

Meager relief under SDRF only option Centre rejects J&K Govt proposal for spl package to quake victims

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, July 16: In a major setback to the people of backward and hilly districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban, the Centre has turned down the State Government's demand for Rs 607.7 crores worth special package for victims of earthquake, who had lost their houses and other property in devastating quake of May 1 followed by repeated aftershocks for more than a fortnight.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the Government of India, to whom the State Cabinet had submitted a proposal worth Rs 607.7 crores as a special grant for earthquake affected people of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts on the pattern of Leh cloud-bursts of August 2010, has rejected the State proposal.

"The Government of India has rejected the State proposal seeking special package for the earthquake victims to help them rebuild their houses, shops and other property, which had been

severely damaged in the earthquake on May 1 followed by aftershocks. This is definitely a major setback.

"The Government has already released Rs 25 crores under State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) to compensate the people as per the SDRF norms, which has very meager provision of relief ranging from Rs 1250 to Rs 35,000," sources said.

"They added that the Centre had conveyed to the State Government through an official communication its decision not to accept the demand for any special package for earthquake victims of three districts. Instead, the Government of India advised the State Government to get in touch with the Planning Commission of India for any kind of grant, if it was possible for the Commission to extend to the State.

Sources said the State Government immediately got in touch with the Planning Commission of India but it too refused to provide any special

funds to the State for compensation to the earthquake victims of three districts. The Planning Commission was reportedly of the view that due to financial constraints it was not in a position to keep a separate provision for the State for rehabilitation of earthquake victims.

"The only thing the Government of India has done is giving us advice to sanction houses for the people under Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), roads under Prime Minister's Grameen Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and schools under Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)," sources said and pointed out that all these three Centrally Sponsored Schemes were already in operation across the State and have very limited scope of compensation of such a massive tragedy.

"Under these three schemes, only a particular number of houses, roads or schools could be given to a particular district," they noted.

The compensation under (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Army chief visits Keran, Divisional Hqrs of Army

* Discusses security scenario with CM

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, July 16: Chief of Army Staff General Bikram Singh today visited the forward areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in the frontier district of Kupwara to take stock of the anti-infiltration



Army chief Gen Bikram Singh on way to forward posts in Kashmir on Tuesday.

measures and visited Divisional headquarters of the Army in Kashmir valley to get first hand account of the counter-insurgency operations conducted in the hinterland.

The Army chief also met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the morning and visited the Army's 92-Base Hospital at Badami Bagh Cantonment in Srinagar where he inquired about the health of injured Army personnel especially those who were injured in a militant attack

two day visit to Kashmir valley. He left for New Delhi at around 4 p.m.

The Army chief visited Keran sector of Kupwara in North Kashmir where 5 militants were killed by troops on July 9. Sources said that the local brigade commander of Keran sector, Brigadier Rajive Kumar gave detailed briefing about the infiltration attempt that was foiled in the sector by the Army early this month.

"Brigadier Kumar gave graphic description of the operation that was launched against the infiltrating militants on July 9 after Army received information about the possible infiltration attempt", sources added.

Sources said that the Brigadier also briefed the Army chief about the counter-infiltration grid that has been strengthened after the information that the militants across the LoC are waiting for the cross over. The Army chief later addressed troops and interacted with them. He complemented them for their alertness along the LoC and for foiling the designs (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

IT surveys 2 traders' premises

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 16: Income Tax Department sleuths today conducted surveys in the premises of two traders in Jammu city and impounded documents indicating evasion of the tax.

Official sources said that on the basis of secret information, sleuths of the Income Tax Department carried out simultaneous surveys in M/s Gupta Decorators at Gole Puli Talab Tillo and M/s Kulbir Singh and Company at Gandhi Nagar.

During the surveys, which continued till late tonight, IT sleuths impounded accounts books and other documents from the premises of both the traders and put them to scrutiny during which invasion of Income Tax came to the fore.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Clashes in Ganderbal, several hurt

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, July 16: Protesters clashed with police in Central Kashmir district of Ganderbal, after body of Abid Ahmad Ganie reached to his hometown from Rajasthan today.

Several people including some policemen also got injured during the clashes. Ganie died under mysterious circumstances.

Police fired tire gas shells and resorted to lathi charge to disperse the protesters after they pelted stones at police and CRPF. The protesters also took hostage one ASI and one constable of State police and later released them after they were beaten. One ruling party district president was also beaten by angry protesters. Immediately after the body of Abid reached to Ganderbal, peo-

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Pak for security coop with India

NEW DELHI, July 16:

Pakistan today pitched for security cooperation with India and said doubting its ability to fight terror in the wake of the recent revelations by the Abbottabad Commission exposing lacunae in its security establishment will not solve anything.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to India Salman Bashir, who was addressing a gathering at the PHD Chambers, said the dates for talks on various bilateral issues were being worked out with Islamabad looking at "quick movement" across the board.

"Our Government is settling in and I must say it considers India the most important track and we are for quick movement across the board in terms of relations," he said when asked about Indo-Pak ties.

