

Joint Army exercises to be resumed India, China agree on strategic communication

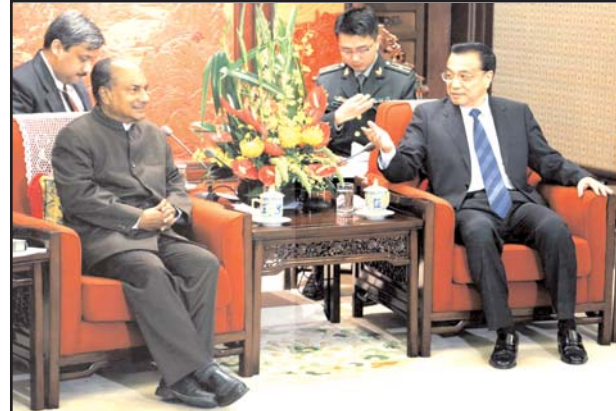
BEIJING, July 5:

Seeking to maintain peace and stability on the Line of Actual Control in the backdrop of the PLA incursion in Ladakh, India and China today agreed that "strategic communication" is required for building mutual trust even as they agreed to resume Joint-Army exercises.

During the delegation-level talks between Defence Minister A K Antony and his Chinese counterpart Gen Chang Wanquan here, the two sides agreed that they will make joint efforts to maintain peace and tranquillity on the borders and take measures to strengthen communication and coordination at various levels between the border guarding forces.

On the issue of the Chinese incursion into Depsang Valley in April, Antony, the first Indian Defence Minister to visit China in seven years, said, "when we are discussing for a long time we will discuss everything. Outcome is very important. In discussions, everything will be

discussed. But the outcome is very positive". Asked whether he took up the hostile comments made by a Major General of the People's Liberation Army



Defence Minister, A K Antony in a discussion with the Chinese Premier, Li Keqiang, in Beijing on Friday. (UNI)

(PLA) Luo Yuan, Antony said, "My discussions were with official people. Very detailed delegation level dialogue with the Defence Minister, and with the Premier also. The message is very clear."

"The PM again reiterated,

the new leadership in China, he told me, gives much importance to strengthening and expanding the relations with India".

The General had yesterday accused India of occupying

Govt may relax SDRF norms if Central package not approved

* J&K once again takes up issue with Gol

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, July 5: The State Government has once again taken up with the Government of India the issue of Central package for earthquake affected victims of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts and was awaiting their final response. The Government was also mulling the idea of relaxing norms of State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) to increase amount of compensation for May 1 quake victims of three districts to increase the amount for damaged property.

Official sources told the Excelsior that after Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi made no mention of the package to earthquake victims during their two days visit to Jammu and Kashmir on June 25 and 26, the State Government again got in touch with the Government to know about its proposal of Rs 607 crore worth relief package sent to the Centre for approval as a special case.

"The Government is on the job once again. Efforts were

being made to get the special Central package sanctioned even if the amount was less than the projected Rs 607 crore. We will wait for few more days before starting relief disbursement under the SDRF," sources said. However, they added that since the compensation under the SDRF norms was meager and not acceptable to the victims, the Government proposed to relax the norms to increase the amount for gutted and damaged property to satisfy the people and help them rebuild their houses before the onset of winter.

Sources said the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), which was converted into SDRF by the Government of India, has fixed norms for completely damaged, severely damaged and partially damaged pucca and kucha houses but compensation under it was too meager to be accepted by the people.

The State Government has received last year's pending installment under SDRF worth Rs 334 crores sometime back. The current SDRF funds and norms were meant for five

years starting 2009 and would continue till 2014 unless changed or extended.

Sources said they have projected maximum amount of Rs 2 lakh compensation for damage to pucca houses and minimum Rs 1 lakh for kucha houses in the package proposed before the Centre. As only two people were killed in earthquake in Baderwah and Ramban, the authorities have already sanctioned Rs 1.5 lakh worth compensation each for their families while the injured were provided relief from Red Cross.

