Pulwama. The killed Pakistani terrorist Talha was mastermind in preparation of Vehicle-borne IEDs besides, involved in attack on civilian at Wanpora area of Pulwama. Incriminating materials, arms and ammunition including 02 M-4 Carbine and 01 AK series rifle were recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation.

Police have registered case under relevant sections of law and investigation has been initiated.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir zone, Vijay Kumar said the slain men belong to Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and included a Pakistani national. He congratulated the joint security forces for conducting successful operation without any collateral damage and also appreciated people of the area for their cooperation with the forces by maintaining calm and not resorting to any kind of violence during the course of operation.

### NC questions delimitation...

to legal parlance, if any act is under judicial scrutiny and the apex court is seized of the matter, the act can be termed a "constitutionally suspect" law.

The party said the principle of constitutional propriety demands that such a law should not be implemented and all the limbs of the state and their institutions should, out of deference to the top constitutional court, desist from implementing such a law till its constitutionality is determined.

Three Lok Sabha members of the NC -- Farooq Abdullah, Justice (retd) Hasnain Masoodi and Akbar Lone -- had participated in the second meeting of the Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (retd) Ranjana Desai last month.

The commission's draft recommendations were presented in a meeting in New Delhi on December 20, 2021. It was attended by the three MPs of the NC and two of the BJP. The panel had sought the comments of the MPs, who are also its associate members, by December 31, 2021.

The NC had vociferously opposed the draft, which proposed to increase the number of assembly seats in the Jammu division from 37 to 43 and in Kashmir from 46 to 47.

It also challenged the panel's theory that the seats in Jammu region had to be increased because of difficult terrain and geographically remote areas, highlighting that several areas in Kashmir remain cut-off for months and are equally arduous.

The party highlighted several areas in Anantnag, Kupwara, Baramulla, Kulgam and Uri in Kashmir division to compare their ground situation, topography, remoteness and tough terrain.

The National Conference said its major objection was towards the formula that was adopted by the commission by throwing the concept of population to the wind and stressed that Kashmir division, despite having a higher number of people com-

pared to Jammu, got only one seat.

The logic needed to be thoroughly debated before yet another decision was implemented on the people of Jammu and Kashmir against their wishes, the party said.

The party said the commission was formed for Assam and Jammu and Kashmir together, but towards the end, elections were held in the north-eastern state without completion of the process and asked why the same formula cannot be adopted in the erstwhile state.

The Kashmir division currently has 46 seats and Jammu 37 seats. The population of Jammu region was 53.72 lakh, while it was 68.83 lakh for Kashmir division, according to the census of 2011.

The party also said that when the Centre was following the concept of 'one nation, one flag' etc, why was Jammu and Kashmir being singled out.

There was no necessity of filling the seven seats as proposed in the J&K Reorganisation Act, the party said, giving example of the Andhra Pradesh reorganisation bill when Telangana was bifurcated and added that the assembly seats were never filled till the next scheduled elections.

The NC said the state assembly had adopted a motion way back in early 2000s that the next delimitation commission would be done along with the rest of the country in 2026 and expressed wonder why the sentiments of elected representatives were not being respected by the government.

### J&K Govt signs...

Lt Governor said. "The world-famous GI tagged saffron has been launched at LuLu Hypermarket, which I see as a major step towards boosting Jammu Kashmir and Dubai partnership. LuLu group is already importing apple from Jammu Kashmir and with saffron, we are adding Kashmir's finest spice to the basket. I am certain this new beginning will take our trade to unprecedented levels," the Lt Governor further added. "Trade between Jammu & Kashmir and Dubai has remained steady, despite Covid-19 challenges and it reflects the resilience of our deep economic linkages. The MoU will further expand Jammu Kashmir-Dubai collaboration and Jammu Kashmir-Lulu Group partnership," the Lieutenant Governor said. It is pertinent to mention that Jammu & Kashmir is number one in the production of Saffron, Apple, Walnut and Almond in India. The MoU with the LuLu group will help the UT to reach out to shoppers at 190 LuLu Hypermarkets across the GCC and Egypt.

### J&K records 418...

as no fresh fatality was reported in the past 24 hours.

The officials said there were 51 confirmed cases of mucormycosis (black fungus) in Jammu and Kashmir as no fresh case was reported since Tuesday evening.

Meanwhile, As per an order issued by the Director Health Services Jammu, leave of all Health staff including doctors, paramedics and other officials has been cancelled in view of sudden surge in Covid-19 cases in Jammu division.

As per the order, directions have been issued to all Chief Medical Officers and Medical Superintendents not to grant leave, except for Medical and Emergency conditions, to health care workers with immediate effect.

