

Firing, shelling unabated, civil areas targeted Army to respond to each & every act of Pak: GOC

***Cross-LoC trade/travel suspended**

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Aug 18: There was no let up in heavy firing and shelling by the Pakistan Army, which continued for fifth consecutive day today with some of the shells landing at Dharana and Malikpur, just 200 meters short of Mendhar town in Poonch district aggravating the already flared-up panic among the people of forward areas. The firing continued during the day today and resumed in the night.

The ceasefire violations by the Pakistan Army have led to suspension of cross-LoC travel and trade.

"There will be no cross-LoC travel and trade from the week beginning tomorrow. However, we will make efforts to exchange stranded civilians on both sides," official sources said.

Cross-LoC travel/trade on Poonch-Rawalakote route via Chakan-Da-Bagh was suspended by Pakistan on August 5 for two weeks citing Eid and Independence Day celebrations. It was due to resume tomorrow

but, sources said, under the present circumstances when Pakistan was resorting to heavy firing and shelling, there would be no cross-LoC trade/travel tomorrow and onwards for at least for one week or even more days.

However, they said, authorities would try to clear the civilians of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), who have been stranded here for past quite sometime. Similarly, the civilians of this side could also be cleared by the PoK administration. A high level 43 members business delegation of Jammu and Kashmir, which was scheduled to leave for PoK on August

26 is also under clout though it has not been cancelled so far, sources said.

"The ceasefire violations from Pakistan side continued for ninth consecutive day today in Mendhar, Hamirpur (Contd on page 9 Col 1)



An Army soldier maintains a high alert at an extreme forward post on LoC at Mendhar on Sunday night. More pics on page 9.

Ministers return after 2 meetings All party delegation heads for Kishtwar today

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 18: In a bid to break standoff between the two communities in Kishtwar, the Government is sending a high level all party delegation for two days to Kishtwar town tomorrow, which reeled under curfew for 10th day today even as four Ministers completed their talks separately with minorities and majority community after their two days stay in the town.

The all party delegation, which will be headed by Planning and Development Minister Ajay Sadhotra and Tourism Minister GA Mir and comprising about 15 other leaders of major political parties, would try to break ice by bringing both the communities on one platform, which the delegation of four Ministers was unable to do despite their two days stay in the town, which had witnessed large-scale vandalism by the miscreants of majority community on August 9 in which huge property including shops of other business establishments of the minorities were burnt, looted and damaged.

Authorities didn't relax curfew in Kishtwar town today in

Educational institutions to re-open today
Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 18: After remaining closed for a week due to curfew restrictions following Kishtwar violence, all educational institutions in Jammu division will reopen on Monday.

A formal order in this regard was issued this evening by the Divisional Administration thus putting at rest all speculations and rumours over re-opening of the educational institutions.

Earlier in the day, rumours were making the round that the call for Jammu bandh against Kishtwar violence had been extended by some organizations. However, there was no such call for bandh.

view of the presence of holy "Chhari Mubarak" and devotees of Machail Mata Ji. The "Chhari Mubarak" will leave Kishtwar tomorrow morning for Gulabgarh. Curfew was relaxed in Kishtwar town and outskirts yesterday for one and a half hours after dividing the town in two parts. The relaxation period had passed off peacefully.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Shantmanu told the Excelsior that a 15 to 17 members delegation of all political parties would leave for Kishtwar tomorrow for talks with the two communities and resolve their issues.

He said authorities decided against giving any relaxation in curfew in Kishtwar today in view of "Chhari Mubarak" of Machail Mata ji shrine passing from the town today.

Official sources said the

State Government has decided to send an all party delegation to Kishtwar with a view that it would be able to bring members of both communities on one platform for negotiations to resolve their issues and end the tension, which has led to imposition of indefinite curfew in the town on August 9 on the occasion of Eid festival.

The all party delegation will be led by Planning and Development Minister Ajay Sadhotra and Tourism Minister GA Mir and comprise Devender Singh Rana and Surjit Singh Slathia (National Conference), Janak Raj Gupta and Ravinder Sharma (Congress), Dr Nirmal Singh and Ashok Khajuria (BJP), Ved Mahajan (PDP), Balwant Singh Mankotia (NPP), Sheikh Abdul Rehman (Samajwadi Party), Tulsu Dass Langher (BSP) and Thakur Randeep Singh (NCP) among

(Contd on page 9 Col 4)

Chhari Mubarak leaves for Chandanwari

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, Aug 18: 'Chhari Mubarak', the Holy Silver Mace of Lord Shiva left for Chandanwari from base camp Pahalgam this afternoon, where puja was held on the occasion of 'Dwadashi' on the bank of the river Lidder.

