

## India watching Afghan peace process: Khurshid

# Allow use of airspace for Srinagar flights: Omar tells Pak

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, June 29: External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid today said that India has been closely watching the developments related to the peace process in Afghanistan.

While addressing a Conference on Cooperation, Development, Peace and Security in Central Asia at Kashmir University here today, Khurshid said: "We have been watching with care and close scrutiny the developments in Doha (Qatar) about the possibility of a conversation and dialogue between the Taliban and High Peace Council of Afghanistan".

"We feel and we have said this to our friends, in the US and the European Union, that our collective decision which is very strongly endorsed in Afghanistan that the peace talks must be Afghan led and Afghan controlled," the Minister said.

Khurshid said it was not possible for anybody from outside to conjure a successful peace architecture for Afghanistan or any other part of the world "I

believe that the peace must come from within. Despite repeated invitations, India believes it must restrain itself to a point which is consistent with our philosophy and allow the

build the dams, we will help them build the roads but they must populate the Parliament with the voices of Afghan people. We shouldn't impose any preconceived notions of democ-



External Affairs Minister, Salman Khurshid speaking at a function in Kashmir University on Saturday. —Excelsior/Amin War

Afghan people to choose their own destiny," he said.

The Union Minister said India will help in reconstruction and development of Afghanistan and expects the Government in that country to deliver on issues like drug trafficking, religious extremism and fundamentalism.

"We will help them (Afghans) in completing the Parliament building, which will be ready in three months. We will help them

racy. We can share our experiences but at the end it has to be their own decision," he said.

"We also expect them to deliver on drug trafficking issues and fundamentalism and religious extremism. It is very important that we really understand religious extremism and fundamentalism are not something that hurts only one society. It is a fundamental

(Contd on page 9 Col 1)

# U'khand Speaker says 10,000 killed, Shinde puts toll at 900

ALMORA/DEHRADUN, June 29:

Two weeks after flash-floods and landslides devastated Uttarakhand, there was no clarity on the death toll with State Assembly Speaker Govind Singh Kunjwal claiming today that it may cross 10,000 while Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde pegged it at 900.

Kunjwal claimed in Almora that the death toll can cross 10,000. "Earlier when I returned from a tour of Garhwal region I believed the casualty figure could be 4,000 to 5,000. But now as per my information and bodies being seen by the people, I can say the figure can cross the 10,000 mark," he said.

In Mumbai, Shinde said, "According to my information, last night the toll was 900."

Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna, who has stated that over 1,000 people may have perished in the calamity, trashed Kunjwal's claim, saying it is incorrect and that true figures will come out once the debris have been cleared.

The National Disaster Management Authority

(NDMA), which is assisting in the rescue and relief operations, put the death toll at 580 till last evening.

Chief Secretary Subhash Kumar said a clearer picture will emerge in a couple of days as the figure of missing persons, said to be around 3,000, is being ascertained following detection of several cases of duplication.

Rescue work in Badrinath area resumed during the day after some delay due to bad weather and 1,313 pilgrims including some villagers were evacuated — 600 by helicopters and the remaining by road, Chief Secretary Subhash Kumar told reporters in Dehradun. He said about 500 people still remain to be evacuated.

Efforts are also being made on a war-footing to ensure supply of essential relief material to over 600 villages in Rudrapur, Chamoli and Uttarkashi districts, which are cut off after the floods.

2,379 metric tonnes of wheat and 2,875 metric tonnes of rice has so far been dispatched to these villages. The frequently changing weather is hampering

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People fill drinking water from leaking pipes in Jammu's outskirts. —Excelsior/Rakesh

## Sathasivam to be new CJI

NEW DELHI, June 29:

Supreme Court Judge P Sathasivam will be appointed as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI) after the expiry of present incumbent Altamas Kabir's tenure.

President Pranab Mukherjee has given his nod for the appointment of Sathasivam as the next Chief Justice, official sources said.

64-year-old Sathasivam has

(Contd on page 9 Col 5)

## India, China focus on BDCA

BEIJING, June 29:

India and China today decided to seek a fair and rational solution to their border dispute as they focused on the proposed Border Defence Cooperation Agreement to avert incursions like the one witnessed in Leh region last month.

This emerged at the end of the two-day 16th round of border talks between the Special Representatives of the two countries—National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon and Yang Jiechi—here today.

The talks, which were held against the backdrop of the recent incursion of Chinese troops near Ladakh, covered a host of issues bedeviling the relations between the two countries.

They were held in a productive, constructive and forward-looking atmosphere, a brief statement put out by Indian embassy here after the talks said.

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## NBW against 7 in drugs scam

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 29: In the much publicized spurious drug scam, Special Judge Anticorruption Jammu, Puneet Gupta today granted interim bail to two accused while as non-bailable warrants were issued against seven.

