

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! Amit Shah orders...

fear of death was never so high, not even during the covid pandemic, or when the militancy was at its peak.  
The authorities have ruled out the possibility of any communicable disease behind the deaths.

A newly formed special investigation team of police has rounded up over 60 people for questioning as part of its investigation after autopsy reports by CSIR-IITR revealed the presence of neurotoxins.

On Friday, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chaired a high-level meeting here to discuss the situation in Badhaal village of Kotranka sub-division and directed health and police departments to expedite investigations.

Located about 55km from Rajouri district headquarters, the villagers are in gripped by fear and want the mystery to be resolved already.

People complained of fever, pain, nausea and loss of consciousness before dying within days of their admission to the hospitals. A girl alone was able to buck the trend and withstand the condition for days. Her condition though continues to be critical.

According to a doctor, the MRI scan of the patients revealed oedema in the brain, a condition where fluid builds up in the brain tissue.

"It is a big challenge for all of us ... I appeal to the people that if anyone has any clue, please come forward and help in the ongoing investigations," National Conference leader and local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Javid Iqbal Choudhary told PTL.

A new graveyard has come up in the village on an agriculture land belonging to Mohammad Aslam, who lost five children and his maternal uncle and aunt, who adopted him, between January 12 and 17.

Aslam's brother-in-law Fazal Hussain and his four children were the first to die under suspicious circumstances in the village on December 7. They were initially believed to have perished to food poisoning for the family had attended a wedding just before.

The pregnant wife of Mohd Rafiq, a cousin of Aslam, and her three children died on December 12.

"The government responded to the situation in a very sensitive manner, leaving nothing to chance. Health teams from within and outside J&K were mobilised and all the villagers were screened within the shortest possible time," Choudhary said.

He said the chief minister has been monitoring the situation since day one.  
"The meeting chaired by the chief minister was informed that a total of 68 people have been rounded up for questioning by the SIT," he said, expressing hope that everything will become clear once the probe is complete.

A grieving Aslam did not rule out a "conspiracy" against his family.

"Hundreds of people had a feast but only Hussain and his children died first. A few days later my cousin's wife and children passed away and then death reached my doorstep. How is it that only our family perished like this?" he said, adding that his family had meals at Hussain's house where a special prayer meeting was held to mark the 40th day since the deaths.

He said fear has gripped the villagers to such an extent that many avoided meeting him when he was grief-stricken.

Zaheer Ahmad Gors, a local social activist, said the villagers are yet to come to terms with the unexplained deaths. "A new graveyard has to be prepared ... It is a testing time for the whole village."

Zahid Shah, a relative of Aslam, said he has full faith in the administration and the police.

"This type of fear was not there even when militancy was at its peak or during the COVID-19 pandemic. People are not coming forward even to dig the grave for the dead," Nazim Din, another relative, said.

Earlier, a government spokesperson said investigations and samples empirically indicate that the incidents were not due to a communicable disease of bacterial or viral origin and that there is no public health angle.

"All samples taken from the victims and the villagers have tested negative for any viral or bacteriological aetiology. The tests were conducted on different samples in some of the most reputed labs in the country.

The toxicological analysis conducted by CSIR-IITR has detected toxins in multiple biological specimens.

The chief minister said the administration is treating the situation with the highest priority.

"The health and safety of our people remain our top priority. The government is fully committed to resolving this crisis and ensuring justice for the affected families," Abdullah earlier said.

## Fire at Badamibagh...

Kumar from Haryana, received burn injuries in the incident. He was shifted to the Army's 92 base hospital nearby, where he was declared dead, the officials said.

The fire has been brought under control, they added.

## Police release pictures...

another terrorist, believed to be Basha, were made public through a poster in both Urdu and English. "General public is requested to share any information regarding the individuals shown in the photographs, identified as four terrorists. A reward of Rs 5 lakh for each terrorist will be given to anyone providing credible information about them," according to the poster. The identity of the informer will be kept confidential. Kishtwar and other districts were rocked by terror attacks last year as Pakistan-based terrorist handlers continued their efforts to spread militancy to peaceful areas of the Jammu region.

