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Terrorists kill 26...

and a favourite with visitors from across the country and the world. Armed terrorists came into the grassland, dubbed 'mini Switzerland', and started firing at tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking, officials and eyewitnesses said. At least 20 people were injured in the strike in the volatile Kashmir Valley where tourists have so far mostly been spared.

As news of the terror attack targeting tourists in Kashmir spread, The Resistance Front (TRF), a shadow group of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group, claimed responsibility.

Officials said it was possible the terror group members could have crossed over from Kishtwar in Jammu and reached Baisaran through Kokernag in south Kashmir.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a visit to Saudi Arabia, and reached Srinagar in the evening for an urgent security review meeting with all agencies.

Officials said Shah is likely to visit Pahalgalam on Wednesday.

"I strongly condemn the terror attack in Pahalgalam, Jammu and Kashmir. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. I pray that the injured recover at the earliest. All possible assistance is being provided to those affected," the prime minister said on X.

"Those behind this heinous act will be brought to justice... they will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger," he added.

Eyewitnesses painted a chilling picture of gunfire breaking the calm of a regular Tuesday afternoon with scores of people enjoying their day out. Cries for help were heard as lifeless bodies lay motionless in pools of blood.

Some put the number of attackers at five.

"My husband was shot in the head while seven others were also injured in the attack," a woman survivor told PTI over phone.

The woman did not identify herself but pleaded for help in evacuating the injured to hospital.

As gunshots rang out, there was panic and tourists ran for cover but there was no place to hide in the wide, open space, said another woman tourist.

A woman said terrorists first asked the name before shooting down the victims. The tourists gathered at Baisaran were from several states, including Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Among those killed was Karnataka businessman Manjunath Rao, who was from Shivamogga.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah condoled the death and called a meeting of officials. A team of officials from Karnataka left for Kashmir, an official statement said.

With Baisaran accessible only by foot or horses, choppers were deployed to evacuate the injured. The families of those killed and injured were taken to the government-owned Pahalgalam Club under tight security.

The entire district administration and police force were mobilised and ambulances pressed into service.

Some of the injured were brought down from the meadow by local people on their ponies.

Army, CRPF and local police rushed to Baisaran, much sought after by filmmakers in the 1980s, after initial news came in of gunshots being heard, officials said.

A massive anti-terrorist operation has been launched to hunt down the assailants and security forces have fanned out in all directions, they said.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration set up 24X7 emergency control rooms in Anantnag and Srinagar.

"The death toll is still being ascertained so I don't want to get into those details. They will be officially conveyed as the situation becomes clearer. Needless to say this attack is much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years," Abdullah said in a post on X.

"I'm shocked beyond belief. This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman and worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough. I send my sympathies to the families of the deceased," he said.

The office of Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said anti-terror operations had been launched to neutralise terrorists.

"Entire nation is angry & blood of our forces is boiling. I want to assure the nation that perpetrators of Pahalgalam attack will have to pay a very heavy price for their heinous act. My heartfelt condolences to bereaved families," it said on X.

Altaf Ahmad Wani, National Conference MLA from Pahalgalam, described the attack as "cowardly" and said targeting innocent persons is against the teachings of Islam.

"The attack was very painful and unfortunate and took place at an unexpected location which is about five kilometres from Pahalgalam (bus stand). It is used for trekking and the people go there on horses," he told reporters.

Pahalgalam town, which was teeming with tourists this morning, went into complete silence. Tourists began leaving in droves.

The incident comes when Kashmir is witnessing a surge in tourist arrivals after reeling under militancy for years.

On February 14, 2019, 40 CRPF personnel were killed in a suicide attack in south Kashmir's Pulwama area. Since then, there have been other terror attacks but none as serious. More than 30 people were killed in an attack on Amarnath base camp in Pahalgalam in 2000.

A year later, 13 people died in a strike on Amarnath pilgrims at Sheshnag while 11 persons were killed in another attack in 2002 in the Pahalgalam area.

A tourist couple from Rajasthan was injured in a firing incident by terrorists at Yammur in Pahalgalam in May last year.

In March 2000 when then US president Bill Clinton was visiting India, terrorists killed 35 Sikhs in Chhattisinghpura in south Kasmir in March 2000.

Baisaran, a campsite for trekkers who then move further up to the Tullan Lake, is accessible from Pahalgalam either on foot or on horses. It offers a panoramic view of Pahalgalam town and the Lidder Valley.

Those behind terror...

go unpunished," the LG said in a post on X.

He said he has spoken to the director general of police and other security officials, and that teams of the Army and police have been rushed to the area to launch search operations.

"Directed the district administration and the health officials to provide immediate medical attention to those admitted at Pahalgalam. An injured tourist has been evacuated to GMC Anantnag. I pray for the speedy recovery of all the injured," he added.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also condemned the attack, saying it is an abomination.

