

## MEA Downplays Ladakh

to mediate between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, a proposal which was rejected by New Delhi. Asked about the situation in Eastern Ladakh, Srivastava said India is committed to the objective of maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas with Chinese and Indian armed forces scrupulously follow the consensus reached by leaders of the two countries on the matter.

"At the same time, we remain firm in our resolve to ensuring India's sovereignty and national security," he said. The MEA spokesperson said the Indian troops take a very responsible approach towards border management and strictly follow the procedures laid out in various bilateral agreements and protocols with China to resolve any issue that may arise in the border areas.

"The two sides have established mechanisms both at military and diplomatic levels to resolve situations which may arise in border areas peacefully through dialogue and continue to remain engaged through these channels," he said.

Trump's unexpected offer came on a day when China took an apparently conciliatory tone by saying that the situation at the border with India is "overall stable and controllable."

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said on Wednesday that both China and India have proper mechanisms and communication channels to resolve the issues through dialogue and consultations.

The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated after around 250 Chinese and Indian soldiers were engaged in a violent face-off on the evening of May 5 which spilled over to the next day before the two sides agreed to "disengage" following a meeting at the level of local commanders.

Over 100 Indian and Chinese soldiers were injured in the violence.

The incident in Pangong Tso was followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9.

It is learnt that both India and China are looking at a solution to the issue through talks.

On May 5, the Indian and the Chinese army personnel clashed with iron rods, sticks, and even resorted to stone-pelting in the Pangong Tso lake area in which soldiers on both sides sustained injuries.

In a separate incident, nearly 150 Indian and Chinese military personnel were engaged in a face-off near Naku La Pass in the Sikkim sector on May 9. At least 10 soldiers from both sides sustained injuries.

The troops of India and China were engaged in a 73-day stand-off in Doklam tri-junction in 2017 which even triggered fears of a war between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-km-long LAC. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet while India contests it.

Both sides have been asserting that pending the final resolution of the boundary issue, it is necessary to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas.

## China Occupied 640 Sq Km

the proposal for BDCA was presented by China, which had been keen to get it signed before Li's visit", the report added. In fact, the BDCA, like all other previous bilateral agreements signed by the two sides in 1993, 1996, 2005 and 2012, has remained ineffective in checking Chinese incursions in Ladakh. On an average, PLA intrusions occur 250-300 times annually and usually during July and August when the weather is favorable. From 2010 to 2013, China made nearly 600 incursions into the Indian side.

Over time, China has only added newer and greater claims on areas in Ladakh, in addition to the known disputed areas over which India and China fought in 1962.

In the 1950s, China had surreptitiously built a 179 km road in the Indian territory of Aksai Chin, which eventually led to a dispute and talks, followed by the 1962 war. After seven decades, from the 4,056 km disputed border between the two countries, China has slowly reduced it to merely 2,000 km in its claims. Apart from the military build-up, China has slowly invested in infrastructure in the disputed areas of Ladakh.

## UN Chief Calls For Restraint

and able" to ease the tensions, amid the continuing standoff between the armies of the two Asian giants at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"...That would be for the parties involved to decide who they would want to mediate this, not for us to opine. We're, obviously, looking at the situation, and we would urge all the parties involved to avoid any action that would make the situation even more tense, Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said at the daily press briefing on Wednesday. Dujarric was asked about the tensions on the border between India and China and how concerned is the UN and the Secretary General. He was also asked if the Secretary General thinks that Trump would make a good mediator in the situation.

The nearly 3,500-km-long LAC is the de-facto border between India and China. Several areas along the LAC in Ladakh and North Sikkim have witnessed major military build-up by both the Indian and Chinese armies recently, in a clear signal of escalating tension and hardening of respective positions by the two sides even two weeks after they were engaged in two separate face-offs. India has said that the Chinese military was hindering normal patrolling by its troops along the LAC in Ladakh and Sikkim and has strongly refuted Beijing's contention that the escalating tension between the two armies was triggered by trespassing of Indian forces across the Chinese side.

"Any suggestion that Indian troops had undertaken activity across the LAC in the Western sector or the Sikkim sector is not accurate. Indian troops are fully familiar with the alignment of the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas and abide by it scrupulously," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said at an online media briefing last week.

## Govt Announces CAT

The notifications come around ten days after J&K high court had sought "competent authority's" view on suggestion for having one CAT bench each at Jammu and Srinagar.

