

Singh hints at Cabinet reshuffle

PM seeks improved ties with Pak: no firm dates on visit

ON BOARD SPECIAL AIRCRAFT, May 31:

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today said he was in agreement with PM-designate Nawaz Sharif that India and Pakistan relations should move forward, but declined to give any commitment about his proposed visit to the country.

India would like to resolve all its outstanding issues with Pakistan in a peaceful manner, Dr Singh said in reply to questions at an onboard media conference while returning from a five-day visit to Japan and Thailand.

Dr Singh was asked what sort of actions he was expecting from Pakistan before such a visit could take place.

The Prime Minister said, "There is an invitation from Government of Pakistan for me to visit Pakistan. There is no firm decision, no dates have been fixed."

He, however, stressed that India would certainly like to have good neighbourly relations with Pakistan.

Dr Singh said it had been consistently India's policy that relations with Pakistan should improve, and the two countries should deal with all the outstanding issues.

"We are committed to resolve them in a peaceful manner. That is also the sentiment which was reciprocated by Mr Nawaz Sharif," Dr Singh said.

He added that he rang up Mr Nawaz Sharif on the very first day when the election results were coming out.

"I conveyed my congratulations to him and I reciprocated his sentiments that India and Pakistan relations should move forward and I also invited him to visit Pakistan".

Singh indicated that a Cabinet reshuffle could be on the cards to fill up the vacancies.

"There are some vacancies. The issue of filling them up is being considered," Singh said.

The Prime Minister was asked whether he was contemplating a Cabinet reshuffle in view of vacancies created by the resignations of P K Bansal and Ashwani Kumar.

Bansal quit as Railways Minister earlier this month in the wake of bribery scandal involving his nephew and a Railway Board member. Kumar also resigned as Law Minister following controversy over vetting of a CBI probe report on coal block allocation scam.

The portfolio of Railways has been given to Road and Highways Minister C P Joshi as an additional charge while that of Law has gone to Telecom Minister Kapil Sibal as additional ministry.

Besides, there are a number of other ministers holding more than one portfolios.

The Prime Minister, while interacting with the mediapersons on board the special aircraft, also rejected reports of a rift between him and Congress President Sonia Gandhi, asserting that there was no truth in it as the two worked together almost on all issues.

"In all truthfulness, there is no difference of opinion between me and the Congress president," he said.

"This perception that on cer-



Army soldiers rush towards the site of a gun battle at Shopian on Friday.

—Excelsior/Sajjad Sameer

Pak violates ceasefire in Nowgam

HM Div Comdr killed in Shopian

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, May 31: Security forces killed Divisional Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen outfit in a fierce gun battle in South Kashmir's Shopian district this evening, police said here.

DIG South Kashmir range, Vijay Kumar told Excelsior that Army and police in a joint operation killed Sajjad Ahmad Mir, Divisional Commander of HM

in village Vandana in district Shopian this evening.

The DIG said that operation was launched after security forces received information about the presence of at least two militants in the South Kashmir village. He said that Shopian Police and 55 Rashtriya Rifles of the counter insurgency Victor Force of Army cordoned off the village and conducted searches during which militants fired resulting in the encounter.

Sajjad Mir son of Mohammad Yusuf Mir of Litter in South Kashmir district Pulwama was a local trained militant and was active since 2009 in South Kashmir, mostly in Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam districts.

Mr Kumar, Commander 12 Sector Rashtriya Rifles, Brigadier Rajiv Nanda and SP Shopian, Mumtaz Ahmad were on the spot monitoring the oper-

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

2 top BCCI officials quit

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, May 31:

In a severe blow to BCCI President N Srinivasan, two top Board officials today quit piling more pressure on him to step down in the wake of the spot-fixing scandal, amid indications that more senior functionaries would resign in a bid to oust the Tamil Nadu strongman.

On a day of dramatic developments, BCCI Secretary Sanjay Jagdale and Treasurer Ajay Shirke sent their resignations to Srinivasan, saying they were deeply hurt by recent developments in cricket.

Bowing to intense pressure, Srinivasan convened an Emergency Working Committee meeting hours after information spilled out that the ICC had warned his son-in-law Gurnath Meiyappan to keep away from bookies at the start of IPL.

Significantly, Jagdale, who is also a member of the three-member inquiry commission to go into allegations against CSK

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Prez for constant risk analysis

PUNE, May 31:

President Pranab Mukherjee today stressed on the need for constant risk analysis in the light of continuous decline in security scenario globally so that the country's security establishment is prepared with dynamic responses to any threat.

Mukherjee called for an increased use of Science and Technology in defence preparedness, saying it has become a "necessity" these days.