The State has released Rs 25 crore for three earthquake-affected districts from the SDRF. Sources said if the relief had to be distributed under the SDRF, the amount released would be enough for providing compensation to the people. However, as the compensation was meager under SDRF, the Government had to relax norms to increase the amount.

"This possibility (relaxation or norms) would be taken up only after the Centre Government formally con-

Make us proud now: Omar to Rasool

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 5: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today called on promising all-rounder Parvez Rasool to make the State proud after he became the first cricketer from the Valley to be selected in the Indian cricket team for the upcoming ODI tour of Zimbabwe.

Abdullah congratulated Rasool on his selection in the 15-member Indian squad for the five-match ODI series against Zimbabwe. "Have heard the great news about Parvez Rasool being selected to play for India against Zimbabwe. Well deserved selection. Make us proud now," the CM wrote on his twitter page.

Rasool today created history by becoming the first cricketer

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Sharif's envoy meets PM

NEW DELHI, July 5:

Pakistan Premier's special envoy Shaharyar M Khan today met Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and conveyed Islamabad's "sincere desire" to move forward on improving relations with India.

He also delivered a letter from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif containing warm expressions of goodwill and good wishes for Singh, the Government and people of India, a statement released by the Pakistan High Commission here said.

The letter also conveys Pakistan's "sincere desire to move forward on improving relations with India. These sentiments were warmly reciprocated by Singh," it said.

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Poll freebies not good: SC

NEW DELHI, July 5:

Freebies promised by political parties in their election manifestos to lure voters shake the roots of free and fair polls, the Supreme Court observed today as it directed the Election Commission to frame guidelines for regulating contents of manifestos.

Holding that such promises by political parties under present law does not amount to corrupt practice, the apex court, however, said that election manifesto released by parties can be included in the Model Code of Conduct.

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

CBI gives clean chit to Bansal

NEW DELHI, July 5:

CBI does not have any tapped conversation which shows that former Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal was involved in or had any knowledge of the Rs 10 crore cash-for-post bribery scandal, which prompted the agency not to make him an accused in the case, sources said here today.

CBI sources said during investigations they could not find out any conversation between the minister's nephew Vijay Singla and the minister which has any mention of suspended Railway Board member Mahesh Kumar's posting.

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

Pak national held on IB

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 5: The jawans of Border Security Force (BSF) today arrested a Pakistan national while he was moving under suspicious circumstances along the forward area on Indo-Pak international border at Khatmariyan in RS Pura sector.

"The alert BSF troops of 122 battalion at Border Out Post (BOP) of Khatmariyan in RS Pura sector apprehended a Pakistan National while he was moving suspiciously near border inside the Indian territory in wee hours of this morning," official sources said.

During preliminary questioning, he revealed his identity as Mohammad Shafiq, 43, son of Mohammad Sarifa Khan, resident

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

Two yatis die on way to cave shrine Amarnath pilgrimage crosses one lakh

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, July 5: With over 15,000 pilgrims performing darshan at holy cave today, the number of yatis visiting the shrine since the 55 day long Swami Amarnath pilgrimage started on June 28 has crossed the one lakh mark.

According to an official spokesman, 15,090 pilgrims performed darshan in the cave shrine situated at an altitude of 14,000 feet in deep Himalayas in South Kashmir district of Anantnag today.

With this, the total pilgrims performing darshan at holy cave during last eight days of yatra has touched 1,03,027 the spokesman said, adding 97,937 yatis have performed darshan in the holy cave till last night.

Spokesman said the majority of these yatis had left for their home States while those who

performed darshan today started their return journey from shorter Baltal and traditional Panjtarni and Sheshnag tracks.

Chandanwari track early this morning under tight security arrangements. These pilgrims after a night halt at Shesh Nag



Pilgrims on way to the Amarnath cave shrine near Dhulian in Sonamarg.

The spokesman said that 4,889 pilgrims left Nunwan-Pahalgam base camp for holy cave via traditional

and Panjtarni will perform darshan in the cave shrine tomorrow or day after tomorrow.

