

Several major roads closed

8 dead, 80 rescued; 1200 houses collapse

Gopal Sharma

JAMMU, Aug 16: At least 1200 houses collapsed as rains continued for the last three days in the region while five persons were buried alive

Army and civilians rescued at least 80 persons from different areas to the safer places since yesterday. The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was closed due to land slides at several places in Udhampur

hours, indicating much loss to the houses and property of the people.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway continued to remain closed due to heavy land slides between Udhampur-Chenani, Batote-Ramban and Banihal. Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on both sides due to blockade. The one-way traffic was however, restored on the highway this late evening.

Shri Amarnath yatra was also hit with the blockade. Many link-roads including Dhar-Mahanpur-Udhampur, Ramnagar-Dudu Basantgarh, Katra-Reasi-Mahore, Udhampur-Chenani-Lati, Pancheri, Kathua-Basohli-Billawar and Bani road have been closed due to landslides. Nearly one kilometer portion of road have sunk near Mahanpur and the land link to the entire Basohli-Bani tehsils has been snapped since late last evening.

The train service between Jammu and Udhampur has also been suspended after a portion of a bridge (No. 67) near Bangarh suffered some damage on the track in Kishanpur-Manwal area.

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Flooded Neeru river at Bhandarwah on Friday. More pics on page 6.

under their houses and three washed away in floods besides a temple and Government school building in flooded Chenab whereas, the police,

and Ramban area. A Met office spokesman told the Excelsior that rain and thunder-shower would continue across the region in next 24

3 Pak Army men 'dead'

5 injured, heavy firing resumes on LoC

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 16: Three Army jawans and two civilians were injured as shells, rockets and bullets fired by the

while they were forced to desert eight forward posts in view of strong retaliation by the Indian troops in Nikiyal area of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) opposite Hamirpur area of Poonch early this morning.



A woman displays a shell fired by Pakistan Army at village Salhutri in Poonch on Friday. Another pic on page 6.

Pakistan Army targeted 18 forward Indian posts and landed in residential areas at Salhutri and surrounding villages in Poonch district overnight as heavy exchange of firing between the Armies of India and Pakistan continued for past three consecutive nights.

At least three Pakistan Army jawans were reportedly killed and four others were injured

Official sources told the Excelsior that Indian troops had been left with little options but to retaliate very effectively and silence the Pakistani guns, which had started targeting civil population on Indian side. Several bullets, shells and rockets fell in civilian areas with some of them landing inside houses of the people at Salhutri, Sandot, Jhalas, Thera, Mankote, Bhera and surrounding areas of Poonch district.

At 9.45 pm tonight, Pakistan Army resumed heavy firing at Hamirpur and Mendhar. Firing was on when the reports last came in. No

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HS visits border, BSF, CRPF Hqrs

No successful infiltration, BSF on high alert: Goswami

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Aug 16: As tensions escalated on the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) due to unprovoked firing by Pakistan Army and Rangers, Union Home Secretary Anil Goswami today visited forward areas on the IB in Jammu sector and later held a high level security review meeting with top brass of para-military forces, civil and police administration.

Mr Goswami, who arrived here this morning on his first two days visit of the State after assumption of charge of the Home Secretary, said the BSF has succeeded in thwarting all infiltration attempts on the borders. He called upon the BSF to maintain strict surveillance on the borders.

The Union Home Secretary, who would visit holy cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi ji tomorrow and later review the shrine security at another high level meeting here before returning to New Delhi, today also visited BSF Headquarters at Paloura and CRPF Headquarters at Bantalar and met the senior para-military officials to review security with them.

In brief inter-actions with

reporters after security review at Octroi Post in Suchetgarh sector of RS Pura tehsil this morning and later in Jammu, Mr Goswami, the son of the soil, said there was no report of infiltration along the International



Union Home Secretary Anil Goswami along with senior officers at International Border in Suchetgarh sector on Friday.

Border in Jammu sector and asserted that BSF was always alert and guarding the border in the best possible way.