Hearing separate petitions, a division bench of Justices Rajesh Bindal and Sanjay Dhar had asked Vishal Sharma, Assistant Solicitor General of India, to seek instructions from the "competent authority" about the suggestion made by Abhinav Sharma, president Jammu Bar Association, about one bench each at Jammu and Srinagar.

Abhinav Sharma had submitted that considering that on an average 25-30 cases are filed daily before both the benches of the High Court pertaining to service matters, one bench in Jammu and Kashmir may not be sufficient. "There should be at least be one bench each at Jammu and Srinagar, to start with," he said.

Earlier, the ASGI Vishal Sharma, had submitted that immediate steps are being taken to constitute bench of CAT in J&K and it has been decided to station a bench "here". But, he said, for the purpose proper infrastructure will be required, such as court rooms and the residential accommodation for the members of the bench.

"Number of members of bench will be decided by the Chairman of CAT considering the requirement as per the cases filed and transferred from High Court," he had said.

He had submitted that the moment accommodation is provided to CAT, required staff shall be deputed to take charge of files of the pending cases from the High Court.

Advocate General D C Raina had suggested one complex for

using as court by CAT at Jammu—the building where earlier Accountability Commission was functional. He had submitted that some other suitable vacant government building can also be short listed. He had also apprised the court that one building was short listed at Srinagar also but the same having been declared as heritage building another one is being located. (GNS)

## HC Upholds Mian Qayoom's

that the "FIRs and the grounds of detention depict and relate to the secessionist ideology of the detainee, entertained, developed, nourished and nurtured by him over decades." The Court further observed that Advocate General has submitted "the ideology nourished and nurtured by the detainee cannot be confined or limited to time, qualify it to be called stale or fresh, unless of course, the person concerned declares and establishes by conduct and expression that he has shunned the ideology."

The bench in its order observed that in the light of the argument taken by the Advocate General, "we leave it to the detainee to decide whether he would wish to take advantage of the stand of the Advocate General and make a representation to the concerned authorities to abide by it."

"Simultaneously, we also leave it to the discretion of the government and the concerned competent authority to take a decision in terms of relevant provisions of JK PSA on any such representation, if made by the detainee." "It is made clear that an adverse order on any such application, if made, shall not entail any legal proceeding, whatsoever," the Court observed.

## Farooq Abdullah, 4 Others

Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and state election commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir and the four states will be its ex-officio members.

The commission will delimit the constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, a Law Ministry notification had earlier said.

The Commission had met on Thursday to review the progress of work so far.

## Vehicle-Borne IED Blast

HM and JeM militants were planning to launch a big suicidal strike against security forces using car bomb. When the input matured on Wednesday, we developed it and nakas were placed in Pulwama by the security forces, Kumar told reporters here. He said in the evening, when the suspected car, about which the police already had inputs, reached a naka, the security forces fired some warning shots and the militant turned the car away and fled.

"At another naka, the forces again fired some warning shots and the militant fled from the spot, taking advantage of darkness, and left the car behind. The forces used lights to check the vehicle from a distance after finding something suspicious. We tightened the cordon and waited for the first light of the day.

"This morning, a bomb disposal squad reached the spot and saw the vehicle was laden with explosives. The IED was diffused in a technical way by the police, Army and paramilitary CRPF. The Pulwama police, with the help of security forces, have averted a major tragedy and I congratulate all of the forces," he said.

The IGP said the police had inputs that JeM was planning to launch such an attack on the anniversary of Jang-e-Badr day the 17th day of Muslim fasting month of Ramzan – but could not undertake it then because the forces had taken pre-emptive measures.

"However, the input got developed on Wednesday and we suspect Adil, who is a HM militant but also works with JeM, and Fauji bhai, a Pakistani militant and JeM commander in Pulwama are involved in the planning of the attack, he said. Kumar said the militants were planning to target the state forces vehicles using about 40-45 kgs of explosives in the same manner as the February 14, 2019 Awantipora attack. "We are calling an expert team from the outside to investigate it. Since the explosive debris went up about 50 metres in the air, it seems that the weight of the explosives would have been about 40-45 kgs," he said.

## After Blast, A Cracked

lies in ruins today after a powerful IED explosion battered the house, breaking doors and windows and causing a crack in the plinth.

"I'm devastated," an inconsolable Mir told Kashmir Observer. "I spent my hard earned money to raise this house and today it lies in ruins."

A farmer by profession, Mir has a family of four. His eldest son Mudasir is a medical student and younger one Athar is in sixth standard. His only daughter is a class 12 student.

