

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Top LeT commander...

92 Base Hospital and their condition was stated to be stable.

This was the first encounter in Srinagar in more than two years. The last one took place in September 2022 at Nowgam. Two local terrorists of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH) were killed in that encounter.

The senior police officer told PTI that Usman was also the right-hand man of Sajad Gul, the TRF commander based in Pakistan.

The Resistance Front (TRF) is believed to be a shadow outfit of the LeT.

The operation was concluded in the evening.

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, V K Birdi visited the injured police personnel and CRPF jawans at the hospital and assured them of full support throughout their recovery.

The IGP also acknowledged their vital contributions to maintaining peace and security in the region.

In another anti-terror operation, two ultras were gunned down by the security forces in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

The encounter broke out near Halkan Gali in the Shangus-Larnoo area.

Addressing a press conference after the operation, Commander, 2 Sector RR of the Army, Brigadier Anirudh Chauhan said the slain terrorists belonged to the People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF) outfit -- an offshoot of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).

"We were receiving inputs about the movements of the PAFF group in Anantnag. This group killed Territorial Army Rifleman Hilal (Ahmad Bhat) on October 8. We received an input about their presence in the Larnoo area and an operation was launched," Chauhan said.

Bhat was among the two soldiers who were allegedly kidnapped by terrorists during search operations in the forest area of Anantnag. While one jawan escaped, Bhat's body was found in the Kazwan forest area in Kokernag.

"Two terrorists were killed. A huge cache of arms and ammunition, including M4 and AK rifles, grenades and three IEDs (improvised explosive devices), were seized. Both were dreaded terrorists and were involved in several attacks, including on non-locals," the Army officer said.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, South Kashmir Range, Javid Ahmad Matoo said according to a preliminary investigation, the two terrorists killed in Anantnag were identified as Zahid Rashid, a resident of Bijbehara, and Arbaz Mir, a resident of Qaimoh who was missing since 2018 and had joined terror ranks.

Apart from the twin gunfights, security forces have also launched a search operation after terrorists' movements were observed in north Kashmir's Bandipora district, the Army said.

The Srinagar-based Chinार Corps unit of the Army said troops spotted "suspicious movements" in the general area Panar in Bandipora on Friday evening.

"On being challenged, the terrorists opened indiscriminate fire and escaped into the jungle," the Army said.

2 UP labourers...

They extend their heartfelt sympathies and prayers to the victims and their families, standing in solidarity with those affected by this tragic incident."

Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra strongly condemned the attack, terming it most unfortunate, and prayed for a speedy recovery of the injured.

Karra urged the government to take effective measures to curb "such inhuman, shameful and cowardice acts".

Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari described the attack as the worst form of cowardice.

"Terrorists have once again attacked non-local labourers, this time in Mazahama, leaving two of them injured. This is the worst form of cowardice on the part of the perpetrators. I pray for the swift recovery of the injured. The security agencies must ensure that the perpetrators are caught and brought to justice," he said.

The Peoples' Conference, led by Sajad Lone, said it was senseless violence.

"We strongly condemn the cowardly attack on two innocent individuals -- Sufiyan and Usman from Uttar Pradesh -- who were shot at by militants in Budgam today. This senseless violence has left them injured and we pray for their quick recovery," the party said in a post on X.

This was the fifth terror attack in Kashmir since the formation of a new government in the Union Territory.

On October 24, two soldiers and two Army porters were killed while another porter and a soldier were injured in a terrorist attack on an Army vehicle six kilometres from the popular tourist destination of Gulmarg.

Earlier that day, terrorists shot at and injured Shubam Kumar, a labourer from Uttar Pradesh, in the Tral area of Pulwama district.

On October 20, a local doctor and six non-local labourers were gunned down by terrorists at a tunnel construction site in the Gagangir area of Ganderbal. A labourer from Bihar was shot dead by terrorists in Shopian district on October 18.

Mother-son duo...

victims belonged to the same family, the officials said.

The driver of the private car, which was headed for Chassana from their Malikote village, lost control in the early hours of the day, resulting in on-the-spot death of Kulcha Devi (27), her 10-month-old baby Neeraj Singh and nephew Sandhoor Singh (23).

