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3 Pak Army jawans killed, 5 injured; 5 posts destroyed

(Pakistan occupied Kashmir) opposite Poonch sector this morning. Three other Pakistan Army personnel were injured.

The Indian Army in Kargil sector killed a Captain of Pakistan Army yesterday in retaliatory firing.

The Indian retaliation was necessitated as Pakistan Army had been targeting civilian areas with 82mm mortar shelling, in which a teen-aged girl and a woman were injured today. Several other civilians had narrow escape as shells landed close to their houses sending a wave of panic among them.

There were no casualties of Indian Army in the firing, sources said.

After suffering three fatalities, Pakistan Army late this evening resorted to heavy firing and shelling at Balnoi at 7.20 pm, Banwat in Poonch at 6.30 pm and Mendhar at 6.45 pm.

Pakistan Army was using medium to heavy fire arms apart from mortar shells, targeting forward Indian Army pickets and civilian areas, they added.

Firing by the Pakistani troops also resumed at Balakote and Hamirpur sectors at 5 pm with at least 15 forward areas being targeted. Firing at all the places continued till late this evening.

Indian troops were giving very effective retaliation at all the places, they said.

Sources said Pakistan started firing in Shahpur Kerni sub sector of Poonch at 12.05 pm today. They fired with heavy caliber weapons and used 82mm mortar shells to target forward posts of Army and forward villagers.

Splinters of mortar shells, fired by Pakistan, fell at village Kerni and Qasba, about 25 kilometers from Poonch town causing injuries to two civilians in their houses. Several splinters fell in the civilian areas causing damage to houses, cowsheds etc.

Army, police and local people evacuated the injured civilians, who were admitted in the Military Hospital, Poonch in serious condition. They have been identified as Farzana Kousar, 12, daughter of Khadim Hussain R/o Kerni and Noor Jan, 40, wife of Mohammad Din, a resident of village Qasba.

Several local people in Shahpur Kerni had narrow escape in shelling by the Pakistan Army, sources said.

Pakistani troops fired nearly 40 to 50 mortar shells in Shahpur Kerni sector of Poonch, a number of which landed in the civilian areas.

Sources said Farzana Kousar was playing in the premises of her house when she was injured after being hit by splinters of a mortar shell while Noor Jan was grazing cattle when a mortar shell exploded in front of her.

The Indian troops retaliated effectively to silence the Pakistani guns at all the places. The firing stopped late tonight but troops were on high alert as it could resume anytime. The firing spread panic among the people living in forward areas especially after splinters of the shells started landing close to houses of the people and the fields.

31 looted guns still untraced, Intl agencies sound alert

the majority community had looted a gun shop in the heart of Kishtwar town and decamped with 41 weapons apart from some ammunition.

Sources said police have so far detained 16 persons for rioting, who were in addition to six persons arrested for looting of the weapons. Of 16 persons, some of them could be let off after questioning. Separatist leader Moulvi Qayoom Mattu, who was reportedly responsible for instigating the mob to indulge in rioting and foment communal trouble, has been detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA) on a warrant issued by Deputy Commissioner Baseer Khan on the basis of dossier prepared by the district police.

The district administration again relaxed day curfew in Kishtwar town and outskirts for second day today. Initially, curfew was relaxed from 8 am to 2 pm and the relaxation period was subsequently extended up to 7 pm. However, night curfew remained in force as a precautionary measure.

"Army has been kept stand-by. However, it hasn't been deployed in the town. Police and para-military personnel remained deployed in strength in the town to maintain law and order," sources said.

Shops of the minority community remained shut during curfew relaxation.

"There is nothing left for us to open. Our shops had been burnt,

Civil and police officers visited forward villages at Shahpur Kerni and urged the people to stay put in their villages. They assured full protection to them. The people held a protest demonstration against Pakistan Army for targeting the civil population.

In previous spells of firing by the Pakistan Army in Mendhar and Balakote sectors, five civilians have been injured during past over one week. Pakistan had been targeting the civil population to force their migration as this would put pressure on Army to stop retaliation. However, the people in the forward areas have already urged the Army to give effective response to Pakistan and don't worry about them. The civilians have expressed their full support to the Indian Army.

Firing from Pakistani side was also reported during the day at Deri Dabasi, Nanda, Peeli and Pona pickets in Mendhar, sources said.

Pakistani soldiers of 655 Mujahideen and 39 Baloch resorted to firing at Rosni Nallah, Gun Hill, Chajaman and 473 Post at Balnoi sector in Mankote which was followed by another violation at Sona Gali, Lowara Gali, Dhyan, Atma Post and surrounding areas of sector Mankote.