In a related development, Ladakh has reported 32 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the total count to 22,321 out of which 21,836 patients have cured while the active cases in the union territory has gone down to 265, officials said.

The union territory has recorded 220 Covid-related deaths -- 162 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic last year, they said.

Sixteen patients were cured and discharged from hospitals from Ladakh.

Of the total 32 fresh cases, 23 were reported from Leh and 9 from Kargil district, they said. A total of 785 sample reports in Ladakh were found negative, they said.

Out of 265 active COVID-19 cases in Ladakh, 205 were reported in Leh and 60 in Kargil district.

### Complete restriction in...

ACS (Health and Medical Education) and other senior Health functionaries on 05.01.2022 regarding the increase in number of COVID-19 cases in the entire J&K it is hereby Ordered that there shall be a complete restriction on non-essential movement in the entire UT of J&K from 9:00PM to 6:00AM till further Orders."

### J&K Govt retires...

non-performing and corrupt employees" for consideration of their premature retirement under the ambit of Article 226(2) of J&K CSRs.

### Should taxpayers pay...

supporters? The judiciary, being the last hope, too is not stepping in to free the nation from the 'enemies of democracy' and the 'custodians of the public exchequer', who are misusing the government funds for their benefit at their whims and fancies. Is it democracy? Freebies are neither a recent nor special phenomenon in India and were a usual offering from political parties in the run-up to elections. Every party whether in the government or in the opposition, have and are all resorting to this. The failure of the parties and governments to deliver development to the ordinary people has primarily led to the concept of freebies and the parties have to resort to it to win over the voters, knowing well that freebies affect the way people vote. Sometimes, it works and sometimes it doesn't, depending whether other conditions are fine. With freebies, some people hope that life will be better.

Let it be clear that there is a huge difference between promises of development and welfare schemes and the freebies, especially in this era of technological development. With social media having become a forceful and effective tool of communication, people are raising very pertinent points on the subject, which are directly related to governance. The posts in the media state what the common masses think. They refer to the slogans, "Give us votes, we will give you laptops, cycles, scotties, free electricity, waive loans, so on and so forth".

Should a taxpayer cut the throat of his children to facilitate politicians to spend the money on freebies to get votes? Isn't it open-ended corruption? Doesn't this culture impact the election process? Can the Election Commission ensure free and fair polls in the face of open announcements of freebies by the political parties? Is it too much to expect from the Commission to issue clear guidelines in this regard? What if taxpayers refuse to pay taxes as a resentment for these funds being used by corrupt politicians for their political gains? The shoddy practises adopted by the Indian political class are bothering the middle class the most. They are paying their hard earned money for undertaking developmental schemes like power generation, credible water supply, dependable roads, better healthcare facilities, quality education and availability of basics to all etc. They certainly don't pay to create parasites, who get everything without doing anything. It is time for the proponents of democracy to think and act.

was registered against him at Police Station Hiranagar.

Meanwhile, Ramban Police under overall supervision of SSP Mohita Sharma foiled a narcotics smuggling bid at Sangaldaan and arrested two persons with heroine like substance. During the routine checking, a Police party of Sangaldaan signaled two pedestrians to stop, but they tried to flee. Acting swiftly Police party tactfully overpowered them. On questioning, they disclosed their identity as Jameel Bhat, son of Ab Razaq, resident of Bandhan and Mohd Junaid, son of Mohd Arif, resident of Jaman Gool, District Ramban. During checking, Heroine like substance weighing 7 gm was recovered from them. The accused were arrested on the spot and FIR No 04/2022 under sections 08/21/29 of NDPS Act was registered against them at Police Station Gool. The arrest was made by Police party Sangaldaan led by Incharge Police Post Sangaldaan PSI Aakash Magotra under close supervision of Insp Muneer Ahmed SHO Gool and SDPO Gool Pardeep Kumar. It is pertinent to mention here that during preliminary questioning, accused confessed that they were illegally transporting the contraband substance for sale among local youth in the area.

In another incident, a surprise Naka was established at Omara Morh, Udhampur for checking of vehicles by a team of Police Station Udhampur led by Insp Chaman Gorkha under the supervision of Addl SP Udhampur Anwaar UI Haq and DySP Hqrs Sahil Mahajan. During checking of vehicles, police stopped a Maruti Suzuki Eeco (JK02CL 5011) for checking. On frisking of driver, identified as Neeraj Sharma, son of Mool Raj Sharma, resident of Jib, Udhampur, the officers recovered 10.6 gm contraband substance. He was arrested and FIR No.09/2022 under relevant sections of NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Udhampur.