(Contd on page 9 Col 1)

Rajnath visiting Jammu on Aug 31

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 18: BJP president, Rajnath Singh is visiting Jammu on August 31.

According to Party sources, Mr Singh will address a Party's one day convention here and later return to Union Capital in the evening.

(Contd on page 9 Col 7)

Relief no substitute to punishment: CM

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today said compensation revised by the State Government to victims of violence, including rape and acid attacks, were not a substitute for punishment to perpetrators.

(Contd on page 9 Col 4)

Fake Society unearthed, several duped

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 18: Police today unearthed a fake Housing and Cooperative Society, which had duped the people of Ladakh to the tune of over Rs 50 lakhs by selling them Government land at Jagti in Nagrota.

(Contd on page 9 Col 4)

Massive operation in Handwara forests Army foils major intrusion bid in Keran

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Aug 18: Army today foiled a major infiltration bid by militants in Keran sector on the Line of Control (LoC) in the North Kashmir district of Kupwara.

An Army officer said that troops along the LoC near Bimla Post in Keran sector observed movement of a group of 7-8 militants, who were trying to infiltrate into Kashmir.

"We challenged them and they opened fire. Our troops fired at them and one of them was injured. Our troops saw him being dragged by his colleagues towards the other side of the LoC", the Army officer added.

A Defence spokesman said here that based on specific intelligence on likelihood of infiltration from Keran sector, the alert troops of the Frontline Vajr Division of North Kashmir, detected movement of a group

"On being challenged the terrorists opened indiscriminate fire, which was retaliated heavily by our forces. The exchange of fire continued till early morning. Presently the search operations are on in the area", the spokesman added.

The defence spokesman said

"This is the second infiltration attempt in past one week from the same area by the terrorists in which two terrorists were eliminated which is indicative of the desperation of various terrorists tanzems to infiltrate in the Valley."

In the meantime, 6 Rashtriya Rifles, 21 RR of Army and SOG Handwara launched a massive search operation early today in the Mooldari forests in Handwara area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district after two militants were spotted in the forests.

Sources said that they are said to part of the group of Lashkar-e-Toiba militants who

(Contd on page 9 Col 7)

Building code implementation extremely low

Amend Development Control Regulations, Municipal Bye-Laws: NDMA to J&K Govt

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Aug 18: Though Jammu and Kashmir is the most urbanized State among the hilly States of the country and vulnerable to multiple hazard risks yet the building code implementation is extremely low and the prevail-

ing situation demands amendments in the Development Control Regulations and Municipal Bye-Laws in order to incorporate provisions for hazard risk mitigation.

This has been stated in the report of the National Disaster Management Authority, which was recently submitted to the

State Government. "The urban population of J&K as per Census 2011 is indicative of the growing urbanization and the percentage share of total urban population by residence has increased from 24.81% in 2001 to 27.21% in 2011 Census", the report said, adding "this increase in urban population puts increased pressure on urban services, social infrastructure and housing sector in particular".

"The Municipal bodies are challenged by this unprecedented growth and this is compounded further with acute shortage of capacity especially disaster risk management", the report further said, adding "since the J&K is vulnerable to multiple hazard risks, the people are exposed to threats from earthquake because of poor seismic performance of the housing stock (residential, commercial, institutional and life-line buildings)".

The NDMA further said, "the reconnaissance visit following the May 1 earthquake reaffirms that earthquake-resistant design

codes and building construction code of practice are generally not followed except in a negligible fraction of building stock", adding "the existing situation of building code implementation is extremely low and thus has created an alarming situation which cannot be ignored".

The NDMA has suggested that the future development schemes and programmes of the Government implemented through State Departments or private parties should adopt and actively implement the Bureau of Indian Standards Code of Practice for construction and earthquake safety.

"There is an urgent need to translate knowledge into practical implementation through making additional provisions in development control regulations and structural safety in building regulations/bye-laws", the report said, adding "provisions can be made for defining mitigation measures for risks from natural hazards as part of building bye-laws".

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