

## **Business Standard**

### **Recruit more youth from border areas in Army: Badal**

Highlighting the services rendered by residents of Punjab to the country, Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal on Sunday urged the government to start a special recruitment drive for enabling the youths of border areas to join Indian Army and para-military forces.

Interacting with the media on the sidelines of his visit to border areas of Amritsar district on Sunday, Badal recalled the spirit of courage and sacrifice of the border belt residents and stressed the need to channelise the energy of youths of this belt.

Badal said that he would soon raise this issue with the central government.

He said the state government would also approach the Ministry of Defence to impress upon it for widening the bridges on defence drains in the region. He said that it was need of the hour to facilitate the people and avoid any sort of untoward incident.

The Union Home Ministry had on Thursday directed evacuation of nearly 1,000 villages in six border districts of Punjab located close to the international border with Pakistan.

Badal said that despite the ongoing tension at the India-Pakistan border, agriculturalists would be allowed to harvest their paddy crop.

"In view of this situation, I had taken up this issue with Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who had immediately directed the Border Security Force (BSF) to allow the farmers of border region to harvest the crop. Likewise, he said government of India has also allowed the farmers having their land across the fence to reap and lift their crop," Badal said.

The Chief Minister said that the state government would soon release the pending compensation of farmers who have land across the border fence.

He said that people within 10 km area of the border were evacuated following the advisory of the government for preventing any loss of life to people.

Tension built up between India and Pakistan on last Thursday following surgical strikes carried out by the Indian Army along the Line of Control (LoC) to destroy terror launch pads in Pakistan-administered Kashmir (POK).