## Now EPFO members...

for intervention of the employer.

Union Labour & Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya introduced the two new services on Saturday.

The minister said around 27 per cent of grievances filed by members are related to member profile/KYC issues and that would see a significant drop after the roll-out of the facility.

He also stated that large employers having a huge workload of such requests will also benefit.

The minister stated that the EPFO has simplified the process of joint declaration on the EPFO portal by allowing employees to self-correct most common errors in personal details like name, date of birth, gender, nationality, father/ mother's name, marital status, spouse name, date of joining and date of leaving, without any verification by employer or approval by EPFO.

This facility will be available for members, whose UAN (universal account number) was issued after October 1, 2017 (when Aadhaar matching was made mandatory).

No supporting document is required in such cases, the minister informed.

If the UAN was issued prior to October 1, 2017, the employer can correct details without the EPFO's approval.

Requirement of supporting document has also been simplified for such cases.

Only where UAN is not linked with Aadhaar, any correction would have to be submitted physically to employer and after verification forwarded to EPFO for approval, he explained.

UAN registration is done by employer for the employee at the time of joining. For many employees, mistakes were committed by employers in recording father/spouse name, marital status, nationality and service details during the registration process or later.

In order to correct these errors, the employee had to make a request online with supporting documents.

The request would have to be verified by the employer and then forwarded to EPFO for approval before any change could be effected. This process was called Joint Declaration.

Out of the 8 lakh requests that were forwarded to EPFO by employers in FY 24-25, it was seen that only 40 per cent were sent within 5 days, 47 per cent were sent after 10 days and the average time taken by employer was 28 days.

The simplification would provide relief to employees in 45 per cent of cases through immediate correction through Aadhaar OTP verification and in the balance 50 per cent of cases through the employer itself.

If any member who can self-approve has already filed his request which is pending with the employer, the member can delete the already filed request and self-approve as per simplified process.

This will benefit nearly 3.9 lakh cases pending with employer as on date.

## Rajnath visits Maha...

of Indianness. It should not be seen in association with any sect, community, or religion. If anyone wants to understand India and Indianness, they should come and see the Maha Kumbh," Singh remarked.

The Defence Minister is also scheduled to meet with Army officials to discuss security arrangements for the Maha Kumbh, the statement added.

After landing at VIP Ghat from the Sangam, he visited and worshipped at Chhatra Akshayvat in the Akshayvat Corridor. He then visited the Patalpuri Temple

and Saraswati Koop.

Singh visited Bade Hanuman Ji Temple, where he performed special prayers, the statement added.

The Defence Minister also inquired about the well-being of the temple priest and asked about the arrangements made for the Maha Kumbh.

Additionally, he sought information about the security measures in place, given concerns over potential terrorist threats and rumours about a bomb being found at the Maha Kumbh, the statement said.



## Modi distributes over...

Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and two Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir; and Ladakh.

Modi said the scheme will help people get loans and benefits of other government schemes.

"Around 2.24 crore beneficiaries in villages will now have SVAMITVA property cards after 65 lakh cards are distributed today," the prime minister said.

"Property rights are a major challenge across the world. Years ago, the United Nations had held a study, which revealed people did not have legal documents for property rights in several countries. The UN has said property rights are important for poverty alleviation," he said.

Modi said an eminent economist had opined that property in villages is a "dead capital" because people cannot do anything with it, and it can't help increase their income.

"India was also impacted by this challenge. People in villages have property worth lakhs of crores (of rupees), but they did not have papers for it. There were disputes, properties were snatched, and even banks did not provide loans over it," he said.

The prime minister emphasized that no sensitive government could leave its villagers in such distress.

"Previous governments should have taken steps to do something about it but nothing much was done," he said.

Modi said Dalits, backward classes and tribals were the worst affected by this.

Elaborating on the SVAMITVA Yojana, he said it involved mapping houses and lands in villages using drones and providing legal documents for residential properties to villagers. He added that the benefits of this scheme are now visible.