"Our country desires a stable and rule-based international system. It is a matter of deep concern that the international security environment continues to decline. This calls for a constant review of the risk scenario so that our security establishment is ready with dynamic responses to any threat," Mukherjee said in his address to seventh convocation of Defence Institute of Advanced Technology

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Pak Comm checks Jhelum water level

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, May 31: A three-member team of the Pakistan Indus Water Commission today visited river Jhelum, flood spill channel and Dal lake in Srinagar to check the water levels.

The three-member team of the Pakistan Indus Water Commission, headed by Indus Water Commissioner Shreeraz Jameel Memon, Joint Secretary Ministry of Water and Power in Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Shehzada and Principal Engineer at NESPAK, Syed Mohammad Mehar Ali Shah visited the Dal lake and the river Jhelum today.

The team visited Chattabal Veer, Flood Spill Channel at Padshahi Bagh and Barrage between Dal lake and river Jhelum at Dalgate to check the water levels of Jhelum and Dal lake. The team left for New Delhi for their onward journey to Pakistan this afternoon after having a shikara ride in Dal lake.

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

Pak frees Indian national

ATTARI, May 31:

Pakistan Government repatriated Indian prisoner Kuldeep Singh in a goodwill gesture here today.

Singh had crossed over to Pakistan inadvertently around a month ago, and today he was handed over to BSF at joint check post on Attari border land route by the Pakistani Rangers.

Pakistan authorities, during the one month period found that Singh was mentally unsound and due to that he could not identify the international border and inadvertently crossed over to Pakistan, sources said.

According to BSF official at Attari border, Singh is a resident of Chokra village of Sangrur district. He was received by his brother Sham Singh after repatriation. (PTI)

Rs 6 lakh of HM seized, 2 arrested

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, May 31: Police today arrested two Over Ground Workers of Hizbul Mujahideen in Central Kashmir district of Ganderbal and recovered Rs 6 lakh from their possession that was to be delivered to a top Hizbul Mujahideen militant in forest area of the district.

A senior police officer said here that the money was to be delivered to one of the top HM militants, Asadullah, who is heading a group of militants that is operating in the forests in Ganderbal district of Central Kashmir.

The officer said that police arrested a person Ishtiaq Ahmad from Ganderbal area of Srinagar who had brought Rs 6 lakh from Srinagar for the HM militant group and was to be delivered to them in the forests.

The officer said that after questioning, Ishtiaq revealed the name of Shreehan Khan of Gutilibagh to whom the money was delivered for the militants. Police raided house of Khan and recovered Rs 6 lakh from his possession.

Both the persons have been

arrested and a case has been registered against them in police station Ganderbal.

The officer said that Asadullah is a foreign militant and is heading the 5 member HM militant group in the forests in Ganderbal district.

This group had arrived in Ganderbal district forests last year and their 5 more members were killed in a major operation that was launched by police and army in Ganderbal district forests in October last year.

The four of the 5 militants who were killed were identified as Abu Bakar, Abu Khalid, Murtaza and Abdul Gazi and 5 AK 47 rifles, 15 magazines, 2 UBGLs and scores of bullets were recovered from the dead militants.

In the meantime, Handwara police and 47 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) recovered arms and ammunition in Wuchar forests of Wogbal area of Kupwara in North Kashmir.

A police spokesman said that during a search operation in Wuchar forests of village Wogbal, Handwara Police and 47 RR recovered one AK 47, one AK 56, nine pika grenades, two AK magazines, 32 rounds of AK ammunition, 18 rounds of pika, one pistol magazine, three pistol rounds and a matrix sheet from a hideout.

Police and Army have launched operations in the North Kashmir's Kupwara district after reports of militant movement in the areas.

On Cong Ministers' demand, Cabinet defers decision on Govt panel report

*Taj's proposal on faculty's pvt practice gets in-principle nod

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, May 31: On the demand of the Congress Ministers, the State Cabinet today deferred decision on the report of a committee constituted by the Government to recommend amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 while as proposal of the Minister for Medical Education Taj Mohi-ud-Din seeking ban on the private practice of all the teaching faculty members of the Government Medical as well as Dental Colleges was agreed in-principle.

Sources told EXCELSIOR that after going through the report of the Government constituted committee and the memorandum prepared by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, which was circulated by the General Administration Department late in the evening, the Congress Ministers had an informal meeting over the issue before the start of Cabinet meeting this morning.

As some of them had certain inhibitions over the report it was

decided that the same should be thoroughly studied even at the level of Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president, Prof Saif-ud-Din Soz so as to ascertain whether the report is in consonance with the Congress stand on the amendments to the Panchayati Raj Act in the light of 73rd Amendment, sources said.

