

HC seeks action against District Judge

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Sept 20: The High Court today sought action against the Principal Sessions Judge Kulgam Kishore Kumar Bhagat for not concluding the trial of a murder case within the stipulated period and may face contempt.

Justice M K Hanjura while rejecting the bail application of accused, Sanjay Kumar Rai, involved in a murder case, sought action against the Principal Sessions Judge Kulgam for not concluding the trial of a murder case within the stipulated period and may face contempt.

Dilbag to continue as DGP: SC

NEW DELHI, Sept 20: The Supreme Court today said the newly appointed acting Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir shall continue in office till the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) takes a decision on the matter.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said acting DGP Dilbag Singh, who replaced S P Vaid, shall continue to operate. It asked the UPSC to take a decision within

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Interest on small savings hiked

NEW DELHI, Sept 20: After a gap of several years, the Government has raised interest on small savings, including NSC and PPF, by up to 0.4 per cent for the October-December quarter, in line with rising deposit rates in the banks.

The decision is aimed at encouraging small savings and promote welfare of senior citizens and girl child. The rates are revised quarterly.

The move, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said in a tweet is aimed at supporting small savers as the interest rates for small savings scheme have been increased by 0.3-0.4 per cent for the third quarter of this year.

Mehbooba hails talks

Excelsior Correspondent
JAMMU, Sept 20: Former Chief Minister and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti today welcomed the resumption of Foreign Ministers-level talks between India and Pakistan.

"Accepting peace overtures of Pakistan's PM Imran Khan by agreeing to a meeting between India & Pakistan's Foreign Ministers is a welcome step. Even though it has come towards the end of NDA's tenure, better late than never," Mehbooba tweeted.

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Imran writes to PM, calls for talks India, Pak FMs to meet on sidelines of UNGA

NEW DELHI, Sept 20: Foreign ministers of India and Pakistan will meet on sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, the Government announced today, the first such high-level engagement since suspension of dialogue between the two nations after the Pathankot air base terror attack in 2016.

Announcing the meeting between External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj with her Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi, MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar, however, made it clear it is not a resumption of the Indo-Pak dialogue and India agreed to the meeting following a request from Pakistan.

He also insisted the decision doesn't change the country's position on cross-border terrorism.

During the meeting, likely to take place next week, India is expected to strongly raise the issue of terrorism emanating

from the Pakistani soil.

The last meeting between the

two Foreign Ministers was held during Swaraj's visit to Islamabad in December 2015 to attend the Heart of Asia Summit, where she had met the then Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz.

After the meeting, the two sides had announced resumption of Indo-Pak dialogue under the comprehensive bilateral format, but the initiative did not take off after Pakistan-based terror groups attacked the Pathankot air base.

Kumar said Swaraj will also attend the SAARC foreign ministers' meeting on the sidelines of the UNGA.

India has been maintaining that there cannot be any comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan till it stops cross-border terrorism.

India agreed to Swaraj-Qureshi meeting following a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan seeking a Ministerial

meeting and dialogue. This does not indicate any change in policy as far as our stand on terrorism and cross-border terrorism is concerned," the MEA spokesperson said at a media briefing.

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Inquiry ordered into works without tenders

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Sept 20: Government has ordered inquiry into the works that were executed by Commissioner Relief and Rehabilitation (M) in various migrant camps across the State without inviting tenders.

The Department of Disaster Management Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction while ordering inquiry into works without tenders in migrant camps for last one year appointed two officers as inquiry officers and they have been asked to submit the report within 15 days.

The Government order (No. 54-DMRRR of 2018 dated 18-09-2018) read: "Sanction is hereby accorded to the appointment of following officers Department of Disaster Management Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction as inquiry officers to inquire into the matter as to how works have been executed without tenders in migrant camps."

The officers who have been appointed as inquiry officers are: Mohammad Akbar Wani, Special Secretary to

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Govt fails to appoint new State level Nodal Officer

Excelsior Correspondent
JAMMU, Sept 20: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh today reviewed situation along the International Border (IB) in Jammu sector in the aftermath of brutal killing of a Border Security Force (BSF) soldier, Narendra Kumar of Sonapat, Haryana, the other day and gave BSF a free hand to deal with the situation.

Sources told the Excelsior that Rajnath met Director General of BSF KK Sharma and other senior officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs to discuss the situation after the brutal killing of Narendra Kumar by the Pakistani troops.

Rajnath told the BSF to take strongest possible action against the Pakistani troops.

He directed top officials of the BSF that the strongest possible action should be taken

against the Pakistani troops involved in Tuesday's incident. The BSF jawan's throat was slit and his body bore multiple bullet injuries. The missing trooper was found killed by Pakistani troops in Ramgarh sector of Samba district, in a first-of-its-kind barbaric act against Indian forces along the International Border.

Sources said the BSF could take some "pro-active" action against the Pakistan Rangers to "avenge" the mutilation of the jawan's body.

Sources said Rajnath Singh has been given detailed briefing on the situation prevailing along the International Border after the killing of jawan by the BSF chief. The situation was tense. Even people living along the International Border were worried that Pakistan could violate ceasefire and target innocent civilians once again.

Late tonight, Pakistani Rangers fired few shots in Ramgarh. The BSF retaliated. Exchange of firing lasted few minutes. No loss of life was reported on the Indian side.

