

Water, Sir Creek, Siachen on agenda India, Pak may resume talks in Aug, Sept

NEW DELHI, July 28:

Confirming that proposals regarding dates for resuming talks have been received from Pakistan, official sources said here today that mutually convenient dates for resuming the remaining third round of comprehensive dialogues were being discussed.

Pakistan media had yesterday reported that the foreign office conveyed to New Delhi its readiness to host the talks on the Wullar barrage at Water and Power Secretaries level on August 27 and 28 and for Sir Creek maritime boundary issue on September 16 and 17.

A meeting at the level of foreign secretaries could be considered later. Official sources said the proposals for dates had been received from Pakistan last week itself, and now "India and Pakistan are in discussion to identify mutually convenient dates for the remaining Secretary-level talks of the third round."

The talks on water and Sir Creek issues are expected to be held in Pakistan while Interior Secretary/Home Secretary-Level meeting and defence secretary-level talks on the Siachen Glacier were likely to be held in India.

New Delhi has also "in principle" agreed to a meeting between Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of UN General Assembly in New York in September.

External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid and Pakistan Prime Minister's Special Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz had taken the decision to resume the dialogue process when they had met in Brunei early this month.

The two countries had begun the third round of the dialogue in September with Commerce Secretaries' meeting in Islamabad, but the process was halted due to the strain in the bilateral relations caused by the beheading of Indian soldiers on the border.

Both the countries had in fact started a composite dialogue in 2004 after a decision for that was taken by then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf during their meeting on the sidelines of SAARC Summit.

However that composite dialogue process had been suspended in the wake of the Mumbai terror attack in 2008.

But Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and his former Pakistani counterpart Yusuf Raza Gilani in their meeting on the sidelines of SAARC summit in Bhutan's capital Thimpu in 2010 decided to resume the process.

The issues to be covered by the Composite Dialogue include: Siachen; Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project; Sir Creek; economic and commercial cooperation and friendly exchanges; terrorism and drug trafficking; peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir.(UNI)

Now, PC wants massive hike in power, VAT, other taxes

*Govt feels targets 'unachievable'

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, July 28: After giving no hike to the State for 2013-14 annual plan, the Planning Commission of India has directed the State Government to increase power revenue, Value Added Tax (VAT), impose property tax and raise other taxes levied in Jammu and Kashmir and reduce revenue expenditure significantly to improve resource base for securing healthy plans in future.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the Planning Commission wanted the State Government to realize revenue worth at least Rs 2800 crores on account of electricity supply in the State, raise VAT and other commercial taxes and cut down revenue expenditure, which included the expenses on account of running the Government apart from salaries and pensions of the Government employees.

"We have no options but to listen to the Planning Commission's advice and try to achieve targets fixed by them. However, the Planning

Commission too should give realistic targets especially to economically backward State like Jammu and Kashmir," sources said.

Asserting that it was not only difficult but rather impossible for the State to achieve the target of Rs 2800 crores worth revenue on account of electricity supply from the consumers, sources said the Government has already fixed "unachievable" target of Rs 2340 crores for current financial year as against just Rs 1450 crores worth revenue realized during 2012-13.

"After putting all the hard efforts and initiated reforms like metering the un-metered areas, reducing Transmission and Distribution (T&D) losses and increasing the power tariff, the State could collect only Rs 1450 crores worth revenue last year. How can the Government double the revenue (Rs 2800 crores) in just one year?" the sources asked.

They said the top bureaucrats of Jammu and Kashmir have very well explained this aspect to the Planning Commission but the latter

insisted on its figures of Rs 2800 crores worth revenue from electricity supply. The Planning Commission wanted to reduce the gap between electricity purchase bill and revenue by raising the target.

The State has kept a budgetary provision of Rs 3579 crores this financial year for purchase of power, which could go up to Rs 4300 crores.

Similarly, sources said the Government has fixed commercial tax revenue target for current fiscal year to Rs 6600 crores but the Planning Commission wanted this amount also to be raised significantly.

During last financial year, the State had fixed target of Rs 5400 crores from commercial taxes but it managed to surpass the target and realized Rs 5900 crores. This year, the Government has already raised the target by Rs 700 crores to Rs 6600 crores.

Sources said the Planning Commission has also identified some areas, where the tax base could be increased or new taxes imposed. It has also

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Bollywood actor Kareena Kapoor during the DVD launch of Indian Food Wisdom & The Art of Eating Right, in Mumbai. (UNI)

BSF holds flag meet with Rangers

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 28: Two senior officers of the Border Security Force (BSF) today visited forward villages in Hiranagar sector of Kathua district to assess the situation arising out of unprovoked firing by Pakistan Rangers last evening at Kothay Post in which a BSF Head Constable and a civilian were injured while the local Commanders of the BSF held a flag meeting with the Rangers at Pansar post this afternoon and lodged strong protest over Pakistan firing.

