

Pak needs to do more on terror: US

WASHINGTON, Mar 21: Pakistan has to do a lot more to wipe out terrorism from inside its territory and it needs to launch a crackdown not just on the Taliban but also on other terror networks, the US has said.

Vice President Mike Pence met Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of Pakistan last Friday and the two leaders discussed the South Asia strategy.

In his new South Asia Policy in August, President Donald Trump had called for tougher measure against Pakistan if it fails to cooperate with the US in its fight against

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Trust vote again not taken up

NEW DELHI, Mar 21: The Lok Sabha proceedings were disrupted today for the 13th day after members from the AIADMK and TRS continued with their noisy protests, stalling the taking up of two notices of no-confidence motion against the Council of Ministers for the fourth day.

Amid the din, Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said that she cannot do a headcount of 50 members supporting the move, a prerequisite for taking up the notices for the trust vote.

She then adjourned the House for the day.

Minutes after the House met this morning, the Speaker adjourned the proceedings for

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IS bomber kills 29 in Kabul

KABUL, Mar 21: An Islamic State suicide bomber struck on the road to a Shiite shrine in Afghanistan's capital today, killing at least 29 people as Afghans celebrated the Persian new year.

The Public Health Ministry

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said another 52 people were wounded in the attack, which was carried out by a bomber on foot.

The Islamic State group claimed the attack in an online statement, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites. IS said the attack targeted "a gathering of Shiites celebrating Nauruz."

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Avalanche warning in many areas

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Mar 21: A fresh weather warning has been issued during the next 24 hours in avalanche prone areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

An official spokesperson said, "a low danger avalanche warning has been issued for Baramulla, Gulmarg, Kupwara-Chowkibal-Tanghdar, Bandipora and Kanzalwan-Gurez sector in North Kashmir."

A low danger avalanche warning has been issued in Anantnag, Kulgam in South, Budgam, Ganderbal in Central Kashmir, he said.

He said similar warning has also been issued in Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi, Ramban, Doda,

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5 security men, 2 militants killed in Kupwara; toll 10

Fayaz Bukhari
SRINAGAR, Mar 21: In the fiercest gun battle of the year, five security force personnel and two militants were killed today in the forests of North Kashmir's Kupwara district taking the death toll in the encounter since last evening to 10.

*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

Three soldiers of the Army and two Special Operation Group (SOG) personnel were killed in the encounter with militants at Cheek Fatehkhana, Halmatpora area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district while two more militants were shot down today taking the toll to 10.

SSP Kupwara, Shamsheer Hussain said that five militants and five security force personnel were killed in the encounter since last evening.

The deceased have been identified as Havaladar Zorawar of 3 JAK Rifles, who was attached with 160 Territorial

Army (TA), Mohammad Ashraf Rather of 10 TA battalion, Naik Ranjeet Khalho of 5 Bihar while two SOG men SPO Mohammad



Troops rush to the site of encounter at Halmatpora, Kupwara on Wednesday. (Inset) two police martyrs. —Excelsior/Aabid Nabi

Yousuf Cheche of Kachama, Kupwara and Deepak Thusoo of Nagrota, Jammu.

Four security forces personnel including Sub Inspector (SI) Harvinder Singh, Javaid Ahmad of SOG, an Army soldier and a CRPF personnel were also injured in the gun battle.

Sources said that the five killed militants were Pakistanis and belonged to Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and

shot dead by the para commandos. They said that five AK-47, six Matrix sheets, GPS devices, and wireless sets and other

ammunition was recovered from their possession.

Sources said that the operation was launched yesterday after a group of women who had gone to the forests for collecting Morchella saw a group of militants praying in the forests. As the news about the group of militants spread in the village, security forces cordoned off forest area and operation against

conducted them.

Sources said that after the killing of 3 militants last evening there was lull in the firing and it was raining in the forest area and this afternoon, the troops thought that there is no

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Union Cabinet releases Rs 625.2 cr for health infra

Centre extends PMDP in health sector till 2020; other sectors to follow

Sanjeev Pargal
JAMMU, Mar 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi headed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government at the Centre intends to extend Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) for another five years. As a first step, the Union Cabinet has extended the PMDP in health sector till March 31, 2020 by providing budgetary support of Rs 625.20 crore as total Centrally-funded scheme.

The Union Cabinet that met today in New Delhi, chaired by Modi, also extended the National Health Mission up to March 31, 2020.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the Cabinet has also approved continuation of the Prime Minister's Development Package for Jammu & Kashmir 2015 by "Stepping up of support under creation of Infrastructure in District Hospitals, Sub-district Hospitals and Primary Health Centers over 5 years" - with effect from April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020 with a budgetary support of Rs. 625.20 crores as total Centrally-funded scheme.

"This will give a major boost to development of health infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir especially in the rural and far off areas," sources said.

Commenting on the major initiative taken by the Centre Government for Jammu and Kashmir, Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr Jitendra Singh expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for extending the PMDP for a period of five years in health sector.

"#Jammu #Kashmir package to continue. Thanks PM Sh @NarendraModi." Dr Jitendra Singh tweeted.

Modi had announced Rs 80,000 crores worth PMDP for Jammu and Kashmir on November 7, 2015, which has subsequently gone up to Rs one lakh crore due to cost escalation

of many projects in both Central and State sectors.

Sources said the Centre proposed to extend the PMDP in all sectors for five years in Jammu and Kashmir to help the State Government complete all projects and utilize the package completely.

"The PMDP would be extended sector-wise," sources said, adding that "in the initial phase, the package has been extended in the health sector and this will be followed by extension in other sectors".

According to sources, almost all the sectors have been beneficiaries of the PMDP.