The BSF has, meanwhile, registered a strong protest with

its Pakistani counterpart over the killing and slitting of throat of the jawan.

The BSF has told the Pakistani Rangers that the act was "unsoldierly", sources said.

The sources said the Pakistani side, which spoke to the Border Security Force officials in the noon over phone, "denied any hand" in the killing of Narendra on September 18.

The Indian side termed the act as "unsoldierly".

Pakistan was informed that their troops "shot and killed" the BSF trooper.

They added that on getting this response, the BSF told the other side that any future misadventure on the India-Pakistan border will be the responsibility of the Pakistani Rangers.

"A brief phone call took place between the two sides this noon. When it was brought to the notice of Pakistan that they had killed the jawan by resorting to unprovoked fire, they flatly refused any hand of their troops in the incident," sources said.

This was the second round of protest that the BSF registered

against the Pakistani troops involved in Tuesday's incident. The BSF jawan's throat was slit and his body bore multiple bullet injuries. The missing trooper was found killed by Pakistani troops in Ramgarh sector of Samba district, in a first-of-its-kind barbaric act against Indian forces along the International Border.

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A Gujar heading towards market to sell milk products on the outskirts of Jammu on Thursday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

Security forces get free hand as tension mounts

Rajnath directs BSF to take strong action against Pak

BSF again lodges protest, Pak in denial mode

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Sept 20: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh today reviewed situation along the International Border (IB) in Jammu sector in the aftermath of brutal killing of a Border Security Force (BSF) soldier, Narendra Kumar of Sonapat, Haryana, the other day and gave BSF a free hand to deal with the situation.

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Dr Jitendra hits out at NC for double standards on elections

Excelsior Correspondent
NEW DELHI, Sept 20: Making a scathing attack on political parties which have decided to boycott the local body elections in Jammu & Kashmir, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said here today that there could not have been a more blatant exposure of the duplicity of these Kashmir-centric political parties than the fact that National Conference (NC) and others are vociferously opposed to the holding of local body and Panchayat elections in the State but they are equally vociferously demanding immediate dissolution of State

Assembly and holding of Assembly elections at the earliest.

Speaking to media-persons on the sidelines of a programme for young Start-Ups, Dr Jitendra Singh recalled that soon after the BJP withdrew support from the coalition Government on 19th of June this year, the National Conference vice president and his team launched a sustained campaign on Twitter as well as other media outlets, demanding immediate dissolution of State Assembly and holding of mid-term Assembly election at the earliest.

At that time, he said, not even once did they express any concern related to 35-A or the situation not being conducive for the holding of an election. Ironically, however, within days, when the proposal to hold local body and Panchayat elections

was announced, the same leaders declared their decision to boycott the election for reasons related to 35-A etc, he quipped.

Dr Jitendra Singh challenged the leadership of these parties to clarify whether they are still in favour of dissolution of State Assembly and immediate Assembly election or will they now revise their stand in the wake of the position they have taken and the reasons they have cited to boycott the local body and Panchayat elections.

Taking a dig, Dr Jitendra Singh said, it is now obvious that these political parties are ready for Assembly election in a bid to grab Ministerial berths if possible, but they are not ready for Panchayat election which will result in handing over power to the popularly elected Panches and Sarpanches.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Construction of bunkers yet to begin in 5 border distts, only 100 taken up in 3 others

Mohinder Verma
JAMMU, Sept 20: Despite repeated directions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, construction of individual and community bunkers for the people living along International Border and Line of Control with Pakistan has yet not begun in five border districts of Jammu and Kashmir and work on only 100 bunkers has been taken up in rest of the three districts till date.

Moreover, the Government has failed to appoint new State level Nodal Officer, who is supposed to ensure increased focus

on implementation of various welfare programmes aimed at the welfare of the border residents and monitor construction of bunkers in eight border districts of the State.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that ever since the sanctioning of 13029 individual and 1431 community type bunkers for eight border districts of the State at the cost of Rs 415 crore, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs is laying stress on pacing up of construction work

so that safety and security of the border residents is ensured as early as possible.

Actually the Union Ministry had started sounding J&K authorities about this mega project much before according formal sanction and announcement of funds and objective behind this step was to ensure that J&K remains in the state of readiness to execute the task, sources further said.

"During the past several months the Department of

J&K Affairs in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has even dashed numerous letters to the Home Department of the State asking for expediting the work and ensuring close monitoring of the construction activities by constituting committees of the officers at different level", they further said.

Though in response to the communications of the Union Ministry the State Government has constituted committees at different level yet work has started only in the districts of Jammu, Samba and Kathua while as construction work has

not started in the districts of Jammu and Poonch districts, sources said. Of 24 candidates of Jammu, 19 were male and five females while in Poonch district, 18 contestants were male and six females.

Four candidates of national parties and one from regional party besides 43 Independents have so far joined the election process for the Urban Local Bodies.

However, sources said, no nominations have so far been received in Kashmir and Ladakh region. Nomination process has already started for Leh and Kargil districts of Ladakh region and Srinagar, Kupwara, Bandipora, Baramulla, Budgam, Kulgam and Anantnag districts

have filed nomination papers in Jammu and Poonch districts, sources said. Of 24 candidates of Jammu, 19 were male and five females while in Poonch district, 18 contestants were male and six