

'My role is only to facilitate dialogue'

Will persuade Centre for talks if separatists are willing: CM

SRINAGAR, Aug 5:

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today said he will persuade the Centre to hold talks with the separatists if the latter show willingness to enter the dialogue with the Government.

"...They (separatists) have to be willing to come forward for a dialogue (with the Centre) but so far there has been reluctance on their part. If any willingness is shown I am sure I will be able to motivate the Centre to talk to them," Omar told reporters on the sidelines of a function here.

The Chief Minister said unfortunately, it was not for him to invite the separatists for dialogue.

"If they have grouse or any complaint with me, I will be more than happy to invite (them). My role is to facilitate a dialogue between them and the Centre which I am trying to do by making sure that the situation in the State remains

conducive for dialogue which over the past few years has been," he said.

Referring to the recent sectarian clashes in parts of Budgam district of central Kashmir, the Chief Minister said sectarian clashes are not a new phenomenon in the State.

"In a run-up to elections, there has always been a concerted effort to polarise people on regional, caste and religious grounds. Don't forget our worst example of polarisation in recent history, in 2008, in the run up to Assembly elections (following amaranth land row agitation).

"So there is no doubt that there is a design in what is happening whether it is in the Shia-Sunni clashes in Budgam, whether it is in the effort to foment Hindu-Muslim trouble in some parts of Jammu but we are aware of it and we will make sure that their designs will not succeed," he said.

Asked to comment on the proposed agitation announced

by moderate Hurriyat Conference headed by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq against alleged use of fake drugs in the State, Omar said there has been no new report on fake medicines.

"There has been no new report on fake drugs. There is nothing like that. Mirwaiz sahib can do whatever he wants to but he should have acted on time instead going for a belated reaction," he said, adding the Government has taken the necessary action against the menace many months before.

"There has been a charge sheet and some people have been arrested. We have set right everything. We have created a new drug procurement committee. Now, I can't understand as what for Mirwaiz sahib will agitate," he said.

The Chief Minister said, "If there is a fresh mistake on our part, he should agitate on that. What is there to agitate on old issues?" (PTI)

DDB misled by officers for three consecutive years

Shown completed on papers, Rs 6.23 cr scheme of PHE doesn't exist on ground

**Axe likely to fall on several officers*

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Aug 5: Unbelievable it may sound but it is a fact that Rs 6.23 crore worth Water Supply Scheme of the Public Health Engineering Department, which has been shown completed on the papers, does not exist on the ground. Most shockingly, the District Development Board (DDB) was misled on the status of the scheme for three consecutive years before the enquiries made startling disclosure.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that this scheme for Chanapora-Zabgulla area of Budgam district was actually mooted at a cost of Rs 1.46 crore in the 1980s to provide drinking water to the vast population. However, the fate of scheme continued to hang in balance for years together and finally in 1997-98 the cost of the Water Supply Scheme was revised at Rs 6.23 crore.

Even after revising the cost of the scheme, those at the helm of affairs in the PHE

Department never tried to ascertain the progress on the ground and the officers associated with the execution of the scheme made good use of seniors' deep slumber and embezzled the money at their whims and fancy by submitting false reports, sources said.

Interestingly, this scheme became topic of discussion during the District Development Board meeting of Budgam for three consecutive years but every time the PHE Department conveyed that scheme has been completed. However, during 2011-12 financial year Planning Department's officers in the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam's office were asked to come up with all possible details about the scheme that too following much hue and cry by the elected representatives of people, who wanted to ascertain as to which areas were getting water supply if the scheme had been completed.

On the basis of preliminary

report from its officers, Planning Department asked the DDC to constitute a multi-disciplinary committee and the same came into being on March 14, 2013 with DDC Budgam as its Chairman and Chief Planning Officer (CPO), District Treasury Officer (DTO) and Superintending Engineer PWD as its members, sources said.

The multi-disciplinary committee visited the spot and found that only some supply lines were laid while as neither intake nor the filtration plant of the scheme was constructed on ground, they added.