Pakistani troops fired again at Kirni-1 and Kirni-2 posts after a lull at 8.45 pm tonight. Indian troops retaliated and the exchange of firing continued till late in the night.

The Pakistani troops have been daily resorting to ceasefire violations since August 6 when its special forces killed five Indian soldiers and injured another in Sarla battalion area in Poonch.

Pakistan Army had last night committed two violations of the ceasefire by firing mortar shells at LoC posts in Hamirpur and Mendhar sectors of Poonch district, drawing prompt and effective retaliation from Indian troops, sources said.

Firing on several Indian posts in Hamirpur sector along the LoC started at 9 pm last night and continued till 10.30 pm.

Troops from across the LoC opened fire with automatic weapons and medium mortar shells, sources said, adding that "our troops retaliated effectively and the exchanges continued for about one and a half hours".

Pakistan troops also fired at Indian posts in the Mendhar sector of Poonch at around 10.30 pm. The firing there continued till 11 pm.

Indian troops responded effectively without any casualties in either of the incidents of firing in Poonch last night.

"The 2003 Indo-Pak ceasefire has become meaningless. There is daily firing these days as was witnessed before 2003," sources said.

The 225-km long LoC in the Poonch-Rajouri sector has been witness to daily violations of the ceasefire since August 7. There have been 33 ceasefire violations by Pakistan in the past fortnight.

Pakistan Army has violated ceasefire over 80 times this year from January 1.

Govt bows to Oppn demands, PM may speak on coal issue today

clarifications were given. (However) it remained inconclusive. We are ready to conclude that discussion and if necessary Prime Minister may also intervene," he said.

Dharmendra Pradhan (BJP) also raised the issue during Zero Hour demanding that the Prime Minister come to the House and speak. "The Prime Minister will have to break his silence," he said, adding that the opposition wanted to "break the slumber of the Government".

Jaitley again said during Zero Hour that a discussion on the missing files issue could start as the Prime Minister was available after the Lok Sabha adjourned for the day.

In Lok Sabha, CPI leader Gurudas Dasgupta made the same demand and alleged that the files contained information on "important persons" and they went missing in an attempt "to cover up the whole operation and ensure that those guilty are not punished. It is a serious offence."

Terming the coalgate issue as

HC, PSC remain at loggerheads over appointment of Court Managers

Judges constituted by the Chief Justice as such the stand is reiterated and the directions passed by the committee will have to be followed in letter and spirit".

"The Law Department, which has been landed in the peculiar situation, is planning to convene a meeting of the PSC, representative of the High Court and Advocate General in order to break the ice between judiciary and Commission so that recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission could be implemented", sources said.

In the meanwhile, the Law Department, keeping in view the prevailing situation, has extended the validity of the selection list of Court Managers by six months beyond August 2013. "The selection list was issued in the month of August last year and its validity was till current month. In order to prevent it being turning in-valid the Law Department has issued a notification extending the validity of the list by six months", sources added.

The creation of 24 posts of Court Managers in J&K Judiciary was recommended by the 13th Finance Commission with a view to enhance the efficiency of court management and resultant improvement in case disposal. The recommendation was made on the ground that Court Managers, with MBA degrees, would support the Judges to perform administrative duties thereby enabling the Judges to devote more time to their judicial functions.

They have also been given the responsibility to ensure that the case management systems address the legitimate needs of each individual litigant in terms of quality, efficiency and timeliness, costs to litigants and to the State. As far as quality management is concerned, the Court Managers have to ensure that the courts meet quality of adjudication standards established by the High Court.

Talking about the recent communal clashes in Kashmir's Kishtwar, he said it would be clear as to who all were behind the violence when a probe by a retired judge into the matter was completed.

Police and security forces fired tear smoke shells and charged batons on the protesters.

Govt nod to scrap collegium system

judges of the Supreme Court, the Law Minister, two eminent persons as members and Secretary (Justice) in the Law Ministry as Member Secretary.

The Law Ministry has been pushing the proposal, which will require a Constitutional amendment, but some sections in the Government as well as judiciary had reservations over its certain provisions.

An earlier proposal circulated in April had incorporated the view that the Leader of the Opposition should be made a member of the JAC.

According to the fresh note, the Leader of the Opposition will not be part of the proposed body.

However, the Leader of the Opposition of either House of Parliament will be part of a committee to be set up to nominate two eminent persons to the JAC.

The committee will also have the CJI and the Prime Minister as other members.

A constitutional amendment bill will be moved in Parliament next week, sources said.