"India has over six lakh villages, with drone surveys completed in nearly half of them," Modi said.

He highlighted that after receiving legal documents, lakhs of people had taken loans from banks based on their properties and started small businesses in their villages.

"After getting legal property rights, lakhs of people have taken loan. They have used this money to start their businesses. Many of these are farmers, for whom this property cards is a guarantee to financial security," he said.

Modi said that once property cards are issued in all villages, the scheme will unlock economic activities worth over Rs 100 lakh crore. He emphasized the substantial capital that will be added to the country's economy.

Noting that earlier, land disputes were common for farmers and obtaining land documents is challenging, often requiring multiple visits to offices and leading to corruption, the prime minister said that land records are being digitized to deal with these issues.

Highlighting that SVAMITVA and BhU-Aadhaar are foundational systems for village development, he said that BhU-Aadhaar provides a unique identity to land, with around 23 crore BhU-Aadhaar numbers issued, making it easy to identify land plots.

"Over the past seven-eight years, approximately 98 per cent of land records have been digitized, and most land maps are now digitally available," Modi added.

Later, in a post on X, the prime minister said rural land digitisation is "furthering rural empowerment by leveraging the power of technology and good governance".

Union Minister of Panchayati Raj Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan', Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj S P Singh Baghel and Ministry of Panchayati Raj Secretary Vivek Bhavadvaj were also present at the event.

It was attended virtually by several chief ministers, Union ministers and state ministers.

Events are also being organised in over 230 districts for physical distribution of property cards. It is expected that around 13 Union ministers will physically join from designated locations from across the country to oversee regional distribution ceremonies of property cards.

The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) scheme was launched in 2020 to enhance the economic progress of rural India by providing 'Record of Rights' to households owning houses in inhabited areas in villages through the latest drone technology for surveying.

The scheme also helps facilitate monetization of properties and enabling institutional credit through bank loans; reducing property-related disputes; facilitating better assessment of properties and property tax in rural areas and enabling comprehensive village-level planning.

## Attack on Saif...

was traveling by the Jnaneshwari Express which runs between Mumbai Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) to Kolkata Shalimar.

Aakash Kailash Kannoja, the detained man, was "still a suspect", Mumbai police said in a statement later, adding that further action will be taken after due verification.

## Reclaim Jammu's space...

of Article 370. So far that is very commendable role of the BJP in J&K.

BJP leadership, its MLAs, in particular, should understand that the people expect something more from them. Jammu's health and educational institutions are not up to mark. They have not raised these issues with the intensity as these should have been. The mysterious deaths in Rajouri have not been placed in a proper context. Politics is not about criticism and who can criticize with loud volume, it is also about practical suggestions. The party needs to do more homework on it. That is of utmost importance to the region. That's the way Jammu can raise its political profile and claim its due position in the current political landscape.

## Congress takes out 'Samvidhan Bachao' march in Jammu

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: As part of its national campaign, the Jammu and Kashmir unit of Congress staged the 'Samvidhan Bachao Rashtriya Padayatra' on Saturday.

Amid chants of 'mulk ko bachaana hai, Congress ko laana hai' (To save the country, Congress must be brought in), hundreds of Congress leaders and workers assembled at Gandhi Chowk in Satwari and later marched in a procession toward the nearby Ambedkar Chowk in Gandhi Nagar.

"This protest rally is part of the national campaign launched by the Congress to save democracy and the Constitution, which faces a direct threat from the B.J.P. We want to mobilise public support in a peaceful manner against the central government's policies, which are dividing the country along religious lines," said Senior Congress leader and AICC in-charge for J&K, Bharat Singh Solanki.

Solanki, who led the rally along with AICC General Secretary and MLA GA Mir, Pradesh Congress Committee President Tariq Hamid Karra, and working presidents Raman Bhalla and Tara Chand, said his party has taken the responsibility to save the country from the B.J.P, which he claims is attempting to dismantle democracy and the Constitution.