Devi's husband Chankaar Singh (32), brother-in-law Dhunkar (19), nephew Ajay Singh (18) were rescued by the local volunteers and rushed to hospital where their condition was stated to be critical, the officials added.

GOC reviews operational...

Rajouri and Kishtwar districts, have recorded terrorist movements over the past several months, prompting police and other security agencies to intensify anti-insurgency operations.

In a post on X, the White Knight Corps said Lt Gen Sachdeva was accompanied by the general officer commanding counter-insurgency force 'Romeo' to Songri in the Rajouri sector.

"GOC underscored the need for unwavering commitment in maintaining peace and security in the region," it said.

In Kishtwar on Friday, the Army officer appreciated the unwavering commitment and dedication of all ranks towards counter-terrorism operations, the XVI corps, said.

LG urges people...

Sinha recalled the significant contribution of the great personalities from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh, Puducherry, Delhi, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

He said the observance of the Foundation Day of different States and UTs is an occasion to celebrate the Unity in Diversity of our great nation and to strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to promote the spirit of national integration through deeper and structured engagement among all States and UTs has strengthened cultural exchange and inspired mutual coordination with the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat," the Lt Governor said.

He said, under the guidance of the Prime Minister, all the States and Union Territories have realised their true potential and are achieving new milestones across the diverse sectors.

Appreciating the artists for their enthralling performances, the Lt Governor said the event today highlighted the rich heritage, culture and tradition fostering a sense of common identity.

He also called upon the people, especially the youth to work with dedication towards building an inclusive and progressive society to realize the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Modi, Shah, Omar...

BJP leader, Rana was undergoing treatment at the hospital. He is survived by his wife, Gunjan Rana, their daughters Deyviani and Ketki, and son Adhiraj Singh.

Shekhawat, who flew from New Delhi to attend Rana's cremation, said, "Devender Rana was a senior leader with a deep understanding of the party's ideology. His loss is significant for the BJP."

Political leaders from various parties gathered to bid farewell to Rana, who passed away late on Diwali night. He was a prominent entrepreneur and an influential politician.

Abdullah travelled to Jammu on Friday to bid farewell to Rana, his former aide, and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family.

"Rana's death is an irreparable loss to Jammu and Kashmir and the BJP. He was a political stalwart whose influence extended beyond party and religious lines," Raina said.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary said, "He was a beloved leader whose loss has left a significant void in Jammu and Kashmir politics."

Congress' Jammu and Kashmir unit chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma also expressed his condolences. "This is very unfortunate. Despite ideological differences,

he maintained friendly relationships with everyone," he said.

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah also expressed shock at Rana's sudden passing. "We had a great relationship with him and before him with his father. Omar liked him a lot.

"He held a significant position in our party in Jammu and made the party stronger. We are all very sad -- my whole family, my son is very sad, he was close to him. I pray God gives strength to his family to bear this loss," he told reporters in Srinagar.

CPI(M) leader Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami also expressed grief at Rana's death, saying in a statement that his sudden death was shocking.

The legacy of Rana is marked by his remarkable journey from building a multi-core automobile company to becoming a significant political figure advocating the "Dogra chief minister" narrative in JK.

Born into a Dogra family in Doda district in 1965, Rana was the son of former bureaucrat Rajinder Singh Rana and the younger brother of Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Jitendra Singh.

Union minister Singh took to X to express grief, saying, "The untimely demise of my brother Devender Singh Rana is a deep personal loss, which is not only irreparable and painful, but the void created will continue to haunt me for the rest of my life. I sincerely thank all those standing by me and the family in these testing times."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock at Rana's death and said his "untimely demise is shocking".

In a post on X, the prime minister said, "...He (Rana) was a veteran leader who worked diligently towards Jammu and Kashmir's progress. He had just won the assembly polls and had also played a noteworthy role in making the BJP stronger in Jammu and Kashmir."

"In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with his family and supporters. Om Shanti," he added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also expressed grief over Rana's untimely passing. "Devendra ji, who was always dedicated to the peace and development of Jammu and Kashmir and the interests of the people, made an invaluable contribution to the progress of the region. His demise is an irreparable loss for the BJP family. I express my condolences to his family and supporters," he said.