"I'm shocked beyond belief. This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman and worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough. I send my sympathies to the families of the deceased," he said in a post on X.

Abdullah said he has spoken to his ministerial colleague, Sakina Itoo, who has reached the hospital to oversee the arrangements for the injured.

"I'll be flying back to Srinagar immediately," the chief minister, who was in Jammu, added.

He also said the attack is "much larger than anything we have seen" directed at civilians in recent years.

"The death toll is still being ascertained so I don't want to get into those details. They will be officially conveyed as the situation becomes clearer. Needless to say this attack is much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years," he said.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti said such attacks must be denounced.

"I strongly condemn the cowardly attack on tourists in Pahalgalam, which tragically killed five and injured several as being reported for now. Such violence is unacceptable and must be denounced," she said in a post on X.

The former chief minister said historically, Kashmir has welcomed tourists warmly, making this rare incident deeply concerning, and called for a thorough investigation.

"A thorough investigation is needed to bring the perpetrators to justice and examine potential security lapses. Ensuring visitor safety is paramount, and steps must be taken to prevent future attacks. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families," she added.

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) strongly condemned the attack, describing it as the most unfortunate and shameful act.

"The rank and file of the JKPCC, led by president Tariq Hameed Karra, strongly denounced the militant attack on tourists. It is very shocking and anguishing to learn about the mindless and dastardly militant attack on innocent tourists," it said in a statement.

Such incidents are highly deplorable and have no place in a civilised society, it added.

The incident has put a big question mark on the tall claims of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre with regard to the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the statement said, adding that the perpetrators of the heinous crime must be identified and given exemplary punishment.

People's Conference chief Sajad Lone said the perpetrators of the attack are the worst enemies of Kashmiris.

"Condemn strongly the dastardly and cowardly attack in Pahalgalam. For decades we have been identified with being great hosts. We have a history of hospitality. And some cowardly terrorists want to destroy it all," he said in a post on X.

Lone said the tourism industry here has suffered a lot and those involved in the sector have begun to restart their lives after a long time.

"They had begun to dream. And here are the ugly villains to shatter it all. Make no mistake. These terror attacks are aimed at yet again disempowering us economically. Those who do this are the worst enemies of Kashmiris.

"They defile our history of hospitality, smearing our glorious past. And they are a curse on our present. They are enemies of our children of our young generation. We have to unitedly send a message that there is no tolerance for terror. Let us live our lives in peace and economic dignity. Please get out of our lives. These tourists are our revered guests," Lone said.

Senior CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami termed the attack an inhuman act.

"Condemning the dastardly attack on tourists in Pahalgalam. The inhuman act of violence deserves to be denounced in the strongest terms. Such cowardly attacks on innocent civilians have no place in any civilised society," he said.

Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said such violence is unacceptable.

"Deeply disturbing news from Pahalgalam of a cowardly attack on tourists that has resulted in tragic loss of life. Such violence is unacceptable and against the ethos of Kashmir which welcomes visitors with love and warmth. Condemn it strongly. Thoughts and prayers with the families of victims and wishing speedy recovery to the injured," the Mirwaiz said in a post on X.

Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Jammu and Kashmir spokesperson Altaf Thakur said the attack is a deliberate attempt to cripple the economic backbone of the valley.

"Terrorists, frustrated by the growing peace and normalcy in the region, want to send a message of fear and instability. But their real target is the livelihood of the common Kashmiri," he said. Thakur accused Pakistan of fuelling terrorism in the region out of frustration.

Amit Shah reaches...

mostly tourists, in what is the deadliest attack in the valley since the 2019 Pulwama strike.

The dead included two foreigners and two locals, a high ranking official said without getting into details.

The toll is still being ascertained, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said while describing the terror attack as "much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years".

Baisaran, about six kilometres from the resort town of Pahalgalam, is an expansive meadow ringed by dense pine forests and mountains and a favourite with visitors from across the country and the world.

Armed terrorists came into the grassland, dubbed "mini Switzerland", and started firing at tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or picnicking, officials and eyewitnesses said.

As news of the attack spread, The Resistance Front (TRF), a shadow group of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group, claimed responsibility.

The officials said it was possible members of the terror group crossed over from Kishtwar in Jammu and reached Baisaran through Kokernag in south Kashmir.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi abruptly ended his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia and decided to return to New Delhi on Tuesday night following a deadly terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir, government sources said.

Modi, who held bilateral talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah, skipped an official dinner hosted on Tuesday to address the crisis, they added.

He was originally scheduled to return to India on Wednesday night.

Modi, who arrived in Jeddah on Tuesday afternoon, delayed a scheduled meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince by at least two hours on Tuesday evening to assess the situation in Kashmir.