Narrating the horror he witnessed since Wednesday night, Mir said that he and his family were having dinner when gunshots rattled the area around 9:45pm. Presuming it to be an attack on nearby Rajpora police station, Mir asked his family to finish their dinner quickly.

"Around 20 minutes later, a posse of security men knocked the main gate of our house," Mir continued. "The cops told me that their officer wants to see me. My family pleaded before them not to take me away. They left and returned later with my brother Bilal Ahmad and neighbor Nisar Ahmad." He said all of them were escorted to meet a senior officer. The officer, he said, gave a torch to his brother and asked him to check the number plate of the car parked around 30 feet from his house.

"My brother went near the car, captured the video and gave it to the officer. Around 2am, cops released us and asked us to stay indoors saying that the car was carrying an IED," Mir added.

Kashmir Observer reached out to the district police for their comments on the incident. A top officer refused, saying IGP Kashmir would brief the press soon.

Complementing all the security agencies for the "successful operation", IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar in a presser on Thursday informed that a timely action averted a major tragedy. "A suicide attacker jumped two checkpoints before leaving the vehicle behind late night yesterday at Ayengund area of Rajpora, Pulwama," IGP Kumar said.

At least 40 to 45 kg of explosive material were fitted in the vehicle, he said, and a blast could've been similar to the 2019 Pulwama explosion in south Kashmir that killed 40 CRPF personnel.

"They [militants] were planning the suicide attack on 17th of Ramadhan [Jang-e-Badr]," IGP said, "but couldn't do it due to our intensified operations against militants."

Meanwhile, Mir termed the hours before the blast as a long horrifying night.

"We couldn't sleep at all," he said. "All of us were huddled in a room waiting for the sun to rise."

Around 7am, Mir said that security personnel asked him to leave the house with his family and cattle towards a safer place. Minutes later, he said he heard a deafening sound and a thick curls of smoke emerging near his house.

"When I visited my house again, the doors and windows were broken into pieces, glasses strewn in all the rooms. Everything lied shattered and scattered," he lamented.

Many locals who visited Mir in flocks to express their solidarity with him claimed that the damage to the houses, including Mir's could have been avoided, if the government forces had taken all the precautions and taken the car to a desolate place before diffusing the IED it carried.

"There's a huge chunk of barren land where the IED could have been diffused," Muzaffar Ahmad, a local said. "Why did they choose the village and caused damage to the house?"

## One More Covid-19 Death

Anantnag and Baramulla with five deaths each, Kulgam has reported four while Budgam and Jammu have two each and one death each has been reported from Bandipora and Udhampur.

## Covid-19 Crosses 2000

detected in J&K. While 101 of them are from Kashmir, 14 are from Jammu," the officials said.

Among fresh cases, 45 cases were reported from Kupwara, 16 from Baramulla, 11 each from Srinagar & Budgam, eight each from Jammu & Shopian, seven from Anantnag, three each from Kathua & Pulwama, one each from Udhampur, Poonch & Reasi, they said.

They said 93 persons who tested positive are travellers.

The number of confirmed cases has now reached 2,036, out of which 1,636 are in Kashmir, while 400 are in Jammu, the officials said.

There are 1150 active cases of the coronavirus disease in J&K – 849 in Kashmir and 301 in Jammu – and 859 (763 from Kashmir and 96 from Jammu) patients have recovered, according to officials.

The J&K has witnessed 27 COVID-19 (24 from Kashmir, 3 from Jammu) deaths so far, including the one that took place on Thursday.

## Probe Ordered After 6

out to be positive later.

In this regard, officials said that a committee headed by Additional Deputy Commissioner has been constituted. Deputy CMO and BDO Tral are its members, they said.

The committee shall submit its report to the Authorities within a period of 3 days.

Pertinently, a few days ago a group of returnees having travel history from outside J&K were quarantined at Tral and were subsequently sampled for COVID-19.

CMO Pulwama said that sampling, quarantining and discharge of returnees is to be done as per the government order and is the domain of Block Medical Officer and his medical teams.

Upon preliminary verification it was surfaced that BMO Tral has "negligently" discharged 6 persons from the quarantine Centre without waiting for their test reports, he said.

While taking cognizance of the matter, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Raghav Langer ordered the probe into the matter. He said such "sheer negligence" on the part of BMO Tral has made hundreds of lives vulnerable with a looming potential to spike a new series of infections in the district. He said Special teams were deputed overnight to the respective areas for quarantining of potential contacts and subsequent sampling of the same. He said that preterm discharging has made the lives of their family members and other contacts vulnerable. (GNS)

## Special Rules for Fast

and Information, Rohit Kansal, who is also the Government Spokesperson, at a press conference here on Wednesday. Kansal informed that the decision of laying a quick and simple procedure for filling up of Class IV vacancies follows the decision of the Government to notify over 10,000 posts for Accelerated Recruitment at all levels- Doctors, Vets, Panchayat Accounts Assistants and Class-IV employees.