The firing amounted to ceasefire violation by the Rangers. IG BSF, Jammu, Rajiv Krishna along with DIG Virender Singh

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MHA for prosecution of 3 Chinese

NEW DELHI, July 28:

The Home Ministry has recommended prosecution of three Chinese nationals who had infiltrated into the Ladakh sector of Jammu and Kashmir in June as the statements given by them to interrogators were contradictory.

All of them had an advance knowledge of Indian defence posts and routes taken by troops during patrolling in the higher reaches of Ladakh, official sources said.

The decision taken by the Home Ministry has been conveyed to authorities concerned in Ladakh for bringing down the three --

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EC prepares for early polls

NEW DELHI, July 28:

Amid speculation over early Lok Sabha polls, the Election Commission is gearing itself up for holding the mammoth exercise along with Assembly elections in five States due later this year by ordering additional EVMs.

The EC has placed fresh order for two lakh Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to public-sector companies as the present lot of EVMs cannot meet the demand in case elections are held simultaneously, highly placed sources said.

"We have placed a fresh order of EVMs as the present total of around 14 lakh EVMs is not enough to hold simultaneous elections

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Yatra completes one month

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 28: Pilgrimage to holy cave shrine of Baba Amarnath ji in Anantnag district of South Kashmir Himalayas today completed one month. A total of 3,27,507 pilgrims have performed darshan at the shrine till late this evening.

Annual 55 days long pilgrimage had started on June 28 and would conclude on August 21 on the occasion of Sharavan Purnima and Raksha Bandhan.

During one month long yatra, 13 persons including 12 pilgrims and one Sevadar have lost their lives.

Official sources said 3286 pilgrims today performed darshan in

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Maharaja's daughters inherit Rs 20,000 cr assets

CHANDIGARH, July 28:

After over a two-decade-long wait, two daughters of the erstwhile Maharaja of Faridkot are set to inherit assets worth a staggering Rs 20,000 crore that include Faridkot House in Delhi's posh Central Vista, two forts, vintage cars and jewellery.

The ex-royals struck the fortune after a local court ruled that Faridkot's former ruler Sir Harinder Singh Brar's 31-year-old will was "fictitious" and "forged" by servants in connivance with lawyers and others.

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Victim had snatched pistol from MI man SPO shot dead by militants

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, July 28: Militants today shot dead a Special Police Officer (SPO), who had snatched pistol from a Military Intelligence (MI) officer during Hurriyat Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani's rally in North Kashmir's Sopore town two years ago.



Family members of SPO wailing over his body. Army, 177 in Sopore on Sunday. -Excelsior/Aabid Nabi and 149 bat-

Police said that at about 9.50 a.m. pistol borne militants shot dead Muzfar Ahmad Dar, 25, son of Gulzar Ahmad Dar at his residence Ontoo Hamam, Chanakhan Sopore.

Police sources said that the two militants barged into the house of Mudasir at Ontoo Hamam soon after he took a bath in river Jhelum outside his residence. "Mudasir jumped out of the window as he saw the two militants barging in. The duo chased him for about 50 meters before showering a volley of bullets at him", police sources said.

The police sources said that the SPO received several bullets in neck, chest and limbs and died on the spot. The militants fled from the scene to the nearby woods after carrying out the strike. Senior police officers immediately rushed to the spot and his body was taken to the Police Station and later handed over to the family for burial.

Police, 52 Rifles of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched a massive hunt against the militants responsible for the killing of the SPO. The village Higam in the outskirts of Sopore where

four policemen were killed on April 26 was also cordoned and search operation against the militants is going on.

Police sources said Hizbul Mujahideen was responsible for his killing. However, no militant outfit claimed responsibility for the attack.

Reports said that Mudasir was appointed as an SPO in the District Special Branch (DSB) of Sopore Police in 2012 after he came close to Sopore Police during his detention.

Mudasir along with six other persons were arrested in 2011 for snatching a service pistol of an MI officer during Geelani's rally at Sopore on November 11, 2011. Police recovered pistol from Mudasir and he was declared as the main culprit behind the attack on the MI officer.