The State Government had

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Demolition under compulsory acquisition without compensation illegal: HC

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Mar 21: High Court has observed that the forcible demolition under the garb of compulsory acquisition of land without providing adequate compensation is illegal exercise and directed the authorities to submit the case of adequate compensation for acquiring the land of petitioners for road widening before High Level Committee.

"In the present case the forcible demolition in the garb of compulsory acquisition without tendering payment of 80% of the compensation estimated by the Collector before taking the possession under Section 17 of the Act, is an illegal exercise of powers by the Collector, which vitiates the award", Court

of Justice M K Hanjura said. Court observed that undoubtedly widening of road (Haft Chinar Indira Gandhi Road, Srinagar) was an important project and citizens have to make sacrifices for the success of this project.

However, Court added, that it does not mean that in the process the authorities do not even adopt humane approach and deprive them of their shelter mercifully.

Quashing the award issued by the Collector, Circular Road Project, Srinagar where by compensation was granted to the petitioner for taking their land in lieu of widening of Indira Gandhi road Srinagar, Justice Hanjura directed the authorities to place the case of petitioners

before High Level Committee which is headed by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir for adequate fixation and compensation.

"The cumulative effect of all that has been said and done above, is that the writ petition on hand is disposed of, and impugned Award dated 10.12.2010 bearing endorsement no. C/CRP/632-40 issued by the Collector, Circular Road Project, Srinagar, is quashed", Justice Hanjura concluded.

Court after quashing the compensation award directed the concerned authorities to submit the case of the petitioners to the High Level Committee, headed by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, for fixation and payment of adequate

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Work yet to begin on two major components of DILRMP

Centre not satisfied with J&K's performance on land records modernization programme

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Mar 21: The Department of Land Resources of the Union Ministry of Rural Development has expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of Jammu and Kashmir on land records modernization programme as its two major components have not received the due attention of the concerned authorities so far. Moreover, financial progress is also not up to the mark as less than 60% of the released funds were utilized till ending last month.

The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP), which

was launched by the Union Government in August 2008, is aimed at developing an appropriate integrated land information management system with the liberty to the States to add State-specific needs as they may deem relevant and appropriate.

The actual implementation of DILRMP in Jammu and Kashmir was started during 2015-16 when J&K Lands Records Management Agency approved plan for computerization/digitization of land records in the State through outsourcing model.

There are three components of the DILRMP---computerization of lands records; computerization of registration and integration of land records with registration. "This is mainly because the Government is not sure as to when the computerization of land records in whole of Jammu and Kashmir will be completed especially when this exercise started in districts of Jammu and Srinagar in Phase-I has already missed the deadline", official sources said.

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It is pertinent to mention here that Phase-I was to be completed between November 2015

computerization of registration and integration of land records with registration. "This is mainly because the Government is not sure as to when the computerization of land records in whole of Jammu and Kashmir will be completed especially when this exercise started in districts of Jammu and Srinagar in Phase-I has already missed the deadline", official sources said.

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Less than 60% funds utilized since launch of scheme

163 jawans die in Siachen in 10 years

NEW DELHI, Mar 21:

The Army lost 163 personnel deployed at the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield, during the last 10 years, according to details provided by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

Six officers were among the army personnel who lost their lives while guarding the glacier which is at an altitude of above 20,000 ft.

Sitharaman gave year-wise details on the deaths in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

The Siachen Glacier in the Karakorum range is known as the highest militarised zone in

the world where the soldiers have to battle frostbite and high winds.

Avalanches and landslides are common at the glacier during the winter and temperatures can drop to as low as minus 60 degrees Celsius.

India and Pakistan started deploying troops at the strategically key glacier in 1984.

Sitharaman said nine Army men lost their lives in 2008 followed by 13 in 2009, 50 in 2010 and 24 in 2011. Twelve Army men had died in 2012, 11 in 2013 and eight in 2014.

The number of deaths in 2015 was 11 while it was 20 and five in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

"Indian Army soldiers deployed in extremely harsh terrain and weather conditions are

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Incomplete Takanwari bridge irks residents

Waseem Ahmad

SRINAGAR, Mar 21: It's more than six years since the construction work of a Foot-bridge at Takanwari area on the outskirts of Srinagar was started but authorities failed to complete it.

The work on the 127 meters long bridge over river Jhelum, which would connect Takanwari with Panzinar was started in 2011. The slow pace of work, however, has hampered the construction work.

The residents of Takanwari alleged that the work on the construction of the bridge is moving at snail's pace and in absence of the bridge they are facing immense hardships in crossing the river.

"Everyday people risk their lives to cross the river by overcrowded boats. If one avoids

crossing the river in boats, he has to cover a long distance and cross the river through Maloora-Tengpora Bridge. The new bridge will be a lifeline for us,"



A view of incomplete Takanwari Foot bridge on the outskirts of Srinagar. —Excelsior/Shakeel

Nazir Ahmad, a local resident from Takanwari said

Lateef Khan, a resident of Panzinar said that despite six years, the bridge is still incomplete. "We fail to understand what is forcing authorities to delay construction of the

bridge. People have to face immense hardships and authorities are not bothered about it," he said, adding, "The two pillars for the bridge

were built long ago and rest of the work is still pending." The construction of the bridge was initiated with an estimated cost of Rs 319.50 lakhs but as per Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC), the exe-

cution agency, only Rs 248 lakhs have been released and rest of the amount is pending. An official at JKPC said apart from paucity of funds, the construction work was stopped several times due to various reasons. "The project was first delayed due to 2014 devastating floods. After that the work was resumed but we had to procure the required raw material for the bridge from Ranchi, Jharkhand. That delayed the construction of the bridge," he said

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