Omar Abdullah posted an emotional message on his X handle, saying, "The terrible news from late last night isn't really sinking in. I know the last few years have been marked by our differences, Devender, but I prefer to focus on the fun times we shared together, the excellent work we did together, and the memories."

"You have been taken from us all too soon and will be missed. May your soul rest in peace now, DSR. My heart goes out to your family as I struggle to find the words to convey my condolences to them," he said.

A civil engineer by training, Rana graduated from the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Kurukshetra and ventured into business, founding the Jamkash Vehicleleads group, which became a leading automobile company in JK.

Rana's political career began at a young age when he joined the National Conference (NC). He quickly rose to prominence as a key strategist, serving as the provincial president and political adviser to Omar Abdullah.

His ability to connect with both Hindus and Muslims, particularly the Gujjar community, solidified his reputation as a trusted leader.

In the recent assembly election, Rana won the Nagrota seat by a margin of 30,472 votes, demonstrating his capacity to unite diverse voter bases.

Rana was also a vocal advocate for the Jammu Declaration, which sought the restoration of statehood for the Jammu region following the August 2019 abrogation of Article 370.

His political journey took a new turn in October 2021, when he resigned from the NC and joined the BJP.

Kharge admits 'Khata...

government here has introduced Shakti, one of the five guarantees offering free ride for women in the non-luxury government buses.

Shivakumar had said that the government would revisit the Shakti scheme as some women have expressed their wish to pay for travelling in the government buses.

In a humorous but subtle manner, Kharge pulled up the DCM before media for his statement.

"You have given some guarantees. After seeing them, I too said in Maharashtra that there are five guarantees in Karnataka. Now you (Shivakumar) said you will drop one guarantee," Kharge quipped.

Quickly Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who were sitting next to him chuckled and rejected Kharge's statement.

Siddaramaiah said the Deputy CM has only said the government would review it. In reply, Kharge said, "Whatever (DCM) you have said has given them (BJP) a chance."

Annual Jhiri Mela...

whose life and sacrifice resonate with every cultivator in the region," Choudhary said while addressing a meeting to oversee the preparations for the annual fair.

Choudhary also said the fair is vital not only for local agriculture, but also for showcasing Jammu's cultural heritage, as he advocated for the enhanced efforts to educate the attendees, especially the farmers, about the agricultural advancements, available seeds and fertilisers.

At the meeting, the deputy chief minister instructed the concerned officials to set up specialised kiosks to provide information on the relevant government schemes, ensuring that farmers' welfare remains central.

"This event is a platform to promote local craftsmen and highlight the traditional arts of the region among the visitors coming from outside," he said.

Choudhary also emphasised the need for improved sanitation, public safety and reasonable pricing of farming tools during the Jhiri Mela.

The district administration will focus on facilitating the poor and marginalised with measures to enhance visitor comfort and safety, he said.

District Development Council Chairman Bharat Bhushan pressed for infrastructure upgrades, recommending that all main and link roads be blacktopped before the fair begins. He also underscored the importance of Bawa Talab, an ancient holy pond in Bhalwal, Jammu, calling for its rejuvenation and improved accessibility.

Inquiry needed into...

of Kashmir, and it united the entire community.

"We need to remain united, keeping our egos aside. Enemies are trying to attack us from all sides but we have to fight them," he said.

Asked if he believed Pakistan was responsible for the attacks, Farooq Abdullah reiterated that an investigation should be conducted into the rise in such incidents after the recently-concluded assembly elections.

"Rather than killing them (perpetrators), they should be caught and asked who is behind them. We should check if any agency is trying to destabilise Omar Abdullah (government)," the NC chief added.

His remarks come amid a spate in terror incidents in the Valley since the formation of the NC government in the UT.

On Saturday, four security personnel were injured in an encounter in the Khanyar area here on Saturday. Following the attack, security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the densely populated locality of Khanyar in the interior city and killed a top Pakistani commander of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) who was active in the Valley for several years, according to officials.

Meanwhile, NC's alliance partner Congress also raised suspicion over the timing of the attacks in the valley.

"It is a matter of grave concern and the timing of it is actually very suspicious because we had very peaceful elections. Before the elections, we had a very peaceful time, and immediately after the elections, all this has started," J-K Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra told PTI Videos here.

Karra called for a holistic and inclusive approach to handle the matters of security.