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Free treatment to pregnant women: Azad

JAIPUR, July 16:

The Centre will provide free pre-natal health care and ambulance facilities to pregnant women across the country, Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad announced today.

Under the Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY) scheme, pregnant women are provided free medical treatment during the delivery and post natal care.

In addition to this, the minister said pregnant women will be given "free medical and ambulance facilities" from conception to delivery.

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Intrusion bid foiled on LoC

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 16: After a brief lull, Pakistan Army tonight again opened firing on forward Indian positions at Sagra-Balnoi area of Krishna Ghati sector in Poonch district, reportedly with a view to push infiltrators into this side.

Pakistan Army started firing at 8.35 pm on forward Indian positions, official sources said, adding initially it was small arms firing but later heavy fire arms were also used by the Pakistani troops. Indian side retaliated only to neutralize the militants and ensure

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

Pak national nabbed on IB

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 16: The Border Security Force (BSF) jawans today arrested a Pakistani national along Indo-Pak International Border (IB) in RS Pura sector.

Reports said the alert jawans of BSF troops of 200 Battalion during few hours of today noticed suspicious movement along the forward Border Outpost in RS Pura sector and challenged the intruder.

The suspected person was arrested and immediately taken into custody.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

EO held for illegal appointments

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, July 16: State Vigilance Organization today arrested Abdul Rashid Shah, then Incharge Executive Officer of Municipal Committees Sumbal, Hajin and Bandipora for illegal appointments made in the municipalities during 2009-10.

Presently attached with Divisional Commissioner Srinagar, Shah was already booked by the Vigilance in case FIR number 15/2013 U/S 5(1) (d)/w 5(2) PC Act 2006 and r/w Section 120-(B) RPC P/S.

He was arrested today for custodial interrogation regarding ille-

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

3 SHOs among 5 posted

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 16: Three SHOs were among five police officials transferred in Udhampur district today.

DIG Udhampur-Reasi range Gareeb Dass has ordered adjustment of Inspector Sanjay Gupta in district Reasi and Inspectors Raghbir Singh and Sukhdev Singh in Udhampur district.

Meanwhile, SSP Udhampur Anil Magotra has ordered posting of Inspector Pradeep Gupta as SHO Rhembal, Inspector SS Bloeria as SHO Ramnagar and Inspector Sukhdev Singh as SHO Majalata.

All three postings of SHOs have been made in place of DySP probationers, who were officiating as SHOs in three police stations of Udhampur district.

SC reprimands J&K on Ranjay killing

NEW DELHI, July 16:

Incidents of attack on foreign prisoners have "international ramifications", Supreme Court today said asking the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir Government to apprise it of steps to ensure that assaults similar to the one on Pakistani inmate Sanaullah Ranjay do not recur.

A bench of Justices R M Lodha and S J Mukhopadhyaya also voiced displeasure over the pace of progress in investigation into the death of Ranjay at Kot Balwal Jail in Jammu.

"Such incidents have international ramifications. The Government has to tell us that about the certain steps that have

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Amarnath pilgrimage crosses 2.5 lakh

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, July 16: Over 2.50 lakh pilgrims have performed darshan in holy cave of Swami Amarnath ji situated at an altitude of 3,880 metres in Lidder Valley in South Kashmir district of Anantnag



Pilgrims on their way to Amarnath holy cave at Baltal on Tuesday. -Excelsior/Sajad Sameer

during last 19 days of pilgrimage.

According to an official spokesman, 9,754 pilgrims drawn from different parts of country performed darshan at holy cave today while 248,186 pilgrims had performed darshan till late last night. With this the total number of pilgrims performing darshan in holy cave during last 19 days has touched 2,57,940, he added.

He said the yatra is proceeding smoothly from both Baltal and Chandanwari tracks. The 55 day long yatra, which started with Pratham darshan on June

28 will culminate on Sawan Purnima coinciding with Raksha Bandhan falling on August 21 after the holy mace of Lord Shiva performs darshan in the cave shrine.

The spokesman said that majority of yatrias who performed the darshan in the holy cave during last 19 days have returned to their home states while others are on their way. He said the yatrias who performed their darshan in cave shrine today have also started their return journey towards Baltal base camp and Pancharni camp and after a night halt at Baltal they will start

their journey towards Srinagar. The spokesman said 3,710 pilgrims left the Nunwan-Pahalgam base camp towards holy cave under tight security arrangements early in the morning via traditional Chandanwari track. These yatrias after night halt at Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Pancharni camps will perform darshan at cave shrine on July 19.

He said 3,958 pilgrims left for holy cave from Baltal base camp via shorter track early this morning. They included 1,063 (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

CBI compelled to surrender Rs 4 cr for Housing project

Neeraj Rohmetra

JAMMU, July 16: Unbelievable but it is true that the highly connected land-mafia has stalled all efforts of the premier investigating agency of the country - Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to construct a residential colony in Channi Rama, which would have helped the agency to increase its field strength in border State.

