

Troops trade gunfire in Kashmir border

51 Pak, 3 Indian soldiers killed

JAMMU, India, Aug 24: At least 51 Pakistani troops have been killed in heavy fighting with the Indian army across their Kashmir border, a military spokesman said here today, reports AFP.

Forty-five other Pakistani soldiers have been injured in the fighting which started Saturday evening and is still continuing, the spokesman said in this winter capital of Kashmir state.

The spokesman said the Indian army had lost three men, including a major, while six soldiers had been injured.

In Islamabad, the Pakistani Defence Ministry confirmed the fighting but denied Pakistani soldiers had been killed.

Earlier AFP said, at least three Indian and 10 Pakistani soldiers were killed in heavy fighting across their disputed Kashmir border, Indian Defence sources said today.

Around 20 others were

wounded on both sides as the two armies traded heavy machine gun and artillery fire from Saturday evening in Uri and Kargil sectors, the sources said.

The firing is still continuing, a military official said in this winter capital of Kashmir state.

An official said the Indian soldiers were killed in Uri, about 400 kilometres (250 miles) northwest of this winter capital of Kashmir. Saturday evening.

Two Pakistanis died in Uri and eight in Kargil, about 500 kilometres (312 miles) northeast of Jammu, when the Indian army retaliated.

Indian and Pakistani troops deployed along their disputed Kashmir frontier regularly exchange fire. The latest fighting was the worst since April when three Indian civilians were killed in Pakistani attacks.

Earlier Reuter said, Pakistan on Saturday accused India

of killing three people with unprovoked heavy weapons fire along the line separating the two sides in disputed Kashmir and said the attacks seemed aimed at sabotaging planned peace talks.

Defence Ministry officials, confirming reports from residents in the region under attack, also said three people were wounded by the Indian artillery and automatic weapons fire on several villages near the United Nations monitored line of control.

An earlier ministry statement had quoted a spokesman as saying the firing began in the morning and went on into the evening, with the villages of Chakothi, Sankh and Pandu being worst hit.

The spokesman said the attacks seemed to be a known Indian pattern of sabotaging dialogue whenever it was initiated to ease tension between Pakistan and India.

"There is a sinister motive of provoking inter-ethnic clashes. Many lives have been endangered by acts of sabotage and bombs blasts on railway lines," he added.

The BJP state secretary Rahul Sinha, alleged that the Manmohan government's failure to contain extremism led to spread of ethnic violence in Assam. "Moreover, some of the

International

Steps suggested to put down ethnic violence in Assam

CALCUTTA, Aug 24: The West Bengal left Front on Saturday urged the Assam Gana Parishad government to take firm steps to put down violent extremist attacks on Bengali and non-Bodo communities in Assam, while the state BJP accused some of the members of the Mahanta ministry of having "secret links" with the terrorists, reports PTI.

The left front chairman, Sajal Dasgupta, condemned the heinous killings by the Bodo extremists in Assam, and said the extremist groups had been systematically launching attacks on the Bengalis and non-Bodos with a view to driving them out of their areas.

"There is a sinister motive of provoking inter-ethnic clashes. Many lives have been endangered by acts of sabotage and bombs blasts on railway lines," he added.

The BJP state secretary Rahul Sinha, alleged that the Manmohan government's failure to contain extremism led to spread of ethnic violence in Assam. "Moreover, some of the

ministers in his cabinet are having secret links with the terrorists," he alleged.

Sinha, however, expressed happiness at the appointment of K P S Gill as security advisor by the Assam government to deal with the situation.

Another report adds: The scheduled caste communities are living in fear in West Bengal, the Bahujan Samaj Party chief and Member of Parliament, Kanshiram, has claimed.

The upper caste people Grabbel all coveted posts in the state after partition, and thereby relegating the SCS to the background, the BSP supremo said at a rally here yesterday.

The SCS of the state were forced to live in faraway places like Andaman and Dandakaranya as a result of the migration and "subjugation" he said.

Warning of fresh agitation by the SCS for their right, Kanshiram said the BSP would implement its own 'ism' after finishing off the 'Manavada.'

This apart, names of 20 district unit presidents of the organisation were also announced.

On August 13, Ms Banerjee announced formation of a 117-member steering committee.

There would be organisational elections within September 13, she said.

Meanwhile, Ms Banerjee threatened to block roads in the state if the centre resorted to petroleum price hike. The leftists are exposed by supporting the proposed price increase, she alleged.

The 67-member "Trinamul Youth Congress" would include 14 women members, Ms Banerjee told newsmen here.

She said that Sobhandev Chattopadhyay, Mohd Asfaq and Swapna Debnath would be heading the labour, minority and panchayat cells of the organisation respectively.

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