Kansal said that the accelerated recruitment process shall be started with Class IV vacancies. The Accelerated Recruitments Committee has already identified 7052 Class-IV vacant posts at the UT, Divisional and District cadre levels in various departments of the Government. All these posts shall be filled up through a Special Recruitment Drive. The concerned departments shall place their indents to the Services Selection Board (SSB) through the General Administration Department. The SSB shall be sole agency for the Special Recruitment Drive. He said that in order to simplify the process and cut down all delays, the Administrative Council has also ordered that all concerned departments will make necessary amendments/modifications in their relevant Recruitment Rules based on this decision alone and that no separate approval shall be sought for this purpose.

Speaking about the procedure and criterion laid down in the Jammu and Kashmir Appointment to Class-IV (Special Recruitment) Rules, 2020, the spokesperson said that these rules address many of the deficiencies of the earlier rules, adding that these Rules clearly define the procedure for referral of Class-IV vacancies, clubbing of the vacancies, preparation of wait lists, select lists etc. with the aim to fill all advertised vacancies within a period of one year, extendable by six months. Giving details of the selection process, Kansal said that the marks obtained in the written test of 100 marks will have primacy in the selection criteria. There will be no interview. He reiterated that no documents including domicile certificate will be required to be submitted at the time of filling the application form.

Explaining the significant features of the rules, the spokesperson added that the rules provide for additional weightage to various marginalized categories. He elaborated that that in order to give benefit to the marginalized sections comprising of widows, divorced/judicially separated women and orphan girls keeping into consideration the extreme compassion involved in their case, an additional weightage of five marks shall be given to such candidates. Similarly, an additional weightage of five marks shall be given to those candidates with no family member in government service. Daily Rated Workers and other similar candidates who have been engaged for at least five years shall be given an additional weightage of five marks. They shall also be given a 5 years age relaxation in the upper age limit.

Kansal reminded that the procedure and rules for domicile certificate had already been notified under The Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020. He added that these Rules prescribe a very simple and time bound procedure for issuance of Domicile Certificates. He said that PRC Holders will be eligible on the basis of their PRCs alone and no other document shall be required in their case. Kashmiri migrants too can get the Domicile certificate on production of either a PRC or Certificate of registration as a migrant. A special limited provision has also been made for bonafide migrants and bonafide displaced persons who may have not registered so far.

The certificates shall be issued expeditiously and there shall be a timeline of 15 days for issuance of the certificate after which the applicant shall be free to approach an Appellate Authority. There are provisions for penalties and revisional powers. The rules also have a provision that applications for grant of Domicile Certificate can be submitted either physically or electronically online. The Competent Authority can also issue domicile certificate(s) electronically. The procedure has an inbuilt mechanism to ensure speed and transparency and no one need to have any apprehensions on this count.

## Mission Education: Two

to the 52 students from first to eighth grade. Each classroom has benches according to the strength of the students. A proper ironed uniform, tie, and a school identity card clipped with the lanyard, make students of this school look second to none. A well-maintained toilet has come up against the school wall. A small godown is sandwiched between office and other

building. Doubled up as kitchen, two ladies are spotted there – winnowing rice and cleaning other eatables meant for mid-day meal.

Apart from the campus overhaul, the duo's efforts have completely transformed the academic scene of the school. Conducted by District Institute of Education & Training (DIET), the result registers of Class 8 of last eight years that the writer himself went through reads the "pass" on every page.

"Being the first graduate from Waripora Payeen, Rabbani along with other teacher has improved the education graph in the village," says Gulam Mohammad Bhat, the school headmaster, calling the duo's posting as blessing for villagers.

Having seen the travails of poverty at first hand, Rabbani asserts that only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches.

"I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth but have worked hard to make a cut in government sector," the affable teacher says, while laying bare the efforts he made in his career.

"I would bind books, paint the walls, made signboards to fund my education. My teachers would drop by, every now and then, with a helping hand to keep my education journey on the rails."

Rabbani, a journalism graduate from Degree College Baramulla, continues that his students have been doing really good at academic front, as well as in various co-curricular activities for a long time now, thus setting a kind of record in the zone. As students kept on passing with flying colours, the literal landscape of the village also witnessed an unprecedented change.