Reliable sources told EXCELSIOR, "CBI had purchased 9 kanals of land under khasra number 326 at Channi Rama from Jammu

Development Authority (JDA) in 2006. After completion of all the formalities, lease deed between the JDA and CBI was executed on August 16, 2011 and it was registered in the Court of Sub-Registrar, Jammu on October 12, 2011. CBI had paid an amount of Rs 2 crores to JDA for the land".

Subsequently, JDA told its officials vide letter no. JDA/LS/2981-85 dated 21.10.2011 to formally hand-over the possession of the land measuring 9 kanals to CBI.

"However, when boundary wall and construction work was started on site by the team of Central

Public Works Department (CPWD), some goons stopped the entire work and claimed that there was stay on the land".

"Ironically, none of the officials of JDA brought to the notice of the CBI that there was any such issue in the said land despite several interactions between the two agencies. While JDA officials claimed that the status was clear, things were different on ground", said a top official of CBI adding, "if this is the fate of CBI colony, what would happen to common people".

"The issue was also taken up with Deputy Chief

Minister, Tara Chand, who earlier held the portfolio of Housing and Urban Development, but there was no progress on the subject", sources said adding, "people who claimed rights over this land had also threatened some officials of the JDA some time back".

Regretting the state of affairs, source in CBI said, "non-availability of housing facilities for our field staff has seriously hampered our efforts to strengthen our base in Jammu and Kashmir. This is a major setback to anti-corruption meas-

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Mining set to adversely affect ecology of Vaishno Devi shrine, pilgrims' health

* Environment clearance obtained by concealing facts

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, July 16: Playing with the ecology and environment of world famous shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, the Jammu Kashmir Mineral Development Corporation is gearing up to begin mining in Trikuta Hills soon.

The mining activity for extraction of Magnesite shall be taken on the land that is very close to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Adh-Kuwari and the Katra Town.

The mining activity is feared to adversely affect ecology of the area and prove hazardous for health of thousands of pilgrims visiting daily to the holy shrine

of Mata Vaishno Devi besides flora and fauna there notwithstanding the Environment Clearance to the project by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The method of mining will be opencast mechanized involving drilling and blasting resulting into generation of huge fugitive dust as well as the apprehension of disturbing the strata of the hill slopes.

"Ironically, no expert opinion has been sought by the Mineral Development Corporation regarding impact of mining over the shrine and pilgrims visiting there despite the fact that the land under mining at Chipprain near

Katra belongs to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The mining lease has been granted by the J&K Government in favour of National Mineral Development Corporation for mining of Magnesite and Dolomite. The lease deed was signed on January 2, 1989 for 20 years and subsequently renewed on 20-5-2011 for a further period of 10 years. Though the total mining lease area in Magnesite zone is 1.4 sq kilometer, the area required for breaking the earth for mining purpose is 26.42 hectare.

According to the sources, the Environmental Clearance to the project has been obtained allegedly by playing fraud and

concealment of facts. On the one hand, JKMDC stated that the mining was to be conducted on non-forest private land while on the other hand, it also had applied for getting forest clearance from the State Government, say the documentary evidences available with the Excelsior.

As per the File number 6-93/2011 WL, the JKMDC in its proposal before the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has projected that the mining shall be done on the non-forest private land under the ownership of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and number of trees to be cut (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Rs 5.20 cr go down the drain; cost escalated from Rs 6 cr to Rs 16 cr

Despite lapse of 21 yrs, Reasi grid station remains in limbo

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, July 16: Astonishing it may sound but this is a harsh reality that in Jammu and Kashmir, which has witnessed transition from Governor Rule in 1990s to third elected Government at present, a grid station has not seen the light of the day during the past over two decades despite expenditure of Rs 5.20 crore till date. Even now, there is uncertainty over the completion of this project in near future.

Reliable sources told EXCELSIOR that the work on

grid station was started at a cost of Rs 6 crore in 1992 when there was Governor Rule in the State. During the initial years, the execution of the project remained satisfactory and people of the Reasi particularly remote and far off areas were optimistic that following completion of work on this grid station they would be able to get adequate power supply.

However, with the passage of time the work on the project started getting delayed and after some years the work on the project came to standstill as due to inordinate delay in the work the cost of the grid station got esca-

lated, sources said. After nine years, the project again received the attention and in 2001 its cost was revised at Rs 10 crore following which some amount was released to re-start the work.

After some years, the grid station once again started facing financial crisis, which led to stalling of the work. People of Reasi and adjoining areas, who had high hopes of getting adequate power supply following completion of this project, virtually understood that the project would never see light of the day for not being on the priority list of the then State Government.

In the year 2012, the issue

again came to the notice of the Government and it got the cost of the project revised. Surprisingly, the cost of the project, which was to be constructed at a cost of Rs 6 crore, was re-worked at nearly Rs 16 crore—almost thrice the cost of original cost, sources said, adding till date an amount of Rs 5.20 crore has been expended on the grid station but without any fruitful outcome.

"This is the height of criminal negligence on the part of concerned authorities that a project of much importance for lakhs of people could not be (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

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