"When LG Manoj Sinha took the security review, I said that time also that it has to be a holistic, inclusive approach like the state government and LG's office should work in tandem," he said.

"On the contrary, things are going crossroads. I don't find a kind of a congenial environment between the two. It is not in the interest of people and the national interest," the Congress leader said.

"Instead of going for one-upmanship, national interest has to be kept paramount as we have very hostile neighbours," Karra added.

The J-K Pradesh Congress chief expressed apprehensions that the spike in the violence would impact the restoration of statehood to J-K.

"What we have been hearing from Delhi is that if statehood is granted back to us, it would be an amended state and some vital departments need to be retained. I hope it is not that. I think the situation is getting created for that," he said.

"We will not accept the half-cooked statehood", Karra said, adding, "We need a full, complete statehood. But, I think something is fishy about it. I am not able to explain it right now, but something is not going the right way."

Earlier, the lieutenant governor, prime minister, home minister, and the BJP, all used to say that statehood is round the corner, but now the same BJP is saying the atmosphere is not congenial, the Congress leader said.

"So, the suspicion now is that who is creating this non congenial atmosphere. It

needs to be looked into," he added.

620 recruits join...

Newly recruited Constable Sourajit Biswas led the parade as the parade commander.

Among the 620 constables, the highest 403 belonged to West Bengal, 133 to Odisha and 84 to Andhra Pradesh.

Constable Biswas, Sabya Sachi Barman, and Shamir Oram got first places in drill, shooting and physical ability respectively, while Saurav Baidya and Manish Singh got overall first and second positions, respectively.

BJP to elect...

has emerged as the single largest party in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls with 42 seats and has a comfortable majority in the 95-member House as its alliance partners Congress and CPI(M) have won six seats and one seat, respectively.

The NC also enjoyed the support of six of the seven Independent MLAs and of the Aam Aadmi Party which has also opened its account in Jammu and Kashmir by winning the Doda segment.

The PDP has won three seats and the Peoples' Conference one seat while five are nominated members.

The first session of the newly elected Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly is scheduled to begin with the election of the Speaker followed by the lieutenant governor's address on November 4.

According to the calendar issued by Pro-tem Speaker Mubarak Gul, the Assembly will make obituary references the next day while the discussion on the motion of thanks on the L-G's address will be held on November 6 and 7. Response to the motion of thanks on the L-G's address will be conducted on November 8.

Krishna Verma strikes gold, five others win silver at U19 World Boxing C'ships

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: Young Indian boxer Krishna Verma won the gold in the women's 75kg category while five other signed off with silver medals at the inaugural U-19 World Championships organised by World Boxing in Colorado, USA.

While Krishna notched up a unanimous 5-0 decision over Germany's Simon Lerika in the 75kg summit clash.

Chanechal Chaudhary (women's 48kg), Anjali Kumari Singh (women's 57kg), Vini (women's 60kg), Akanksha Phalасwal (women's 70kg) and Rahul Kundu (men's 75kg) lost their respective finals.

Chanechal had to settle for a second place finish after she was disqualified while Anjali went down 0-5 to Mia-Tiah Ayton of England.

Akansha and Rahul lost be an identical 1-4 margin to Lilly Deacon of England and USA's Avinongya Joseph respectively.

Meanwhile, Vini lost via 2-3 split verdict to England's Ella Lonsdale.

Five female boxers and a male boxer will fight for gold in the final on Saturday.

The tournament is World Boxing's first global event.

World Boxing is a breakaway organisation that was launched to ensure boxing's place in the Olympic movement. It aims to replace the International Boxing Association (IBA) as the world governing body for boxing.

Spinners do their job well, time for batters to salvage pride; Mumbai Test poised for exciting finish

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

MUMBAI: Exploiting the spin-friendly conditions, Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin chiselled through the New Zealand batting line-up to bring India to a stage from where they can force a face-saving victory in the third Test which is now headed for an intriguing finish.

New Zealand ended day two at 171 for nine with an overall lead of 143, which might look small but even a target in the vicinity of 150 will pose serious challenge for the Indian batters, considering the fast deteriorating Wankhede track.

This was after half-centuries from Shubman Gill (90) and Rishabh Pant (60) and a crucial 38 not out from Washington Sundar gave India a slender 28-run lead as they put on board 263.