Mir alleged that the ruling party at the centre has no respect for freedom fighters or those who contributed to the creation of India's strong Constitution.

"They are eroding the ideology of our national heroes, and it is the inherited duty of Congress to stand up against this onslaught," he said, adding that the people of the country have started understanding the true nature of the current rulers, who he claimed show no care for the nation or its freedom fighters.

"Look at the language being used by the Home Minister, both inside and outside Parliament. He should be sacked from his position," Mir said.

Karra alleged that B.J.P leaders have shown disrespect to the Father of the Nation and the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country.

"We will continue our protests until the Home Minister resigns," he said, adding that the party would do everything in its power to safeguard the Constitution and democracy.

Bhalla emphasised that Congress will not tolerate insults to the Father of the Nation and the Father of the Constitution. He also vowed to mobilise the public to strengthen secular forces in the country, which he believes are key to its development and progress.

## Two drug peddlers arrested; heroin, sharp edge weapon recovered

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant crackdown against Drug Peddler by Jammu Police, a police party from Akhnoor Police Station apprehended two drug peddler involved in drug peddling during a routine patrolling and checking operation at Pannu Chowk Naka around 6:30 PM on Saturday.

The Police intercepted a Tata Safari bearing registration number DL 4CAL 4843, which was traveling from Sohla towards Jammu.

Despite being signaled to stop, the vehicle initially attempted to flee but was eventually stopped and its occupants detained. The two individuals were identified as Amit Sharma, son of Shakti Sharma, resident of Rajpura Magotrian, Tehsil Jammu, District Jammu and Vipul Mehra, son of Ashwani Kumar, resident of Ward No. 33, Rajpura Magotrian, Tehsil Jammu, District Jammu.

Upon searching the vehicle, the police recovered approximately 20-25 grams of heroin-like substance and a sharp-edged weapon (Toka). The suspects were unable to provide any valid justification for possessing the contraband items.

A case under FIR No. 08/2025 has been registered at Akhnoor Police Station under Sections 8/21/22/25/29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and Section 4/25 of the Arms Act. Further investigation is underway.

It is noteworthy that one of the accused, Amit Sharma, has a prior criminal record and was involved in Case FIR No. 16/2020 under Sections 8/21/22/25/27/29 of the NDPS Act at Domana Police Station.

## Missing youth traced out, re-united his family

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: A youth was traced out and was re-united with his family.

A missing report of a youth namely Sabar Hussain, son of Mohd Hussain, resident of Gagrain, Tehsil Mandi at present Bainch Age 20 years District Poonch was entered in PS Poonch video DDR No 23 dated 29.12.2924 and now he has been traced out and re-united with his family. Reports revealed that one youth namely Sabar Hussain had gone missing and his missing report was entered at PS Poonch on Dec 29, 2024.

Soon after getting the information regarding his missing, Police swung into action and on the directions of SSP Poonch a team was constituted under SHO PS Poonch for search of missing youth.

The Police team by using all possible means as well as technical help and after getting some clues about his presence in Mumbai, Maharashtra succeeded in tracing him. Accordingly, after completing all codal formalities, the Youth has been handed over to his family and missing report has been closed accordingly.

## Kidnapping case worked out, girl recovered

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: Police has recovered the kidnapped girl (name withheld) from Punjab and handed over to her legal heirs.

Reports revealed that on Feb 8, 2021 a report was lodged at Women PS Doda by one Mohd Saleem, son of Mohd Issa, resident of Shingni Tehsil Gandoh regarding kidnapping of his sister (name withheld) by some unknown kidnapper from Shingni area of Tehsil Gandoh.

On the receipt of this report a case FIR No. 10/2021 U/S 363 IPC was registered at Women PS Doda. During the year 2022, for the facilitation of services to the family of victim, investigation of the case was transferred to PS Gandoh. During course of investigation, Police recorded the statements of some relatives and others suspected.

