

**ASSAULT IS ON  
Sikhs march  
in NY as girl's  
hair cut P7**



**US Supreme  
Court decision  
gives relief to  
immigrants P5**



**ABC OF DERA  
A primer on  
Sirsa Dera  
for the  
layman P14**



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## Kashmir Valley explodes over land-for-mandir

**PDP withdraws support • Govt cancels land transfer to shrine  
• But J-K splits along communal lines as violence rages**

Sach Kanwal Singh

**SRINAGAR:** Blatent imposition of Hindutva agenda in Kashmir has triggered a groundswell of protests, violence, police firing, lathi charges, street demonstrations and rage across the state. The PDP, which had protested transfer of 40 acres of land to a Hindu shrine board quit the government in protest, plunging the state in crisis. The outgoing Governor S K Sinha pursued the Hindutva agenda till the last day and the incoming Governor NK Vohra had to deal with the raging violence. Now the Congress government in the state has cancelled transfer of land, but the right wing Hindu party BJP has taken up the cause in a big way.

As this edition of the WSN was going to the press, it was the turn of Jammu to witness massive violence. Safron band of BJP-RSS, Shiv Sena and many other Hindu bodies had given a call for bandh in Jammu on July 1, demanding transfer of land to Amarnath (Yatra) Shrine Board. Some 60 people were injured in clashes, curfew was imposed at several places. Kashmir valley saw the death of a 70-year-old in police firing in Budgam (some reports said he was hit by a teargas shell) and things seemed going out of control.

Eager to cash the emerging communal feeling, the BJP has called for an India-wide strike on July 3 and repeated calls for scrapping Article 370 of Constitution which gives the state a modicum of some autonomy. Many experts said the Valley situation was back to where it was in 1990, and at least one thing was clear. Kashmir and Jammu were divided clearly along communal lines.

CONTINUED ON P 2

YATRA TAKES WRONG TURN P 18



PDP's Mehbooba Mufti announcing withdrawal from coalition government of Ghulam Nabi Azad

## Sirsa dera too in Kashmir-style land row, tries land grab

WSN Bureau

**CHACHIAN (KANGRA):** As Kashmir exploded over illegal transfer of forest land to a Hindu shrine at the behest of the Governor and due to blackmail by some Congress ministers, a new equally explosive issue is morphing into a snowball. And at the heart of it is the controversial notorious Sirsa dera of self-styled Gurmeet Ram Raheem who is accused of rape and murder in various CBI cases.

The Sirsa dera head had acquired hold of 175 kanals of prime land at Chachian village of Palampur subdivision but after it

came to light that it was under the illegal possession of Sirsa Dera, district magistrate Bharat Khera ordered the revenue authorities take back control of the property. The land estate was clearly in the name of the Himachal Pradesh government in revenue records.

Now, it seems the Sirsa dera has swung some influence. Last week, Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh paid a surprise visit to the controversial dera in Chachian village, near Palampur. It seemed to be a hush-hush visit as it was not mentioned in his official tour programme but word leaked out.

CONTINUED ON P 2

## Balwant Singh Rajoana shames death sentence

**Panth and Humanity sole claimants to my  
body after death; donates eyes to Huzuri  
Ragi of Darbar Sahib, Amritsar**

Jagmohan Singh

**BURAIL (CHANDIGARH):** Every time, Kamaldip Kaur looks into her brother's eyes, she knows such occasions will be few and far between. Balwant Singh Rajoana is on the death row, convicted in Beant Singh murder case. But such is his worldview that perhaps Kamaldip may long have to live with those eyes. Long after Balwant Singh hangs to the utter shame of Indian justice system.

Rajoana's Eyes. Eyes that have seen untold atrocities against the Sikhs, eyes that have seen the machinations of hegemonic brahminical forces trying to annihilate as well as assimilate the Sikhs,



Lakhwinder Singh, on 17 June 2008.

It was not a spur of the moment decision. Rajoana, in fact, first wrote to the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib on June 5, explaining his wish. This was followed by calls from personal attendant of the Jathedar to the Deputy Superintendent of Jail, and thus he was granted permission by the jail authorities.

In his hand-written letter, sent to the Jathedar through the prison authorities, Balwant Singh Rajoana said: "As you are aware, I have been sentenced to death by an Indian court in the Beant Singh assassination case. I have decided not to appeal against this order and not to submit before this system."

CONTINUED ON P 2



**NETAR  
DAAN**

**A WSN EXCLUSIVE**

eyes that have rarely dropped a tear, eyes that have always gleamed with pride in the service of the Guru.

Rajoana's eyes. Eyes that will now shame even death. In the presence of his sister, brother-in-law, nephew and the Deputy Superintendent of Model Jail, Chandigarh, (where he is lodged), Balwant Singh Rajoana has signed his will, donating his eyes to the blind Hazuri Ragi Singh of Darbar Sahib Harmandar Sahib, Bhai