Hinting embezzlement of funds earmarked for the scheme, which existed only on the papers, the multi-disciplinary committee submitted its report on May 30, 2013 and accordingly the same was forwarded to the Administrative Secretary of PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Department.

On the instructions of Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Sham Lal

Sharma, the Commissioner Secretary of the department, Dr Pawan Kotwal sought necessary information from the Chief Engineer, Kashmir, which were furnished recently.

However, the Minister as well as Commissioner Secretary don't want to leave any legal lacuna and have directed the Chief Engineer to furnish the details vis-à-vis the officers, who had generated bills for various works on the scheme, who were responsible for carrying out inspection of the work and who had furnished information that scheme had been completed, sources said.

"Moreover, they are also keen to know the year-wise and component wise expenditure shown on the scheme since 1997-98 and who were involved in purchase of pipes without carrying out work on intake and filtration plant", sources further said. "This is being done to ensure that those involved in embezzlement of such a huge

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Rangers open firing twice on IB, jawan hurt

Effective response given, will lodge strong protest: IG BSF

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Aug 5: Pakistani Rangers twice resorted to firing on forward Indian positions of the Border Security Force (BSF) along the International Border (IB) in Ramgarh sector of Samba district today causing serious injuries to a BSF Head Constable after which IG BSF, Jammu Frontiers, Rajiv Krishna warned the Rangers of consequences if they didn't mend their ways.

Mr Krishna, who visited Ramgarh sector after the firing for on spot assessment of the situation along with other senior BSF officers including DIG Varinder Singh and CO 200 BSF Hemant Kumar, said the BSF would lodge a strong protest with the Rangers over unprovoked act of firing on the International Border and give an effective reply. He added that the BSF jawan was injured in sniper shot fired by the Rangers.

This was the third incident of firing on the IB in past one week. In the first incident, a BSF Head Constable was injured in

Hiranagar sector while in the second incident, the infiltrators had escaped after firing by throwing Rs 4.96 lakh worth fake currency besides arms and ammunition in RS Pura sector.

Official sources said the Pakistani Rangers opened firing from their Ashraf Post directly targeting forward Indian posts at Narayanpur in Ramgarh sec-

tor prompting the BSF to retaliate very effectively to silence guns of the Rangers.

The BSF jawans, who have been maintaining a very high alert on the IB, conducted searches on the border after the Pakistani firing but they didn't find any traces of the infiltrators.

"The firing appeared to have been directly aimed at the BSF



—Excelsior/Gautam
BSF officers and jawans monitoring situation at forward post in Ramgarh sector on Monday. (Another pic on page 6)

tor of Samba district at 4 pm today. Amidst the firing, the Rangers fired a sniper shot targeting the BSF jawan directly.

The jawan identified as BSF Head Constable Ram Nivas Meena was hit in his chest while he was manning a forward BSF post causing serious injuries to him.

The BSF jawans evacuated Meena from the forward post and shifted him to local hospital from where he was referred to Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu, where his condition was stated to be stable.

Again at 6.55 pm, the Rangers again fired several shots towards the Indian positions in the same

jawan's cause casualties among them," sources said describing this act of Rangers as "extremely provocative".

Last week, Pakistani Rangers had opened firing in Hiranagar sector injuring a BSF Head Constable and a civilian. Second incident of firing was reported in RS Pura sector where after the BSF retaliation the infiltrators had escaped leaving behind Rs 4.96 lakh worth fake currency, one Chinese pistol and ammunition. The BSF had seized the consignment.

Sources said three incidents of ceasefire violations by the Pakistani Rangers have been

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

All 3 killers of migrant arrested

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 5: Police tonight arrested all three accused involved in the killing of Prem Nath Talashi at Jagti township yesterday from Ludhiana in Punjab and seized a Bolero used in the crime. All three killers were being brought here.

*Pic on Page 6
SSP Jammu Atul Goel told the Excelsior that 30 hours long efforts of Jammu Police materialized tonight after all three accused were nabbed at Ludhiana at 11 pm where they had taken shelter after committing the crime.