A total of 15 wickets fell on the second day, underlining the fact that life won't be easy for the hosts while batting fourth.

Ashwin (3/63) found his rhythm while Jadeja (4/52) added four more dismissals after his 5/65 in the first essay to keep India's hopes alive to avert a clean sweep at home for the first time.

Ajaz Patel (7) was at the crease when Jadeja cleaned up Matt Henry (10) for the penultimate wicket on the final ball on the second day.

Will Young's gutsy 51 was the only resistance from the Kiwis who succumbed to pressure, after Patel (5/103) recorded yet another five-wicket haul.

Having made a subdued impact so far, Ashwin's delight on getting Rachin Ravindra (4) stumped was evident as he beat the charge of the batter with bounce and turn.

With Glenn Phillips (26) using the long handle to a good effect, Ashwin cleaned up the New Zealand batter for another crucial breakthrough.

Young, who batted as solid as he did in the first innings, was Ashwin's third victim giving the bowler catching practice after being outfoxed on a carrom ball.

The 37-year-old Ashwin made impact beyond his bowling when he took an outstanding catch to end a stubborn 50-run association between Young and Daryl Mitchell (21), who, for a passage of play, threatened to take the game away.

Young and Mitchell had steadied the ship after New Zealand's top-order was blown away, but the latter's charge against Jadeja proved costly as he did not get the distance in his stroke.

From mid-off, Ashwin covered 19 metres running sideways to his left and put in a fabulous dive to complete the dismissal, post which New Zealand crumbled further. Tom Blundell (4) chopped one onto his stumps off Jadeja while Ashwin cleaned up Phillips, who had switched to aggressive batting knowing New Zealand desperately needed more runs.

At the start of Kiwis' reply, Akash provided a rare sight of a pacer disturbing a batter's furniture on turning track when he dismantled Tom Latham's (1) off and middle stumps in the first over.

Earlier, India's progress suffered a severe blow with the exit of Pant towards the end of the morning session, as its effects were felt acutely when play resumed post lunch. From Pant's dismissal in the 38th over to India eventually folding in the 60th, the team managed eight fours and two sixes - the wicketkeeper-batter alone hit that many during his brisk half-century earlier.

Patel, finding the right length, reaped rewards as the Kiwi spinner claimed another five-for at the Wankhede Stadium, following up his world record 10/119 in the first innings of the 2021 Test here.

Gill fell short of his century while others continued to disappoint.

Perhaps, there was no greater disappointment than to see Sarfaraz Khan looking like a fish out of water during his four-ball struggle, failing to open his account at his home turf where at times he has plundered runs for fun.

Sarfaraz failed to read the length of his first ball and went for a mighty sweep against Patel in his pomp, but was beaten by the bounce and turn on the next.

He might have fallen on the third ball when it bounced off his glove but there was no silly point.

IPL Retention: Kohli drops hints of completing 20 years with RCB till 2027

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

BENGALURU: Virat Kohli has dropped elaborate hints that he would like to continue playing competitive cricket till 2027 with an aim to complete 20 years with Royal Challengers Bengaluru after being retained by the franchise for a hefty fee of Rs 21 crore.

Having entered the twilight zone of his illustrious career, speculations are rife about how long the 36-year-old would continue in top flight cricket having endured a prolonged lull for the last four years since the start of COVID-19.

Kohli has been playing for RCB ever since IPL's inception in 2008 and is the leading run-scorer in the competition, amassing over 8,000 runs at a healthy if not spectacular strike rate of 131.97, including eight hundreds and 55 fifties.

"At the end of this cycle, it is going to be 20 years that I am going to be playing for RCB and that in itself is a very, very special feeling for me," Kohli told 'RCB Bold Diaries' indicating that he aims to continue for at least another three years till 2027. "I have never thought that I am going to play so many years for one team, but the relationship has truly become special over so many years.

He reiterated that he doesn't see himself playing for any other franchise.

"I don't see myself anywhere other than RCB, and I am very happy that it happened. I am very excited that I got a chance to create a strong new squad in this auction, something that we are really looking forward to as a franchise, as a team," Kohli said in RCB's Bold Diaries video. He also pondered on the fact that he shared a close bond with the franchise and its fans, while his goal would be to win the elusive title.