

NSG deployed to provide counter-drone protection to Srinagar, Jammu IAF bases: DG

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

GURGAON: Counter-terrorism commando force National Security Guard has been deployed at the IAF stations in Srinagar and Jammu to provide anti-drone security cover to these vital installations, the force's director general M A Ganapathy said on Saturday.

The first-ever drone attack took place on June 27 at the Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu where two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which came from across the border, dropped bombs, injuring two airmen and damaging a portion of a building.

The two IAF facilities in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are located close to the Pakistan border and are categorised as "sensitive" installations.

The National Security Guard (NSG) chief said the federal counter-terrorist and counter-hijack commando force is enhancing its "counter-terrorism profile" and preparing itself to meet emerging security challenges.

He said the forces' bomb disposal teams had neutralised improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and tiffin bombs, including those that were



brought by drones from Pakistan and dropped in Indian territory.

The director general (DG) was speaking during the 37th raising day celebrations of the force, also known as the 'black cats', at its garrison in Manesar here.

Ganapathy said the NSG "has been deployed" at the Srinagar and Jammu IAF stations to provide security cover to the facilities keeping in mind drone attacks and added that this system is working "successfully".

A senior officer added that this deployment "will continue till a full-fledged and independent counter-drone system is deployed at these two

bases".

The NSG has an array of anti-drone equipment, radars, jammers and drone killer guns that essentially work for perimeter security, the officer said.

Soon after the drone attack on the Jammu IAF base, he said, an NSG 'technical surveillance' team was sent to the station and it deployed its equipment there.

Later talking to the media, DG Ganapathy said drone warfare is a "new challenge" and all the security forces need to upgrade their capabilities and technology against such attacks.

"Drones are an easy way to create mischief, to drop bombs and payload like weapons and ammunition," he said.

All the security forces need to upgrade themselves vis-a-vis counter-drone technology and "I think we are capable to tackle this threat", the NSG DG said.

Asked why was the specially trained force not being involved in counter-terrorist operations being carried out in the Kashmir Valley, Ganapathy said the NSG has expertise in house intervention, hostage rescue and counter-hijack tasks and as and when

they are requisitioned, the force will respond.

Officiating as the chief guest of the event, Minister of State for Home Nitin Gadkari lauded the commando force for its operations and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought an "independent security policy" for the country.

The minister said security threats are continuously evolving including the threats of 'lone wolf' attacks and aerial strikes.

The NSG was raised as a federal counter-terrorist force in 1984 to undertake surgical commando operations to neutralise terrorist and hijack threats.

It is also a special squad that provides armed security cover to at least 13 high-risk VIPs at present.

The NSG has five hubs in the country, apart from its main garrison here, and in each of them, a team of commandos is stationed in readiness 24x7 to respond to any threat situation within a 30 minute mobilisation time-frame. The five NSG hubs or bases are located in Gandhinagar, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai and they were created post the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

CS reviews mining ops, directs installation of helpline numbers



Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta chairing a meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, on Saturday chaired a meeting to review mining activities towards ensuring the availability of construction material at reasonable prices in Jammu and Kashmir.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Revenue, Mining, Forest, Ecology & Environment, besides Director, Ecology, Environment & Remote Sensing, Member Secretary, Pollution Control Board (PCB), Divisional Commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu, all Deputy Commissioners, District SPs, and concerned officers participated in the meeting. While emphasizing the availability of various minor minerals at reasonable prices, the Chief Secretary directed the concerned to expediently complete the registration process of auctioned mines for their early operationalization so that the supply of these minerals is augmented and consequently prices are stabilized across all districts. The

Chief Secretary expressed concern over the failure of successful bidders of the e-auction of minor mineral mines in completing the required formalities. The Chief Secretary asked

the Mining Department to initiate cancellation proceedings if they fail to apply for the statutory clearances within the stipulated time frame and consider re-auction of the defunct mines. Reviewing the issue of pendency of departmental NOCs, the Chief Secretary directed the Divisional Commissioners to hold special reviews and facilitate time-bound issuance of the same. The Divisional Commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu were also directed to undertake regular market surveillance and ensure the availability of construction material at equitable rates across all districts. They were asked to analyze the difference in rates between districts and rationalize the same, besides ensuring enforcement of the notified rates by curbing any form of illegal mining or trade. They were asked to take strict penal actions against the delinquent agencies found to be associated with illegal activities and overcharging. Dr. Mehta further asked the Mining Department to install dedicated helpline numbers to facilitate grievance redressal on account of unavailability of construction materials at notified prices, besides periodically monitoring district-wise market rates and taking strict action against over pricing.

NC leader A R Rather's son Hilal Rather joins PC



Hilal Rather, joining JKPC in presence of party president and others leaders on Saturday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Hilal Rather, son of veteran National Conference leader Abdul Rahim Rather, joined the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference on Saturday.

Rather, who is out on bail in a case related to diversion of loan money taken from Jammu and Kashmir Bank, joined the People's Conference in the presence of party chairman Sajad Gani Lone.

Asked if he had consulted his father and NC leader Abdul Rahim Rather on joining Lone's party, Rather replied in the negative.

"I respect my father and he has been magnanimous in giving me space to take my own decisions. I have taken this decision on my own," he said.

Rather said he chose People's Conference as he wanted to work for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir who have immensely suffered due to the ongoing conflict.

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