Reasi police also arrested a notorious drug peddler and recovered heroin from his possession. Team of Reasi Police at check Post Nomain during checking and frisking of vehicles noticed suspicious movement and stopped a car (JK02AF 3307) plying from Jammu towards Katra. During checking, 3 gm heroin (Chitta) like substance recovered from driver of car, identified as Vicky, son of Chuni Lal, resident of Christian Colony, Reasi. He was arrested and FIR No 03/2022 under section 8, 21, 22 NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Katra.

## CRIME REPORT

### 3 BSF personnel injured as bus turns turtle

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: At least three Border Security Force (BSF) per-



sonnel got injured after a bus, they were travelling in, turned turtle on Rajouri highway.

As per details, a bus of a BSF Battalion, which was part of a convoy when reached near Bowli Morh at Narian, met with an accident and turned turtle. All the injured were immediately shifted to local hospital in other vehicles which were also a part of convoy. The injured were identified as HC Ram Pal of 146 Bn, Const Anil Kumar and ASI A K Mishra. Among three, HC Ram Pal got critically injured and was first shifted to 325 Army hospital Nowshera and thereafter shifted to GH Rajouri for advanced treatment while other two received minor injuries.

### Four arrested in theft case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday solved a theft case in

Bandipora by arresting four accused involved in crime and recovered stolen property from their possession.

As per details, on January 4, 2022, Police Station Bandipora received a written complaint stating that some unknown person/persons have stolen a Motor Cycle (JK19-7354). Accordingly, FIR No 03/2022 under relevant sections of law was registered in Police Station Bandipora and investigation started, during which Police zeroed in on three suspects identified as Sameer Ahmad Sheikh, son of Reyaz Ahmad; Abrar Ahmad Rather, son of Muhammad Hussain and Zameer Ahmad Akhoo, son of Zahoor Ahmad-all residents of Kaloosa Bandipora. During questioning, suspects confessed their crime and revealed that they have sold the stolen bike to a mechanic, identified as Jafar Shafi Bhat, son of Muhammad Shafi, resident of Safapora, who runs a motorcycle repairing shop at Safapora.

Subsequently, all accused were arrested and on their disclosure, the stolen motorcycle was recovered in parts, police said, adding that further investigation is going on and more recoveries are expected.

### Shop theft case solved; accused arrested, stolen property recovered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

REASI: Police on Wednesday solved a theft case by arresting an accused and recovered stolen property on his disclosure.

As per details, one Ashok Kumar, son of Late Shanti Saroop, resident of Ward- 5 reported at Police Station Reasi that on intervening night of December 17-18, 2021, some unknown thieves struck his shop, located near Ganesh Mandir and decamped with garlands decorated with currency notes worth Rs 12,000. On this, FIR No 243/2021 under sections 457, 380 of IPC was registered & investigations initiated.

Police team swung into action and suspects were rounded up and finally, a prime suspect was zeroed-in having past conduct of stealing. Identified as Rakesh Singh, son of Dhani Ram, resident of Thilloo, at present Migrant Camp Talwara, the Police launched a manhunt to arrest him but he continued evading arrest by changing locations quite often. Finally, after hectic efforts, the suspect was nabbed from Talwara and put to sustained questioning, after which he confessed his crime.

On his disclosure, Police team recovered stolen property, currency notes-garlands and tools used in committing offense. Further investigation in the case is going on to unearth his links in other theft cases. The accused Rakesh is apparently a drug addict and a habitual thief of the area, earlier remained involved in theft case registered vide FIR no 24/2021 under sections 379/34 of IPC at Police Station Katra, wherein a bike was stolen from Katra.

### 7 narco smugglers nabbed in Jammu division

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Police on Wednesday arrested seven narco smugglers in Jammu division and recovered heroin from their possession. As per details, a team led by Insp. Surinder Paul Singh SHO Lakhnapur during patrolling duty noticed a suspicious car (JK08-4003) which was driven by one Varun Singh, son of Kamlesh Singh, resident of Jagatpur Tehsil & District Kathua who, along with his accomplice namely Sadiq Hussain alias Shiva, son of Sher Ali, resident of Ward No 11 Kathua were asked to stop for checking. On checking, approximately 9 gm Heroin like substance recovered from their possession. Both accused were arrested on spot and FIR No.

03/2022 under sections 8/21/22 of NDPS Act was registered against them at Police Station Lakhnapur.

In another instance, a team led by Insp Yash Paul Sharma SHO Police Station Hiranagar under the supervision of SDPO Border Sachit Mahajan during patrolling duty near Chakra noticed a suspect identified as Talab Hussain alias Pappi, son of Alam Din, resident of Rakh Sarkar Plahi, Tehsil Hiranagar. On checking, 5 bottles of Corex, 100ml each, (Codeine Phosphate Triprocaine Hydrochloride) cough syrup were recovered from his possession. The accused was arrested and FIR No. 02/2022 under sections 8/21/22 of NDPS Act

