



JPNN|Jammu | Jan 06, 2015| Pakistan fired mortar shells and gunshots at over 60 villages and scores of forward posts in Kathua and Samba districts in Jammu and Kashmir in continuing ceasefire violations over which it has refused to take protest notes from the Indian side. Nearly 10,000 people have fled from the border areas with 7,500 taking shelter in camps set up by the government in safer areas in Kathua and Samba districts since the latest round of ceasefire violations by Pakistan started on New Year Eve, officials said today. As tensions on the Indo-Pak border escalated, Border Security Force (BSF) Director General D K Pathak asserted that India wants peace along the border but will retaliate strongly if fired upon. "We cannot go on taking their (Pakistan) bullets," he told reporters after paying floral tributes here at a wreath laying ceremony of Jawan Devinder Singh, who died in shelling by Pakistan rangers at Khawara post in Samba sector yesterday. Pathak said Pakistan has refused to take protest notes from the BSF on ceasefire violations resulting in breakdown in communication between the two sides. The latest round of ceasefire violations by Pakistan has left four jawans and a woman dead while five Pakistani rangers were killed in retaliatory firing.

As many as 50 villages and many border posts were targeted in Kathua up to 2300 hours on Monday and the shelling resumed around 0400 hours today, Deputy Commissioner Kathua Shahid Iqbal Choudhary told PTI, adding it was so intense that mortar shells landed about four km inside the Indian territory. The 82mm mortar shells landed in Sherpur, Chakra, Lachipur and Londi areas of Hiranagar sector, which are located deep inside Indian territory, he said. F troops also retaliated resulting in exchanges till 0700 hours today, the DC said.

However, there was no loss of life or injury to anyone among civilians in the firing and shelling since last night, officials said. In Samba, Pakistani shelling continued till 2230 hours last night targeting over 10 to 12 villages and several BoPs, SSP, Samba, Anil Magotra said. "...If firing comes from their side, we definitely have to respond to that. Because we cannot go on taking

their bullets and seeing civilians getting injured on our side and keep silent--that can never happen," Pathak said.

"We want to restore normalcy along the border but we are forced to retaliate because Pakistan Rangers resort to firing on us," Pathak said. "Pakistan Rangers are not accepting protest notes over ceasefire violations. There is no communication between the two sides," he added. Pathak said ceasefire violations by Pakistan could be an attempt to divert attention of its public from the Peshawar carnage. Nearly 140 schoolchildren were massacred in a recent terror attack at an army-run school in the Pakistani city. Agency