"BSF have been asked to be alert all the time and maintain vigilance. This is their mandate and they are doing it in the best possible way," Mr Goswami said, adding, that there was no report of any possible infiltration via the IB.

Asked about the fear psychosis generated among troops due to the recent killings by sniper firing, Mr Goswami said, "I have met jawans and found their morale is high...They are guarding the border with vigi-

lance and alertness."

The Home Secretary said this was a ground assessment visit and the decision regarding the next step would be taken after a meeting with senior Defence officers from New Delhi, including the Joint Secretary dealing with border management.

He, however, dismissed reports of Central Intelligence agencies holding Bajrang Dal activists responsible for the Kishtwar communal clashes.

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Omar flays national leaders for different treatment towards J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 16 : Emphasizing the need for a definite change in the mind-set of a particular category of national leaders regarding



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah inspecting Independence Day parade at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar.

treating Jammu and Kashmir with discrimination, Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah on Thursday criticized them for

Basharat to head SERC, Gupta Property Tax Board Satwain Canal, re-organization of Settlement, Land Records Deptts receive Cabinet nod

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 16: State Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah this morning took several important decisions which include construction of balance portion of Ravi canal, appointment of Chairman State Electricity Regulatory Commission, constitution of Property Tax Board, allotment of contract of Lower Kalnai Power Project and reorganization of Settlement and Land Records Departments.

The Cabinet after thorough discussion on the memorandum of PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Department accorded approval to the construction of

said referring to the national leaders.

Without naming BJP and likeminded politicians, Omar

showing complete duplicity in their approach towards the issues like Kishtwar. "You treat similar incidents in rest of the country and Jammu and Kashmir differently", he

said, "It is most unfortunate on the part of these leaders to discriminate Jammu and Kashmir vis-à-vis other States and show biased approach while dealing with similar matters differently

in Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country". He said that he was once asked why people of Jammu and Kashmir think themselves different from the rest of the country and away from the mainstream. He said that he got the reply to this question by the approach and treatment shown by these national leaders regarding Kishtwar incident.

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	Highest: 95.0 per cent
	Lowest: 87.0 per cent
	Sunset on Saturday: 07.15 p.m.
	Sunrise on Sunday: 05.58 a.m.
	KASHMIR
	Possibility of light rain/thundershowers
	TEMPERATURE
	Max: 23.5 Degree C
	Min: 16.7 Degree C
	RELATIVE HUMIDITY
	Highest: 93.0 per cent
	Lowest: 73.0 per cent

Curfew continues for 8th day

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 16: Curfew continued in Kishtwar town and its outskirts for eighth consecutive day today without any relaxation while it has been lifted in all other seven districts, where it was imposed on August 10 and 11 in the aftermath of Kishtwar violence. Night curfew, however, continued in sensitive Bhandarwah town of Doda district as a precautionary measure.

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No talks with Pak: Khurshid

DEHRADUN, Aug 16:

External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid today said there was no point in even discussing holding talks with Pakistan till the situation at border becomes totally normal.

In response to a query about India's response to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's offers of talks, Mr Khurshid said right now, the grounds to hold such talks were totally damaged in view

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Pak violates ceasefire in Kargil

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 16: Pakistani troops fired at Indian posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kargil and Drass sectors of Ladakh for the first time in the 14 years since the Kargil war of 1999.

Sources said that Pakistani troops opened fire in Drass and Kargil sector by using small arms on the night intervening August 11 and

(Contd on page 6 Col 4)

7 CEs shifted in PDD

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 16: The Cabinet today accorded sanction to the transfers and postings of seven incharge Chief Engineers in PDD with immediate effect.

Girja Kour, Incharge Chief Engineer awaiting orders of adjustment has been transferred and posted as Incharge Chief Engineer,

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Azad best Health Minister India ever had: Survey

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 16 : Union Health Minister and former Chief Minister of J&K Ghulam Nabi Azad has been voted as the best Health Minister the country ever had since independence.

This information came forth during a survey conducted

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