

The Arunachal Times

Arunachal CM says recruitment rallies are being conducted specifically for locals

Underscoring the importance of making all the Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) fully functional, Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Friday directed the State Civil Aviation Secretary to personally intervene and coordinate with the Indian Air Force (IAF) authorities to sort out all pending issues.

He sought a detailed report from the Secretary by October 30.

The discussions should be result-oriented and not just a beginning for another round of discussion, the chief minister said during a meeting with the IAF Chief of Eastern Air Command Air Marshal C Hari Kumar here this morning.

“We have had several meetings with the IAF authorities regarding the ALGs in the past but few issues remain unresolved. We need to move ahead with concrete decisions so that all the ALGs can be made functional as soon as possible,” Pema said.

Seven ALGs in Arunachal Pradesh were handed over to the IAF for making them functional. Of these, five ALGs at Ziro, Aalo, Pasighat, Mechuka and Walong have been completed and other two, one at Tuting is scheduled to be completed by December this year and the other at Tawang by April 2017.

However, certain issues like encroachment and constructions around few of these ALGs remain a security concern that have to be resolved before fully operationalizing them.

Admitting that the concerns raised by IAF cannot be compromised, the chief minister called upon all stakeholders, particularly the Civil Aviation Department and local administrations to create awareness amongst the people and convince them to abide by the pre-conditions.

He sought special attention of the state government officials on ALGs at Ziro and Aalo that have major issues of air safety and air-space, specifically for use of fixed-wing aircrafts, as raised by IAF due to presence of civilian population in the vicinity of landing strips.

Chief Secretary Shakuntala D Gamlin observed that confidence of the local populace, who have emotional and historical attachments with their habitations, has to be won and an amicable solution evolved in consensus with them.

To one of the major queries raised by the State Government on use of the ALGs for civilian purposes, Air Marshal Kumar informed that the IAF has absolutely no objection to it. In fact, he said, IAF will be more than happy to see civilian aircrafts land on these ALGs.

“We make it clear that we have no objection to a civilian terminus in these ALGs. It is upon the State Government, the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to decide how to go about it. Establishment and operationalization of civilian terminus and passenger/commercial flights is at their sole discretion,” the Air Marshal informed.

Participating in the discussion, Pasighat MLA Kaling Moyong requested the IAF to keep at least 50% reservation for employment of local youths for manning these ALGs, to which the Air Vice Marshal responded positively, saying that IAF is open to employ local youths as much as possible. He said recruitment rallies are being conducted specifically for locals of Arunachal Pradesh.

“We are more than willing to have as many youths of Arunachal Pradesh as possible in the IAF,” the Air Vice Marshal added.

Parliamentary Secretary and local MLA of Mechukha, Pasang D Sona, IAF Group Captain S Arunachalam, Col N Mukerjee and top state government officials also attended the discussion.