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Continuous attack of Sikkim vehicles on

Sikkim transporters call indefinite strike

PRASHANT ACHARYA

SILIGURI, JUNE 29 /- /A Sikkim Nationalised Transport (SNT) government bus was vandalized at New Jalpaiguri on Thursday again after a goods truck was looted on Wednesday in Siliguri. The driver of the government bus said that as soon as the passengers alighted from the bus a group of people started vandalizing the bus with lathis and stones. He said that he managed to flee from the mob to save his life.

Meanwhile All Sikkim Truck Drivers Association has declared an indefinite truck strike through a

press release issued on Thursday. According to the press release it stated that the trucks plying to Siliguri, West Bengal to ferry goods are being vandalized and the drivers' lives are at threat. We have decided to go for an indefinite strike from today itself. We took stock of the June 28th incident of Siliguri and after proper fact finding we took the decision to go for indefinite strike in Siliguri. We will continue unless the government of West Bengal provides us complete assurance that no Sikkim vehicles are vandalized in Siliguri. There were few trucks that have plied to Siliguri due to lack of information or delay

in availing information so we appeal the State authorities to make proper arrangements for their safe passage to Siliguri.

Today they will submit a memorandum to the CS, Home Secretary, Transport secretary, DGP, DC and SP requesting the authorities to take appropriate steps and speak to their counterparts in smooth operation of the Highway. An appeal will also be made to the Centre to look into the matter seriously as Sikkim is a border state and it's only connect with a lifeline that is NH10. Arrangements must be made to keep the highway open. A demand has been put forward to the State police



Former CP C S Lepcha welcoming new CP Neeraj Kumar Singh at Siliguri Metropolitan Office. Lepcha has been transferred to Kolkata as IGP Armed Police-EOI Pkhs

Army Chief takes stock of situation in Sikkim

GANGTOK/NEW DELHI, JUNE 29 /- /Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat today visited formation headquarters of the force in North Sikkim and was briefed by top commanders about the security situation in the wake of the face-off between Indian troops and Chinese military over a disputed area. Rawat, on a two-day visit, was apprised about the tense situation on the border at the Army's 17 Mountain Division even as China, hardening its position on the stand-off, warned that the Indian Army should learn "historical lessons", in an oblique reference to the 1962 war. The Army Chief also visited areas under the 17 Mountain Division, tasked to guard the Sino-India border in the Sikkim sector, and took stock of various operational aspects. "Gen Rawat was briefed about the operational matters," an official source said. The genesis of the flashpoint was China's attempts to build a road at strategically key area of Dongdong, the linking junction to the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet tri-junction could give China a major military advantage over India. The Indian Army had blocked construction of the road by China in Dongdong, a disputed territory between China and Bhutan. Of the 480 km-long Indo-China border from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh, a 220-km section falls in Sikkim. Official sources said China had removed an old bunker of the Indian Army in Dongdong by using a bulldozer after the Indian side refused to accede to its request, which triggered the face-off. Referring to Gen. Rawat's comments earlier this month that India is ready for a "two-and-a-half front war", the Chinese military today rejected the remarks as "extremely irresponsible" asking him to "stop clamouring for war".

AT A GLANCE

Vice-Presidential poll on Aug 5

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission of India (ECI) today announced the dates and full schedule for holding election for the post of vice president. Making an announcement, CEC Nasim Zaidi said, "Last date of filing nominations is July 19 and polls will be held on August 5." Results will also be declared on August 5," the CEC said in a press conference.

Pakistan summons Indian diplomat

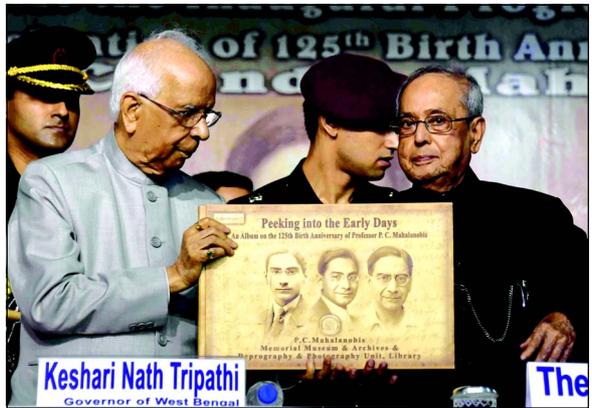
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan today summoned India's acting Deputy High Commissioner over the alleged ceasefire violation by Indian troops in Kashmir which it claimed to have killed a civilian. Foreign Office (FO) spokesman said in a statement that Indian forces resorted to firing in Nikiyal Sector yesterday, resulting in the death of a 22-year-old civilian Abdul Wahab of Dohilla village. Four other civilians were injured.

Prez welcomes GST; thanks PM, FM for its implementation

EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, JUNE 29 /- /President Pranab Mukherjee who today welcomed the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) from July 1 thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union finance minister Arun Jaitley for the reforms for the 130 crore people in the country.