The move to set up JAC would entail amendments to Articles 124, 217, 222 and 231 of the Constitution and insertion of Article 124 A.

The views of the Governors, Chief Ministers and respective Chief Justices of the 24 High Courts will be elicited in writing for appointment of judges as per the procedure which could be determined by the JAC.

Bar associations, jurists and other bodies may also be asked to suggest names.

Justifying the move to scrap the collegium system, the Law Ministry said, "The need for this proposal arises primarily because the present system of appointment of judges in the country is

unprecedented as in no other country in the world, does the judiciary makes appointments for itself."

It said the present system has resulted from the decisions of the Supreme Court "which it is believed are inconsistent with the constitutional scheme".

The note said the collegium system has no constitutional backing or Parliamentary endorsement.

"The proposed amendments will provide constitutional backing to the process of consultation through the institution of JAC and will make the process truly participatory between the executive and the judiciary without in any way compromising the independence of the judiciary," the Cabinet note reads.

"the biggest scam ever in the country, amounting to a loss of Rs 1.86 lakh crore," Basudeb Acharya (CPI-M) wanted to know whether the government had lodged an FIR to find out who was responsible for the files going missing.

AIADMK's M Thambidurai sought a clarification from Singh, while JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav wanted the Government to find a "middle path" to allow the House to function.

V Maitreyan (AIADMK), who had given a notice for suspension of Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha, said missing of important files has been termed by CBI Director as a "serious setback" to investigation.

"The Prime Minister necessarily needs to intervene and clarify the matter," he said.

Earlier, Ravi Shankar Prasad (BJP) alleged that Jaiswal should not have made the statement as it was in conflict of interest since he was arbitrator in deciding on a family feud in a company which was a beneficiary of coal block allocation. (PTI)

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Uphold LoC sanctity: India to Pak

The minister also emphasised the need for Pakistan to show determined action to dismantle the terrorist networks, organisations and infrastructure and show tangible movement on bringing those responsible for the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack to justice quickly.

Ahmed also noted that the newly elected Prime Minister

of Pakistan has publicly articulated his commitment to seek a relationship with India defined by peace, friendship and cooperation.

The remarks come in the backdrop of series of ceasefire violations on the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir with the two sides trading charges.

The Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) received a briefing on the situation along the Line of Control during its first meeting since Sharif assumed office in June. Discussions on tensions along the LoC figured prominently in the meeting.

"It was strongly emphasised that the ceasefire should be maintained in letter and spirit. All military and diplomatic channels should be used to prevent ceasefire violations," an official statement said.

"It was emphasised that Pakistan will also continue to seek dialogue and resolution of all outstanding issues with India peacefully," the statement said.

The DCC took note of "continued violations of the ceasefire" and condemned the "unprovoked firing" that killed an Army captain yesterday.

"Pakistan's policy of restraint and responsibility was highlighted," the statement said.

Bilateral ties soured after five Indian soldiers were killed in an attack by Pakistani troops along the LoC two weeks ago. Both sides have accused each other of violating the 2003 ceasefire along the LoC.

The Pakistan Army has claimed two personnel were killed in "unprovoked" firing by Indian forces this week.

The National Assembly also passed a resolution deploring the death of the captain yesterday and calling for "constructive" engagement with India.

In his opening remarks at the DCC meet, Prime Minister Sharif said Pakistan was facing "formidable challenges domestically while far-reaching developments were taking place in the region". The statement did not give details.

The DCC provides a plat-

form to deliberate on these issues and craft an appropriate response, he said.

Presentations were made by Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Foreign Secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani and the Director General of Military Operations.

The meeting deliberated on the evolving situation in Afghanistan. It emphasised that a peaceful, stable and united Afghanistan was in Pakistan's vital interest and will contribute positively to peace, security and progress in the region.

Pakistan will fully support the world community's efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. It will also work to comprehensively upgrade its relations with Afghanistan, the statement said.

A report on The Express Tribune's website said the committee decided that negotiations with extremists will be conditional and there will be no dialogue till they are ready to disarm.

The Government will fight extremists who refuse to give up their weapons, the report said.

The meeting also approved the reconstitution of the DCC into the Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS). The CCNS will be chaired by the Prime Minister and include Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Interior and Finance, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman and chiefs of the Army, navy and air force.

The CCNS will focus on the national security agenda to frame a national security policy that will become the guiding framework for subsidiary policies like defence policy, foreign policy and internal security policy.

The meeting was attended by the Ministers for Finance, Information and Interior, Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman and the three service chiefs. (PTI)

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