Terrorists opened fire at a famed meadow near Pahalgalam town in Jammu and Kashmir, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in what is the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

Chugh, Azad, Vikram...

the terrorists seem to be designing to defeat the tourism industry which the people of J&K would outrightly reject, he added.

Ghulam Nabi Azad, President of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) and former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, has strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pahalgalam, Anantnag district.

Azad expressed deep sorrow over the incident, extended his sympathies to the affected families, and called for stringent action against those responsible.

"The barbaric act of terrorism deserves condemnation in the strongest words," Azad stated, emphasizing the need for unity across all communities to combat such acts of violence.

Azad also highlighted the importance of providing immediate medical assistance to the injured and ensuring comprehensive support for the victims' families.

He reiterated his commitment to peace and stability in the region, urging all political parties and citizens to come together in the fight against terrorism.

Prof. Suresh Chander said, "the killings of tourists at Pahalgalam today are absolutely horrific. While I'm no security expert, it's clear that the current strategy needs a thorough reassessment. Simply deploying more security personnel isn't the answer, as it's impossible to protect every location and individual. The upcoming Amarnath Yatra and tourist influx in the valley require a careful re-evaluation to ensure safety and security.

Former J&K High Court Bar Association President Vikram Sharma said, "The ugly face of these Pakistan-sponsored monsters must be crushed. This is not just terrorism-it is state policy, and the sponsoring country must face annihilation if necessary. I urge the Prime Minister and Defence Minister to strike with unprecedented force. The blood of our people cries out for justice."

The socio-spiritual group Movement 'Kalki' also strongly condemned the attack, calling it "a crime against humanity" and a desperate attempt to divide the nation. "Kashmir is not a playground for terrorists. It is the sacred land of Rishi Kashyap," said Senior Advisor Pritam Sharma, adding, "No force can stop the new dawn rising in J&K. The darkness of terrorism is breathing its last."

National Conference leader Ajay Kumar Sadhotra described the attack as "an assault on the very fabric of civil society," urging law enforcement to act with urgency and severity. "These lunatics have crossed every line. Our hearts go out to the victims. Terrorists must be dealt with an iron fist," he said.

BJP leader Raman Suri echoed the sentiment, calling the attack a "shocking display of cowardice." He emphasized that militancy is in its final stages, hence the targeting of soft civilian targets. "The abrogation of Article 370 brought peace, but now, cornered militants are lashing out. We will not allow them to derail our progress."

Shiv Sena (UBT) J&K chief Manish Sahni labeled the act "nefarious and religion-based," warning terrorists and their handlers in Pakistan to back off or face grave consequences. "Strong military action must be taken. The timing before Amarnath Yatra makes their intention crystal clear. But we will not be cowed."

Ritika Trehan, Chief Spokesperson of BJP Mahila Moreha, has strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pahalgalam today, expressing her deepest condolences to the families of the victims.Trehan unequivocally condemned the cowardly act of terrorism, emphasizing that such attacks will not deter the people of Jammu and Kashmir from pursuing peace and development. She stressed that terrorism is a threat to humanity and must be fought collectively. The Chief Spokesperson extended her solidarity to the grieving families, assuring them of the BJP Mahila Moreha's unwavering support during this difficult time. She prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the attack.

Strongly Condemning the attack on innocent people, mostly tourists at Baisaran Pahalgalam known as "Mini Switzerland" of Kashmir which as per reports has taken death toll to about 26 so far, Abhay Kumar Mahajan SSP Retd & BJP leader expressed deep concern and hoped that our security forces will succeed in tracing all those who are responsible for such Cowardly Attack at Baisaran Pahalgalam.

Senior BJP figure Ravinder Raina lamented that "enemies of Kashmir have once again bled our land" by striking unarmed tourists. He praised the rapid cordoning/off operations by the Army and Police and promised that all involved-both attackers and their local enablers-would face justice.

The Coordination Committee Jammu joined the chorus of outrage, calling the assault "an attack on the spirit of our land" and urging the Government of India to respond decisively.

Ranvijay Singh of the Dogra royal lineage condemned the violence as "despicable," imploring security forces to pursue the culprits "with full might" and ensure

top-tier medical care for the wounded. Subash Shastri, President of the Nawa-e-Milli Council, expressed "heartfelt condolences" to bereaved families and affirmed national unity against terrorism.

The Kashmiri Pandit Conference (KPC), led by President Kundan Kashmiri, decried what it termed a "cold blooded communal massacre" of Hindu tourists, highlighting alleged security lapses in a high footfall zone. Calling for a high-level inquiry, KPC demanded swift action against Pakistan-based masterminds and any local collaborators. In parallel, the

Kashmiri Pandit Sabha warned that the attack-coinciding with the U.S. Vice President's regional visit-signals anti-national forces' unwillingness to accept Kashmir's recent security gains.