Shortly before the start of Cabinet meeting, Deputy Chief Minister, Tara Chand and Minister for Medical Education, Taj Mohi-ud-Din, as decided in the meeting of Congress Ministers, called on Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and apprised him of the Congress Ministers' decision on the report, sources said, adding conceding the request of the Cabinet colleagues from the coalition partner (Congress) the Chief Minister announced in the Cabinet that the report of the Government appointed committee on amendments to the Panchayati Raj Act was deferred to allow the Congress party to study it thoroughly.

"Since the report has been prepared by a group of bureau-

crats it is imperative not only for the Congress party but also for National Conference to analyze the same so that there remains no lacunae and the sensitive issue is handled very cautiously", sources said.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pradesh Congress Committee chief Prof Soz had constituted two committees--- one headed by MLC Ravinder Sharma and another by present Tourism Minister, G A Mir to conduct detailed study of 73rd Amendment of the Constitution and recommend important points, which could be incorporated into the State Panchayati Raj Act.

Stating that reports of these committees were also submitted to the departmental committee headed by Commissioner Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, sources said, "the Congress also wants to ascertain whether the points recommended by the committees headed by Ravinder Sharma and G A Mir have been taken care of in the Government

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

GOC reviews situation in forward areas

Infiltration attempt by ultras foiled on LoC

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, May 31: Indian troops opened firing in Balnoi sector of Mendhar tehsil in Poonch district last night reportedly to neutralize a group of militants trying to infiltrate into this side while General Officer Commanding (GOC) 16 Corps Lt Gen DS Hooda today visited forward areas on the Line of Control (LoC) in Mendhar, Krishna Ghati and Poonch sectors.

Official sources told the Excelsior that troops opened firing after observing movement of infiltrators in forward Sagra area of Balnoi sector in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district late last night. Pakistan Army is also reported to have opened firing on their side only.

"It was not clear as to why Pakistan Army resorted to firing on their side only," sources said, adding it could be an indication to the militants to retreat in view of heavy presence of Army personnel on Indian side of the LoC.

The militants were reported to have escaped back after the troops opened firing on observ-

ing their movement, sources said, adding that the troops conducted searches in entire Balnoi area early this morning. However, there were no traces indicating infiltration of the militants on this side of the LoC.

The infiltrators had retreated, sources said.

Confirming firing by the Pakistan Army simultaneously when the Indian troops opened

(*Pic on page 6)

firing to neutralize the militants, sources said, this was for the first time that they fired on their own side and didn't target Army in forward positions to facilitate the infiltration bid by the ultras.

The firing by Pakistan Army lasted about 20 minutes.

Troops had been observing movement of militants during the past few days in Tufchian area of Pakistan opposite Sagra area of Balnoi sector. Troops had already been maintaining a high alert all along the LoC in anticipation of intrusions by the militants.

Sources said not only opposite Balnoi, there were many areas in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK)

opposite twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, where movement of militants along launching pads of Pakistan Army was clearly visible.

"In view of the movement of the militants and their reported attempts to sneak-in, Army have already sounded alert along the LoC," sources said.

Meanwhile, GOC 16 Corps Lt Gen DS Hooda today visited forward areas of the LoC in Mendhar, Krishna Ghati and Poonch sectors along with senior local Commanders of the troops and reviewed security scenario.

The senior Army officers briefed Lt Gen Hooda on the situation prevailing on the LoC, number of militants present across the LoC and attempts being made by the ultras to enter into this side.

The GOC called upon the troops to remain on high alert and ensure that the militants didn't manage to succeed in their designs.

With the onset of summer, the militants have made some intrusion bids in Poonch and

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

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Today's issue of Daily Excelsior consists of 20 pages including (16+4).
—Editor

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INSIDE	WEATHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing corrupt to book Sopore Bypass bridge ...Page 8 Youth of J&K have high potential to excel: Governor ...Page 3 Div Com tours Amarnath shrine route, reviews arrangements ...Page 3 Govt conscious of difficulties of far-flung areas: Sham ...Page 5 Vikar for effective mechanism to check transmission losses ...Page 5 Silverware for Indian team in Asian Snooker C'ship ...Page 14 	<p>JAMMU</p> <p>Mainly dry.</p> <p>TEMPERATURE Max: 40.4 Degree C Min: 23.6 Degree C</p> <p>RELATIVE HUMIDITY Highest: 23.0 per cent Lowest: 16.0 per cent Sunset on Saturday: 07.34 p.m. Sunrise on Sunday: 05.26 a.m.</p> <p>KASHMIR</p> <p>Mainly dry.</p> <p>TEMPERATURE Max: 29.4 Degree C Min: 11.3 Degree C</p> <p>RELATIVE HUMIDITY Highest: 64.0 per cent Lowest: 23.0 per cent</p>

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