He said 6200 pilgrims left from Baltal base camp for holy cave via shortest track this morning. They included yatis who performed pilgrimage by air also, he added.

He said these yatis have performed darshan in the cave shrine and had started their return journey.

The weather on Nunwan to holy cave as well as Baltal to holy cave was pleasant during the day, the spokesman said, adding the sky was however cloudy at cave shrine.

He said two pilgrims died on way to holy cave during last two days. They were identified as 50 year old Krishan Kunji of Gujarat and 51 year old Ashwani Bahi Patil of Ratlam Madhya Pradesh.

Spokesman said Krishan Kunji suffered a cardiac arrest late last evening at Bhawan and

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

20 terminated illegally Agriculture Deptt manipulates vacancies to help VEWS

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, July 5: In one of the biggest frauds of promotion to the employees in the Agriculture Department, 121 vacancies of Agriculture Extension Officers (AEOs) in Agriculture Production Department (APD), have been manipulated by the officials of the department to promote Village Extension Workers (VEWS) illegally.

The fraud has been exposed in response to an application filed by Advocate Fayaz Ahmad Bhat on May 15, 2013, seeking information from the Agriculture Department under Right to Information Act.

The response to the RTI that came over a month later has revealed that the department has manipulated the vacancies of AEOs in the department to help 61 promotees.

According to Recruitment Rules of the Agriculture Gazetted Service notified vide order no 179 dated 2/6/1988, total sanctioned strength of AEOs in the department was 598 and 467 officers were in position while there were 68 vacancies as on 02/06/1988.

A Government order No 10 Agri of 2002 dated 25-10-2002 shows that total sanctioned strength of AEOs in the department was 625 and 467 officers were in position while there were 158 vacancies on the same date 02/06/1988.

The minutes of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) held on January 2, 2013 shows that total sanctioned strength of AEOs in the department was 603 and 414 officers were in position while there were 189 vacancies on the

same date - 02/06/1988.

The department promoted 67 VEWS as AEOs on 19th March 2013 vide Government order No 113-Agri of 2013 and they have kept 28 more promotions pending as Vigilance clearance and Annual Performance Report of these candidates was awaited. These promotions were made against 34 available vacancies but the officials of the department manipulated the vacancies to help the promotees at the cost of Public Service Commission Recruited candidates.

The vacancies were created illegally in place of officials who left the department and 53 of them of the department who

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

Bungling, irregularities worth crores of rupees in CCDU Govt hands over case to Crime Branch for in-depth probe, criminal action

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, July 5: Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Sham Lal Sharma has handed over the case of irregularities worth several crores of rupees in the Communication and Capacity Development Unit (CCDU) to the Crime Branch for in-depth probe and criminal action against those involved in the large scale bungling.

Authoritative sources told EXCELSIOR that department of PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control has submitted the report of the departmental committee that conducted enquiry into the misappropriation of funds in the Communication and Capacity Development Unit to the Crime

Branch yesterday for further probe and action against all those involved in the irregularities.

The departmental enquiry committee, which was constituted on February 2, 2013 to look into the working of the Communication and Capacity Development Unit, has established large-scale irregularities in execution of programme and incurring of expenditure.

It is pertinent to mention here that the CCDU is responsible for developing State specific information, educate and communicate strategy for reforming initiative in water and sanitation, improve capacity development of functionaries at different level, address water quality issues, monitor water quality by

taking random samples, ensure sanitation and hygiene, conduct door to door campaign and create awareness among the masses on water hygiene.

Sources said that when the issue of irregularities worth crores of rupees in CCDU figured in the Legislative Council during the Budget Session-2013, the Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Sham Lal Sharma assured the Chairman of the Legislative Council to submit the report of departmental

enquiry committee for the consideration of the House.

"Chairman of the Legislative Council, after going through the report, had stated that prima-facie the irregularities have been established as such the case should be handed over either to the Vigilance Organization or the Crime Branch for further probe and criminal action against all those involved in the misappropriation of funds worth crores of rupees", sources said.

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