Naseer Yatoo, a son of a farmer, is one of the alumni of this school, embellishing the CV of the school, with his academic acumen.

Pursuing his graduation in Political Science from Dayal Singh College which is affiliated with Delhi University, Naseer reasons the lack of counseling, besides poverty, behind the educational backwardness in his village.

"While I was lucky enough to get a proper counselling at right time, which landed me in a Delhi campus, others continue to falter," informs Naseer who enrolled under the Prime Minister Scholarship Scheme at his college.

Though everyone has not the stars on their side but Naseer's journey to Delhi brought home the point that you can avail these schemes and let your children's education go unhindered despite financial hiccups.

"Now, a lot has changed in our village," continues Naseer, who ranked 11 in Arts stream in the entire Kashmir division, in his Class 12. "People take a mileage out of different schemes for the education of their kids which is a positive sign for the village."

While many credit the teacher duo for the change, some students still end up in quarries and in fields because the tentacles of poverty are too hard to snap off.

"Most village students drop out because of the hand-to-mouth income back home," complains Fateh Mohammad Ilahi, the elder Panch, sporting a trimmed beard and a skullcap. "They would've gone ahead in their lives and careers, but due to poverty, they're forced to start earning to supplement the family income."

The village, therefore, has half a dozen graduates—some of whom vainly continue to apply for different posts, while other disillusioned lots have given up and landed in the fields as sun-tanned workers.

Among them is Hafizullah Ilahi, who does many odd jobs, to keep the hearth going.

A Humanities graduate from Degree College Baramulla, Hafizullah's dreams hit the dead-end when he witnessed financial conditions at home in dire straits.

"Poverty doesn't allow you to sit home and prepare for exams, it takes away that luxury," says Hafizullah, with a wry smile. "They would've gone ahead in their lives and careers, but due to poverty, they're forced to start earning to supplement the family income."

Aware of these disadvantaged stories, the teacher duo, raised by hard times, tirelessly works to educate and empower their own people.

And while acknowledging their efforts, one of their students, Sahil Rasheed says the duo always goes out of their ways for students.

"They teach us in a friendly way which gives us freedom to pose questions whenever we've doubts regarding any subject," says Sahil, as his classmates nod in approval. "They make the school a much desired place for us."

Much of this compassionate connection with their students comes from their own deprived upbringings.

"In my student days," says Fayaz Ilahi, another teacher, "I would give a miss to classes on two days every week."

During those two days, he says, he along with other village boys would work as labourers to earn their school fee and finance their needs.

"That's how," he says, "I've grown up and studied."

The hard life used to make him melancholic, quite often, but Ilahi would pledge to change it someday.

In 2010, his moment came, when he was recruited as Rehbar-e-Taleem teacher, on his Class 12 qualification basis, and was posted in his own village. He got regularised in 2015.

"In all these years, I've seen many village boys ending up in fields and quarries," Ilahi continues. "We're trying to shore up their spirits, so that they could earn their livelihood in a much respectable way."

## Sopore Woman Delivers

Our staff including a senior doctor and other Para medical staff who had come into her contact was put under quarantine," she said.

She added that the family members of the lady have also been kept under quarantine at her home—(KNO)

## 2 OGWs Held In North

"Incriminating materials including arms & ammunition were recovered from their possession. Case FIR number 68/2020 under relevant section of law has been registered at Police Station Kralgund and further investigation in the matter is in progress," the police spokesperson said.

He identified the accused as Asif Ahmad Dar of Tulwari Langate and Muzamil Ahmad Peer of Muqam Shahwali.

## 4 Gamblers Arrested

has been registered in Police Station Khrew," the spokesperson said.

## Teenage Girl Dies

for last rites after completion of legal formalities, the officer said—(KNO)

## Police Arrests 10 Bovine

Senior Superintendent of Police Rajiv Pandey said.

The animals were rescued and the accused arrested, he said. Similarly, 105 bovines were rescued from BattalBallian, Jakhani and Bharat Nagar areas. The animals taken on foot by the smugglers towards Kashmir without any permission, Pandey said.

A total of 10 smugglers -- Sameer Ahmed, Mohammad Rafi, Mohammad Sharif, Manzoor Ali, MohmmadAsif, Showkat Ali, BhagHussain, Noor ilahi, Mohammad Din, and Shabir Ahmed -- were arrested, he said.

Cases were registered at Police Station Udhampur under relevant sections of law and further investigation is on, the official said.