

## BJP, NPP leaders leave delegation Day curfew lifted, peace march taken out

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Aug 21: After 13 days, day curfew was lifted and peace march was taken out by both the communities in Kishtwar town as an all party delegation conceded most of the genuine demands put forth by the two sides during their three days stay in the town, which was hit by massive violence on August 9 on the occasion of Eid festival, leading to large scale damage to the property.

Meanwhile, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command Lt Gen Sanjiv Chachra today visited Kishtwar and assured the civil administration of full support for handling the security situation.

The BJP and its allied organisations, however, didn't join the peace march in protest against alleged statement of DIG Doda-Ramban range Ashkoor Wani in a newspaper yesterday in which he had described BJP leader Sunil Sharma's PSO Virender Kumar as mastermind of Kishtwar violence.

Two BJP members in the delegation-Dr Nirmal Singh and Ashok Khajuria left Kishtwar town this morning and returned to Jammu without attending the joint meeting of the two communities.

However, Sanatan Dharam Sabha convenor, Hans Raj Bhutyal told the Excelsior that the DIG Doda and DC Doda Baseer Ahmad Khan had given them a written statement that the DIG hadn't given any statement to the press and that Virender Kumar has been detained only for questioning in connection with rioting.

Mr Bhutyal said the all party delegation headed by Medical Education Minister Taj Mohiud-Din also assured them that the statement was handiwork of some anti-national elements, who didn't want restoration of peace in Kishtwar.

"We want peace...lifting of curfew...restoration of normalcy. There will be no violence from our side. It is now the job of all party delegation to fulfill the assurances given to us so

that peace lasts for ever in Kishtwar," he added.

Earlier in the day, the joint meeting of minorities and majority community with the all party delegation that had been scheduled for 10 am today, was delayed by an hour as the BJP protested against the statement of the DIG that Sunil Sharma's PSO was mastermind of violence.

Despite repeated denials in the meeting by the DIG, the BJP leaders in the delegation (Dr Nirmal Singh and Ashok Khajuria) refused to budge and insisted on removal of the DIG on the ground that even if he hadn't given the statement, this reflected his mindset. "The DIG should be removed. He is biased against the minorities. His intentions are doubtful," the BJP leaders insisted and left the delegation without attending the joint meeting for Jammu.

The BJP leaders would reveal their future strategy at a press conference here tomorrow morning.

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## Govt duty bound to ensure safety of its citizens: J&K to SC Adequate measures put in place to control situation after the incident

Neeraj Rohmetra

JAMMU, Aug 21: The State Government had taken all measures at its command to prevent and control the situation in Jammu Division that had arisen in the wake of communal clashes in Kishtwar district and immediate steps were also initiated to restore confidence among the different communities.

This has been stated by the Chief Secretary, Iqbal Khan in an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court Bench headed by Chief Justice P Sahasivam.

The State Government, in its affidavit has stated that a Commission of Inquiry under the J&K Commission of Inquiry Act, 1962, to be headed by the retired judge of the High Court would soon be set up and the formal orders are expected to be issued shortly after following the due procedure.

"The State Government is duty bound to ensure the safety of its citizens and all those, who visit the State and safeguard their property", says the affidavit which is in possession of Excelsior.

Dwelling on the steps initiated by the State Government for maintenance of law and order in the affected areas, particularly in Kishtwar town, the Chief Secretary has said, "immediately after the incident of clashes, curfew was imposed in the district and Army was called out to assist the civil administration to control law and order situation", adding, "an additional 10 companies and two platoons of police and Central Armed Police (CAP) were deployed in the district for maintaining law and order. In addition, five Deputy Superintendents of Police have been deployed for special duties to assist the District Police to function as Sectoral Officers for law and Order duties".

On status of investigation into the incident, the affidavit says, "a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted, which is headed by a Superintendent of Police and the investigation is being carried out on war-footing basis", adding, "so far 15 persons, involved in riots have been arrested. One person has been detained under

the Public Safety Act, 1978. Four looted weapons have been recovered today and five persons have been arrested taking total number of arrests to 15".