On the directions of SSP Doda, a Police team under the supervision of SDPO Gandoh and SHO PS Gandoh was constituted. Sources were activated besides suspected places were raided by the police team.

Ultimately it came to fore that the girl is somewhere at Punjab which was further zeroed in at Bhogpur area of Punjab State. The special team constituted for the purpose was sent to Punjab and the girl was recovered and brought back to District Doda. After the legal proceedings she was handed over to her legal heirs. Further investigation of the case is going on.

## Drug peddler arrested, heroin recovered

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: A Team of Police Post Tikri while performing Patrolling/checking duty at Tikri naka point intercepted one suspicious person, who on seeing police party tried to escape from the spot but was apprehended by the police party.

On frisking of said apprehended person namely Pawanjeet Singh S/O Mohan Singh R/O Sundrani, Chiryai Muttal, Tehsil Tikri District Udhampur. Police team recovered 3.38 grams of Heroin like contraband substance from the above said accused person who has been arrested on spot.

In this regard, A Case FIR No. 09/2025 U/S 8/21/22 NDPS Act has been registered in PS Rehambal.

## Cyber Cell solves online frauds & recovers Rs 6.9 lakh

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Cyber cell DPO Jammu, a dedicated unit to deal with cases of online/offline frauds and cybercrime who has been relentlessly working for ensuring the safety and security of masses in general has once again successfully recovered an amount of ₹6,90,460/- from fraudsters in separate cyber-crime complaints who used to deceive the people by adopting different tactics regarding online trading and investment and extract money from victims.

In two complaints the complainants invested in trading through telegram page and in other complaints the complainants lost money through a fake Gaming APP (Aviator).

In this regard the complainants approached cyber cell Jammu of being fraudulently cheated, taking the cognizance of matter the cyber cell Jammu took no time to start the investigations and acted swiftly while exhibiting the ultimate professional excellence through its dedicated skilled human resource which was put to task and in no time the lost amount of Rs.6,90,460/\*was recovered from the fraudsters.

## Crackdown on illegal mining, 12 vehicles seized

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a drive against illegal mining and to tighten noose against the violators, Jammu Police has initiated strict action against the criminals involved in illegal mining & minting money out of the public resources.

In an operation which was carried out at different locations in South Zone of District Jammu, detained 08 dumpers loaded with sand seized under illegal mining.

Similarly, PP Belicharana seized 02 dumpers, while PP Nehru Market and Greater Kailash seized 01 truck each loaded with sand/bajri without proper documentation.

In all, 10 vehicles have been seized in the jurisdiction of PS Satwari and one vehicle each has been seized in jurisdiction of PS Gandhinagar and Gangyal each of South Zone. After detaining these vehicles the District Mining Officer was informed of necessary legal actions. Jammu Police is committed to protecting the public property and to eradicate the menace illegal mining in the area.

## Absconder apprehended, produced before court

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: A Police Team led by IC PP City Rajouri successfully apprehended an absconder Sayed Asif Hussain, son of Wazir Hussain age 26 years a resident of Bonyar District Baramulla currently residing at Kheora Rajouri

The accused had been evading arrest for a long time in connection with FIR No. 351/2023 U/S 382 IPC registered at Police Station Rajouri. Acting upon a warrant under Section 299 of the CrPC issued by the Court Rajouri. The absconder was produced before the Court in Rajouri for further legal proceedings.

## Land grabber detained under PSA in Jammu

### ■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A suspected land grabber was detained under the stringent Public Safety Act in Jammu on Saturday, police said.

Abdul Majeed alias Bittu Teli, a resident of Sunjwan, was shifted to the Amphalla district jail on the detention orders of the Jammu district magistrate, a police spokesperson said.

The dossier for the Public Safety Act (PSA) against Majeed was prepared by the forest department and the detention order executed by a team from the Channi police station, he said.

"Majeed is notorious for various illegal activities, including land grab by changing the specification of forest land. He was a habitual offender and involved in several land grab cases," the spokesperson said.

He also warned of stern action against those resorting to illegal mining, land encroachments and other unlawful activities.