The accused Naresh Singh, Sumit Kumar and Shanky, all resi-

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

Civilian dies in police custody

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 5: A civilian, who had been called to Ramnagar police station in Udhampur district for questioning in connection with mysterious death of his wife, allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself with ceiling of a fan in computer room of the police station in early hours of this morning, leading to massive protests from the people.

Authorities have ordered magisterial inquiry into the death of the civilian, who has been identified as Subash Chander, 35, son of Jagat Ram, a resident of village Insha in Ramnagar.

SSP Udhampur Anil Magotra said Subash Chander's wife, Gasho Devi had died under suspicious circumstances in her house

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

Man dies of negligence, NH blocked

Excelsior Correspondent

KATHUA, Aug 5: Irate public blocked busy Jammu-Pathankote National Highway near Kalibari and disrupted movement of traffic for about two hours, after a middle-aged man died due to negligence of Medical staff at local district hospital here this evening.

Reports said 42-year-old Mehar Singh, son of Bishan Dass, resident of village Mulay Talab had gone to the hospital as he had some fever and pain in stomach. He was attended by Dr N R Bhagat who asked the staff to provide injection through drip set.

(Contd on page 6 Col 4)

Curfew like restrictions in Palhalan

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 5: Curfew like restrictions continued for the second consecutive day today in Palhalan area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district following clashes against the arrest of an Imam.

Although, there were no fresh clashes today the area, but the tension continued to prevail.

Police early today announced that people should remain indoors as the curfew will continue to remain imposed in the Palhalan area.

Police, CRPF and Army remained deployed to foil any attempt

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

Ambika, Azad likely to attend PCC convention at Jammu on Aug 11

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, Aug 5: For infusing more confidence among the party cadre, Congress national general secretary Ambika Soni, who is also incharge of the J&K affairs and Union Minister for Health Ghulam Nabi Azad are arriving here for attending a one-day convention of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) members of Jammu province on August 11.

PCC president Prof Saif-ud-Din Soz will preside over the convention wherein Ambika Soni and Azad will be the special invitees. Hotel Ashok is likely to be the venue of this convention for which the arrangements are being finalized, informed sources in Congress circles told the Excelsior.

All the executive body members of Pradesh Congress Committee from Jammu Province, whose number is approximately 150 including

ex-officio members like ministers, MLAs, MLCs, ex-ministers and ex-legislators, are going to attend this convention wherein party programmes and further strategy keeping in view the forthcoming Parliament elections is likely to be discussed, sources added.

Both Ambika Soni and Ghulam Nabi Azad are learnt to have given their consent for participation in the maiden PCC convention after the re-appointment of Prof Soz as State unit chief. The last PCC convention was held on May 18-19 in Kashmir, last year.

Earlier, the convention was planned to be held on August 9 but keeping in view the forthcoming Eid-ul Azha, August 11 was finalized for the event. A similar convention of the PCC members from Kashmir Province is also going to be held soon and a final date in this regard is likely to be decided after August 15, sources said.

According to the party sources, the convention is being viewed as a major step towards unity efforts in the faction ridden State unit of Congress where division among the party leadership is

wide open.

After a long gap, both Prof Soz and Ghulam Nabi Azad are likely to share dais publically thus signaling a unity move from the party convention next week, sources explained.

As the Parliament and State Assembly elections are approaching nearer, leaders of both the factions are severely feeling the necessity of party unity for better poll results and this approach was evident during the last month convention of Jammu Urban unit, held at Kangra Fort near Ban Talab where some die hard Azad loyalists were seen sharing dais with Soz camp leaders.

Meanwhile, sources said that leaders of both the factions are also gearing up for show of strength before the party incharge Ambika Soni, who will address the party cadre for the first time since her appointment as the incharge J&K affairs. She had visited J&K along with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and AICC president Sonia Gandhi during their visit for inauguration of the Banihal Railway tunnel, last month where there was no party programme.

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