Dr Anice Choudhary, the then Vice-Chairman of the Purchase Committee and Principal of the Government Medical College Jammu, and Sunil Gupta, member of the Purchase Committee surrendered before the Court today and filed bail application.

The Court granted them interim bail subject to the furnishing of bail and personal bonds to the tune of Rs 20,000 each.

Special Judge Anticorruption also issued non-bailable warrants against seven accused namely Prem Prakash Barnwal, Manjula Barnwal, Directors of M/s Sanative Pharmaceuticals, Manoj Kumar Aggarwal, Rahul Kumar Singh, Mukesh Aggarwal, Zubair Ahmed and Neeraj Aggarwal.

Earlier, an application was filed on behalf of Mukesh Kumar

(Contd on page 9 Col 6)

## Rahul's tough message on groupism

NEW DELHI, June 29:

Gearing up for the 2014 Lok Sabha battle, Rahul Gandhi today warned Congress leaders against groupism and told them that coordination and cooperation is the key to success.

In his first formal interaction with newly-appointed party office-bearers, seen as his team to meet future challenges, Gandhi told them in no uncertain terms that accountability will follow responsibility.

He also felt there was something amiss in the functioning of the outgoing party set-up, sources said.

With a series of Assembly polls due this year and Lok Sabha elections by May next, Gandhi said the AICC set-up should project a picture of a united family where the young give respect to elders and draw from their experience.

(Contd on page 9 Col 4)

## Pak national held on IB

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 29: The Border Security Force (BSF) today apprehended a Pakistani national from near Khora Border Out Post (BOP) along the International Border (IB) in Samba sector.

The Pakistani national was arrested soon after he entered into the Indian territory, official sources said.

He disclosed his identity as Mohammad Asif, 40, son of Nazir Ahmad, a resident of village Darhan, Shakargarh.

The jawans of 9 BSF, who apprehended the Pakistani national, were questioning him but he appeared to be insane. The BSF recovered Rs 83 in Pakistani currency from his possession.

## Minister threatens SP

# Noisy scenes in DDB

## Kupwara meeting

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 29: The District Development Board Kupwara meeting that was chaired by Medical Education Minister, Taj Mohi-ud-Din witnessed noisy scenes with the Ministers joining the legislators in expressing concern over the slow pace of the developmental works in their constituencies.

Surprisingly the MLA Langate, Engineer Rashid who is most vociferous was overshadowed by the PDP MLA from Lolab, Abdul Haq Khan, who alleged that his constituency has been worst affected as the developmental works have been stopped due to lack of state assistance to the Centrally Sponsored Schemes in his constituency in particular and district in general.

Mr Khan staged a walkout against the alleged failures of the Government towards development in the district especially in his constituency after chairman of the DDB Kupwara in his address told the meeting that the State is poor and has no funds. Irked by the remarks of the chairman, Khan staged walk out.

He said that if the Government has no funds what was the fun of holding the DDB meeting. He said that the Government has failed to deliver.

Haq Khan told the meeting that the work on Irrigation Schemes, bridges and other Centrally Sponsored Schemes have been stopped as the State has not released its share for these schemes. He said that work on the Lolab Bypass bridge has been stopped some 2 years ago and roads across the Kupwara district are in dilapidated condition as no macadamisation has taken place.

Law Minister, Mir Saifullah also raised the issue of the slow pace of work on the already existing projects in his constituency. He also put forward list of various developmental works to be undertaken in his constituency.

National Panthers Party MLC, Rafiq Shah raised the issue of developmental schemes and put forth some of the developmental projects that needed to be taken up on fast track basis. He told the meeting that the border district has been neglected by the Government.

Engineer Rashid expressed his concern over the statement of the chairman of the DDB Kupwara on lack of funds.

In the meeting, CAPD & Transport Minister Chowdhary Ramzan lambasted the

(Contd on page 9 Col 7)

## Over 11,500 yatris perform darshan on Day 2

# 14 counters opened for fresh registration

Avtar Bhat

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, June 29: Over 11,500 pilgrims performed darshan in the holy cave of Swami Amarnath on second day of yatra today while 10,541 pilgrims left for darshan of holy cave from the base camps of Nunwan-Pahalgam and Baltal.

According to official sources, 11,530 pilgrims performed darshan of Ice Lingam at holy cave today. Out of them, 6,132 pilgrims left from Baltal base camp while 4,409 left from Nunwan Base Camp to cave shrine. While those who left via Baltal had reached the cave shrine by late in the evening and those from Nunwan track had stayed for the night halt at Sheshnag and Chandanwari respectively, sources said.

Sources said the yatris were stopped for a brief period at Access Control Gates at Chandanwari and Baltal due to heavy showers of rain in the morning. But after improvement

in weather the yatra was allowed to go ahead.