The President who was in Kolkata today said this while addressing a Global Summit organised by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India. "With different kinds of taxes in the country a consumer had to pay 30 to 40 per cent more on the cost of production of goods or services. From the days of Yashwantrao Sinha who was finance minister in Vajpayee government to my days in Finance Ministry before I assumed the office of President we tried to have the GST. I introduced in 2011 a Constitutional Amendment Bill to facilitate the GST. But it could not go through," the President said. He also said that though there were bearing transaction costs on human resources, material resources and even financial resources on having multiple taxes in the country GST could not be imposed on the people. "We have delayed to change with consent. To get people along with us, to accommodate various opinions in democratic process," he said. The President also said how after 30 years of a fragile coalition government 65 per cent of 800 million people in the country exercised their franchise to do away with coalition government. Meanwhile Union minister of state for finance and corporate affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal who was present at the event said that trial runs of the GST Network - which provided the technology backbone for the new tax regime - had been successfully carried out and all the mandatory tests had been done. "We have carried



President Pranab Mukherjee at the birth anniversary celebration of Professor P. C. Mahalanobis at ISI, Kolkata

out the GSTN trial runs. The software has undergone all the mandatory tests." Meghwal told newsmen on the sidelines of the event. Meghwal further added that return filing under GST will be simpler. "The return to be filed on the 10th of every month will be the main one. Subsequent ones will be generated automatically," he said. Asked about West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's objections and TMC's boycotting of the mid-night launch programme Meghwal said the party and its MPs had supported the tax reform in

Parliament. "I have nothing to say about TMC and Banerjee boycotting GST launch. The roll out happens as scheduled. But, yes, Bengal will benefit the most from the new tax regime as it is a destination-based tax," he added. For the President, this was perhaps a special visit to the City of Joy. "This may be my last visit to Kolkata in my capacity as the president of the Republic of India," he said. Mukherjee, who has lived here and also made several visits to the city as the president, as a minister and an MP, was here to inaugurate celebrations of

the 125th birth anniversary of P C Mahalanobis at the Indian Statistical Institute here. He expressed happiness at having received an opportunity to address "mighty minds" in the form of teachers, researchers and students during the function at a time when he was nearing completion of his tenure. Mukherjee said "dogmatism and rigidity" of mind were the most obstructive forces for progress and development and one should accept ideas with an open mind and then analyse them to find solutions to problems.

Mamata slams Centre on Air India issue, GST rollout

PURBA BURDWAN, JUNE 29 /- /Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today criticised the Narendra Modi led Union government for trying to 'privatise' the national carrier Air India and introduce GST in a "hurried" manner, saying "we do not support this." "They (Centre) are trying to sell Air India entirely. Air India is the nation's pride. We don't support this," Mamata said at a public meeting here. The Union cabinet had on Wednesday

clearly disinvested of the beleaguered national airline. Air India, which has floundered amid stiff competition from no-frills rivals and reported at least seven years of losses. "The Centre is also trying to shift the Tea Board of India headquarters from Kolkata," she claimed. In a veiled but obvious reference to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she alleged: "Attempts are being made to throttle democracy. There is dictatorship in the country."

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Killing people in name of cow protection unacceptable: PM

AHMEDABAD, JUNE 29 /- /Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said killing of people in the name of cow protection is not acceptable, remarks that came amid a spurt of attacks by cow vigilantes and a wave of protests. Delivering a speech to mark the centenary of the Sabarmati ashram here and 150th birth anniversary of Shri Mahatma Gandhi, a guru to Mahatma Gandhi, Modi said unleashing violence against others went against the ideals of the Father of the Nation. "Killing people in the name of 'gau bhakti' is not acceptable. This is not something Mahatma Gandhi would approve," he said. "Let's all work together. Let's create the India of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams. Let's create an India our freedom fighters would be proud of," the Prime Minister said.

"No person in this nation has the right to take the law in his or her own hands," he said. The Prime Minister's remarks come against the backdrop of growing incidents of cow vigilantism. A Muslim youth was last week killed on board a Mathura-bound train by people who taunted his family and repeatedly called them "anti-nationals" and

"beef eaters". "Violence never has and never will solve any problem. As a society, there is no place for violence," Modi said. Thousands of people across the country had on Wednesday taken to the streets in a citizens' protest named 'Not in My Name' against the recent incidents of mob killings. Holding placards that read "Break the Silence", "No Place for Islamophobia" and "Shed Hate not Blood" among others, the protesters had said they had gathered to send out a message that there is a need to unite for a cause. Meanwhile, amid reports of alleged lynching incidents targeted at minorities, Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today said there was no atmosphere of fear or insecurity prevailing among the community. Naqvi said some forces wanted an "agenda of destruction" to dominate the Centre's "agenda of development" and action was being taken against them. The Union minister of state for minority affairs and parliamentary affairs, however, said such incidents (of lynching) cannot be justified and appropriate steps will be taken against the perpetrators, while reiterating that the government was committed to its development plank.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting Sabarmati Ashram, in Ahmedabad on Thursday

Modi's words sound hollow, says Oppn

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29 /- /Opposition leaders on Thursday questioned the sincerity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks against cow vigilantism, saying little has changed despite his earlier warnings. Modi, speaking at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad on Thursday, said that killings in the name of cow are unacceptable and that nobody has the right to take law in their hands. "The Prime Minister should ask himself as to who has created this atmosphere of lawlessness in the country. Pro forma condemnations are not enough. The Prime Minister must reaffirm that he believes in the founding values of the Indian state," Congress spokesperson and former Union Minister Manish Tewari told a news agency. Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Gopalkrishna Gandhi, in a sarcasm-laced remark, said the "presence of Gandhi's living spirit in Sabarmati Ashram" must have affected Modi.