The document states that in the incidents of violence, two persons lost their lives in Kishtwar and one person at Gulabgarh, Atholi, 43 persons, including two police officers, were injured. "Incidents of arson also occurred at Kishtwar and Atholi, Paddar and 15 cases were registered, both at police station Kishtwar (10 cases) and Atholi, Paddar (5 cases), for the investigation".

Referring to the ongoing Machail Yatra, the affidavit says, "since August 1, this year, 21,517 yatris have per-

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## Commission issues notice to Principal Secy PDD not amenable to CERC jurisdiction, claims J&K Govt

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Aug 21: In a step, which could create major embarrassment for State Government, the Power Development Department (PDD) has conveyed to the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) that J&K PDD is not amenable to the jurisdiction of Commission. This stand has been taken by the Principal Secretary of the Department despite being aware of the fact that J&K is one of the constituents of Northern Grid whose disputes can be adjudicated only at the CERC.

The response was filed by the Power Development Department in a petition before the Central Electricity

Regulatory Commission regarding default on the part of the PDD in opening a Letter of Credit in accordance with CERC (Unscheduled Interchange Charges and Related Matters) Regulations.

As per Clause (4) of the Regulation 10 of Unscheduled Interchange Charges and Related Matters, Regulations, 2009 of CERC, all the regional entities, which had any time during the previous financial year failed to make payment of UI charges, are required to open a Letter of Credit equal to 110% of its average payable weekly UI liability in the previous financial year.

It is pertinent to mention here that UI is a pool account and the states over-drawing from the grid in deviation of

their schedule are required to pay the prescribed UI rates to the UI pool account and the states under-drawing from the grid or the generators, which have been injecting into the grid, shall get payment from the UI pool account at the prescribed rate.

The Power Development Department of J&K was required to open Letter of Credit by May 17, 2010. However, the PDD authorities remained in oblivion for quite long time and failed to ensure compliance, official sources told EXCELSIOR. This prompted the CERC to issue notice on December 1, 2011 asking the J&K PDD to show cause as to why appropriate actions under Section 142 of the Electricity Act, 2003 should

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## Amarnath pilgrimage concludes, 3.54 lakh perform darshan

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, Aug 21: With the darshan of Chhari Mubarak (holy mace) in cave shrine, on the occasion of Shrawan Purnima, the 55 day long annual pilgrimage of Swami Amarnath Ji, which started on June 28, concluded today.

The holy mace reached the cave shrine amid the chanting of Vedic hymns and Mantras from Panchtarni the last halatage point on traditional Chandanwari track early this morning. The Chhari Mubarak led by Mahant Deependera Giri and accompanied by a large number of Sadhus and devotees performed pooja-arohana in the cave shrine in a traditional way.

The holy mace later returned to Panchtarni in the evening where from it will reach Pahalgam tomorrow. After a night halt at Pahalgam and performance of religious rituals there, the holy mace will return to Dashnami Akhara temple in Srinagar on August 23.

Meanwhile, a last batch of 185 pilgrims performed darshan in the cave shrine today. With this, a total number of 3.54 lakh pilgrims performed darshan during the 55 day long yatra in the

holy cave situated at an altitude of 3880 metres in South Kashmir district of Anantnag this year from both Pahalgam and Baltal tracks. This figure was 2.81 lakh less than the number of pilgrims who visited the holy cave last year. During the last year, a total number of 6.35 lakh pilgrims performed darshan in cave shrine while 6.21 lakh pilgrims visited the holy cave during 2011.

However Chief Executive Officer, Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) Naveen K Choudhary said that several influencing factors including Uttarakhand disaster and statements regarding the perceived threats of terror attacks and the emerging law and order situation were the causes for decline in the number of yatris this year.