Sources said the weather in the morning was cloudy and there were few spells of rain in the yatra area. However the



Amarnath yatris shouting religious slogans "Jai Bole" as the 2nd batch of pilgrims at Nunwan Base Camp is all set to move towards the holy cave on Saturday. —Excelsior/Sajad Sameer

# J&K tax base may touch Rs 7000 cr this year

## \* Govt asks PDD to mop up Rs 2400 cr

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, June 29: Expanding its tax base, Jammu and Kashmir was, for the first time, set to cross the figure of Rs 6000 crores worth tax from its own resources during the current financial year, about Rs 700 crores more than the previous fiscal.

These figures have been conveyed by the State Government to the Planning Commission of India (PCI) for claiming highest ever annual plan of Rs 8050 crores for this financial year.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the State was expected to garner Rs 6600 crores from its own tax resources during 2013-14.

During 2012-13, the State had recovered Rs 5900 crores from the taxes, which were Rs 500 crores more than the target of Rs 5400 crores fixed by the Government.

The State's tax base mainly comprised Valued Added Tax (VAT), Sales Tax (ST), Excise Tax, Motor Spirits Tax, Stamps Duty, Toll and Entertainment etc.

Sources said the Planning Commission had sought details of the State's own tax revenue during 2012-13 and proposed recoveries during 2013-14 before taking a final decision on funding the annual plan for current financial year.

Though the Planning Commission was reportedly satisfied with the tax base of the

State, it wanted it to be increased over the next few years so that the State was in a position to fund the healthy annual plan. The State has assured the Planning Commission that it would take all steps to increase its tax base but made it clear that it can't burden the common man more as inflation was already breaking all records.

"We want to increase our tax base but it has to be within the limits. It would be increased in a way that the common man was not affected," sources said.

They added that the State was likely to stick to its present tax base even during the next financial year as both Parliament and Lok Sabha elections were scheduled to be held

next year.

During last financial year of 2012-13, the State Government had fixed tax targets of Rs 5400 crores but it eventually ended up with collecting Rs 500 crores more totaling Rs 5900 crores. Though for current financial year, the State has fixed the target of Rs 6600 crores, Rs 700 crores more than the previous year, it was confident that even during current fiscal year it might touch the figure of Rs 7000 crores.

Sources said the revenue generated on account of electricity supply in the State remained a cause of worry as despite increase in revenue over the pre-

(Contd on page 9 Col 7)

## No benefit to J&K even after leasing out huge land

# Despite lapse of 5 yrs, no headway in setting up of steel plant by SAIL

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, June 29: The repeated persuasions by the State Government have failed to yield desired results vis-a-vis setting up of the first-ever steel plant by the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) during the past five years. Due to non-prioritization of the project by the Central Public Sector Company, the State has failed to get the intended benefits like generating employment avenues and having steel available on reasonable rates.

The foundation stone of the first-ever steel processing unit for Jammu and Kashmir was laid by the then Union Minister for Steel, Ram Vilas Paswan, in

2008 at Lassipora industrial estate in Pulwama district in order to generate job opportunities for the unemployed youth and to make available steel products at the reasonable rates.

As the project was of immense importance for J&K, the then State Government leased out 200 kanal of land to the SAIL, which is among the five Maharatnas of the country's Central Public Sector Enterprises, with the hope that it will immediately start work on setting up of steel plant with an initial annual capacity of 100,000 tonne.

"However, neither the project received any required attention of the State Government nor did the steel giant prioritized this project for years together. Thereafter,

SAIL decided to shelve the program and shift the plant to adjoining State of Himachal Pradesh on the ground that sufficient incentives were not made available by the State Government", official sources said.

No doubt, Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah stalled this move of the SAIL by personally raising the issue with the then Union Steel Minister, Beni Prasad Verma, no considerable headway could be made for getting the work on the plant started by the SAIL, sources said.

"Due to least interest from the steel giant not only 200 kanal of land is lying un-utilized but also employment to be generated by this unit remains a dream", they further said. "State had

hoped that thousands of youths would get direct and indirect employment with the commissioning of this plant, which would also give push to the developmental activities with the availability of steel on reasonable rates", sources added.

Again, after remaining out of sight for quite long time, the project received attention of the State Government last year when it once again took up the issue with the SAIL. This resulted into steel giant deciding to set up plant in the joint venture instead of taking up the same at its own and inviting offers from the interested companies, sources said.

This exercise of the SAIL received four offers—two from Jammu and Kashmir and two

(Contd on page 9 Col 7)

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Today's issue has 20 pages including Sunday Magazine (4 pages)  
— Editor

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**WEATHER**

JAMMU

Possibility of rain/thundershowers

**TEMPERATURE**

Max: 35.2 Degree C  
Min: 26.7 Degree C

**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**

Highest: 59.0 per cent  
Lowest: 53.0 per cent  
Sunset on Sunday: 07.43 p.m.  
Sunrise on Monday: 05.29 a.m.

**KASHMIR**

Light rain/thundershowers

**TEMPERATURE**

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