Geelani was addressing a rally at Sopore on November 11,

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Kishtwar back to normalcy after brief tension, FIRs lodged

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 28: Tension gripped Kishtwar this evening when a 'Kalsh Yatra' being taken out by the minorities in the town for 'Murti Sthapana' (installation of idols) at Lord Shiva temple at Pushal was stopped by two youths from majority community at Sangram Bhatta, who objected to raising of religious slogans by the women.

Two youths—one each from the two communities—were injured in assaults. Police said they have registered two First Information Reports (FIRs) from both the groups against each other for investigations. Local police and Shastra Seema Bal (SSB) have been deployed in full strength in the town to maintain law and order.

IGP Jammu Rajesh Kumar

said the matter has been resolved and the situation was fully under control and normal in Kishtwar.

Official sources and eyewitness account revealed that the minorities were taking 'Kalsh Yatra' in Kishtwar town this evening for 'Murti Sthapana' at Shiv Mandir at Pushal when two youths of majority community objected to raising of religious slogans by the women at Sangram Bhatta.

The people took strong exception to the behaviour of two youths of majority community. Some of the youths in the 'Kalsh Yatra' beat-up the boy Atil, a local resident of Sangram Bhatta, who had objected to raising of the religious slogans.

In the meantime, youths from majority community also gathered and beat-up a youth

from minority community identified as Ranmeet Singh Parihar, who was riding on his bike. They also tried to damage his bike but police swiftly took the motor cycle away to police station.

Police diverted the route of 'Kalsh Yatra', which culminated peacefully.

Later, people from both the communities gathered outside Kishtwar police station.

Police said FIRs from both sides have been registered for assaults on the two youths. Copies of FIR Nos. 129 and 130 of 2013 under relevant Sections of law, registered at Kishtwar police station, were given to the two sides late tonight after which the agitated people dispersed.

Senior officers of police have rushed to Kishtwar town.

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PDP has roadmap to resolve Kashmir: Mufti

Mir Farhat

SRINAGAR, July 28: People's Democratic Party patron and former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed today said that if the people elect his party to power, he will show a roadmap for the resolution of the dispute as per the aspirations of all those who are a party to the dispute.

"I have a roadmap in mind. If people of Jammu and Kashmir elect the PDP in the coming Assembly elections, I will show a roadmap for the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue," Sayeed said while addressing his party workers on the party's 14th Foundation Day at its headquarters here.

Mufti said Jammu and Kashmir issue cannot be put under the rug. "We have to address it, we cannot ignore it. I



PDP patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed addressing party workers during a rally on the 14th Foundation Day celebrations of the party in Srinagar on Sunday. -Excelsior/Amin War

will motivate not only the Governments at the Centre, but also people of India for its resolution with your support."

"I am talking of that resolution which will be acceptable to

the people of the State, people of India and people of Pakistan," Mufti said.

The PDP patron said that for the resolution, "we have to take all the people involved in the

dispute on board."

"I will take out the people of Jammu and Kashmir out of the political quagmire if people support us in the elections," he said.

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Decision delayed for 3 yrs despite no constraints of funds 13th Finance Comm recommendation on creation of 28 courts gathering dust

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, July 28: The recommendation of 13th Finance Commission regarding creation of 28 courts in Jammu and Kashmir has been gathering dust during the past three years despite the fact that funds in this regard are to be borne by the Government of India. Even at present, there are doubts about these courts coming up in near future because of varied reasons including the demands of the politicians for opening up of courts in those areas, which deserve the same on the basis of population and workload on

the existing courts. Official sources told EXCELSIOR that 13th Finance Commission in its report had recommended opening of 28 Morning and Evening Courts in Jammu and Kashmir with the observation that improvement of justice delivery can be done by supporting the judiciary.

"The creation of additional courts was also recommended in the light of huge pendency of the cases and the need to dispose of current filings at the rapid pace in order to prevent accumulation of arrears", they further said. The 13th Finance Commission had also stated that court working hours could be increased by

using the existing infrastructure by holding morning/evening/shift courts, sources added.

The 13th Finance Commission was of the observation that district and subordinate courts have been disposing off both important as well as petty cases and the pressure on the judicial time on account of petty cases can be relieved by allotting them to Morning and Evening Courts.

However, the Jammu and Kashmir did not find the setting up of Morning and Evening Courts as suitable due to security reasons. However, the State decided to

start 28 courts—14 each of Mobile Magistrates and Special Mobile Magistrates, they informed.

After getting green signal in this regard, the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs of the State Government issued order for creation of 24 courts in the year 2011 and thereafter the High Court was approached for identification of locations where these courts would have to be set-up.

Since 2011, no significant progress has been made in establishing these courts. "Though the High Court has identified the locations and conveyed the same

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