He said due to the Uttarakhand disaster the tourist and pilgrims traffic to the hilly States witnessed a sharp decline this year. The pilgrimage to holy shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi has also been affected due to this tragedy where the number of yatris was about seven lakh less than in the corresponding period last year, he added.

It may be recalled that since

the SASB took the control of Swami Amarnath Shrine in 2001 the number of pilgrims who visited the holy cave were 1.91 lakh during that year, followed by 1.10 lakh in 2002, 1.70 lakh in 2003, 4.0 lakh in 2004, 3.88 lakh in 2005, 3.47 lakh in 2006, 2.96 lakh in 2007, 5.33 lakh in 2008, 3.81 lakh in 2009, 4.55 lakh in 2010, 6.21 in 2011, 6.35 in 2012 and 3.54 during this year.

This is the lowest number of pilgrims visiting the holy cave during last five years. The Governor, N. N. Vohra, who is Chairman of the SASB, could not reach the holy cave where he was going this morning along with Navin K. Choudhary, Chief Executive Officer of the Board due to rain and poor visibility.

Expressing satisfaction over the smooth conduct of this year's Yatra, the Governor thanked the State Government, Army, CRPF, BSF, ITBP, State Police, BSNL, the 5 Banks involved with the registration of pilgrims and all other concerned organizations, particularly the Indian Meteorological Department, and the people of the State, for their valuable contribution to the organization of the Yatra. He

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## Chinese troops intrude in AP, leave after 4 days

ITANAGAR/NEW DELHI, Aug 21:

In yet another face-off with Indian Army similar to the one in Ladakh, Chinese troops reportedly intruded more than 20 kms into Indian territory last week in Chaglagam area of Arunachal Pradesh and stayed there for about four days.

A contingent of People's Liberation Army reportedly intruded into the Indian territory on August 11 and stayed put there, Defence sources said in Delhi today.

The intrusion was detected on August 13 and the Indian troops asked them to go back, the sources said.

Both sides showed banners to each other to leave the area, the sources said.

The Chinese soldiers left on August 15, they said. Official sources in Itanagar said the Chinese troops went back after a 15-minute Border Personnel Meeting.

"They had come and have gone. The Indian troops are now

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## India non-committal on PM-Sharif meeting

NEW DELHI, Aug 21:

As tensions along the LoC continued, India today remained non-committal on a possibility of a meeting between Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif in New York next month.

Asserting that for a dialogue to take place there needs to be a conducive atmosphere, spokesperson in the External Affairs Ministry said, "And certainly an environment in which terrorism or violence is perpetrated against India is not the right type of environment for this. As far as any specific meeting that you are talking about, I think I had mentioned it last time that the dates that were being indicated were in the last week of September ... We look and examine every situation as it evolves."

He also stressed that India expects Pakistan to abide by its publicly stated commitment not to allow its territory or territories under its control for violence or terrorism against India.

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## Heavy Pak firing in Hamirpur

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 21: After a brief lull of 24 hours, Pakistan Army tonight resumed heavy firing and shelling in Hamirpur sector of Poonch district.

PRO (Defence) Col RK Palta said Pakistan Army violated ceasefire in Hamirpur sector at 9.30 pm tonight by resorting to firing with automatic weapons and small arms. They also fired mortar shells.

The firing was going on when the reports last came in, Col Palta said, adding there were no casualties or damage on the Indian side.

The Indian troops gave an effective retaliation.

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## Rupee tumbles to record low

MUMBAI, Aug 21:

The rupee today continued its free fall, plunging to 64.54 against the dollar for the first time ever before recovering some ground to end at 64.11, still down a staggering 86 paise to a fresh closing low.

The currency's slide continued amid steps by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) yesterday to increase availability of cash in the banking system. Heavy dollar demand from importers, continued capital outflows and expectations the US Federal Reserve would start withdrawing its bond-buying programme next month also weighed on the currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 63.45 a dollar from the previous close of 63.25 and touched the day's high of 63.10 on an initial rally in local stocks. It later fell sharply to a lifetime intra-day low of 64.5450 before

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