Rajiv Mahajan, J&K President of Shri Ram Sena, condemned the "barbaric" strike as an attempt to thwart both tourist season and the upcoming Amarnath Yatra. He pledged the organization's full support for security agencies and urged citizens to remain vigilant against terrorist networks, reporting any over-ground or underground operators.

Former Minister Dr Manohar Lal Sharma has lamented the "cowardly" terror attack in Pahalgalam on Tuesday afternoon, and demanded the centre take accountability instead of making "hollow claims" about restoring normalcy by ridding the former state of terrorism. He said reports of the attack on tourists were extremely heartbreaking. Instead of making hollow claims on the situation being normal in J&K, the government should now take accountability and take concrete steps, so such barbaric incidents do not happen in the future, and innocent Indians do not lose their lives like this," he said. Dr Manohar calling the attack a "blot on humanity urged the ruling BJP to take decisive action against the terrorists.I strongly condemn the cowardly terror attack on innocent tourists in Pahalgalam, Jammu & Kashmir. The entire nation is united in fighting the scourge of cross-border terrorism.

Vikramaditya Singh, senior political leader and former MLC, has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgalam, calling it a barbaric act of violence aimed at disturbing peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued today, the former MLC expressed deep anguish over the incident and extended heartfelt sympathies to the victims of this carnage and their families. "This brutal act of terrorism against innocent tourists in Pahalgalam is unforgivable and beyond condemnation," he said.

He said, "The people of Jammu and Kashmir have long suffered the consequences of violence, and such attacks are an attempt to stall growing economic gains and stability made in recent years," he added.

Vikramaditya Singh called for a harsh and swift response against the perpetrators and supporters of this heinous massacre.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) J&K Ladakh strongly condemns the recent terror attack in Pahalgalam, which has targeted innocent tourists. This heinous act of terrorism is a grave concern for the safety and security of tourists, particularly with Pahalgalam being a crucial base camp for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

A meeting of the state unit of VHP was held to discuss the situation and take stock of the security measures in place. The meeting expressed outrage and deep anguish over the attack and demanded immediate action against the perpetrators. "We are appalled by the terror attack in Pahalgalam, which has shaken the very foundations of our tourism industry. The safety and security of tourists, especially those visiting for the Amarnath Yatra, are of utmost importance," said Rajesh Gupta, President, VHP J&K Ladakh.

Security beefed up...

Wednesday given by Hindu Organisations. The other office bearers present in the meeting include Dheeraj Mahajan, Sr. Ve. President, Vishal Gupta, Vc. President, Abhimanyu Gupta, General Secretary, Rahul Gupta, Secretary and Nitish Gupta,Cashier of the Federation.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress committee has given a call for Jammu Bandh in protest against the gruesome and cowardly terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgalam leading to huge loss of lives.

In a statement on behalf of party , JKPC Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma has appealed to the people to observe a complete peaceful Jammu Bandh tomorrow to send a strong and united message against terrorism. The killing of innocents and the terrorism on our soil is not tolerable. To send a strong message and to express solidarity with the victims of attack and their families, a complete bandh should be observed he appealed to the people.

In light of this attack, the VHP J&K Ladakh calls for a complete shutdown of Jammu on Wednesday to protest against the government's failure to ensure tourist safety. We are pleased to announce that various trade and social organizations have confirmed their support for the bandh, including the Jammu Chamber of Commerce, Jammu Traders Federation, and several prominent social and cultural organizations.

We urge all citizens to support this bandh and join us in our demand for justice. The success of this bandh will send a strong message to the government that the people of Jammu will not tolerate such acts of terrorism and demand immediate action to ensure their safety and security.

Terrorists cursed Modi...

to come out," she said. "They said 'Chaudhari tu bahar aa ja'" Asavari said.

Then the terrorists blamed them for supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after which they made some statements to deny that Kashmiri terrorists kill innocent people, women and children, she said.

"They then asked my father to recite an Islamic verse (probably the Kalma). When he failed to do so, they pumped three bullets into him, one on the head, one behind the ear and another in the back," she said.

"My uncle was next to me. The terrorists fired four to five bullets into him. They shot several other males who were at the spot. There was nobody to help. No police or army, who reached 20 minutes later. Even the locals there were reciting the Islamic verse.

"The people who took us to the spot on ponies helped us -- three women, including myself and my mother -- made the return journey. Later we underwent medical examination to check for injuries and were then shifted to Pahalgalam Club.

"The firing happened around 3.30 pm. It has been 5 hours and there has been no update on my father's and uncle's medical condition," Asavari said.

Wanted gangster dies...

with the help of Punjab Police on Monday.

While returning to Jammu, the accused insisted on halting the vehicle to attend a call of nature but when they were brought down from the van, they "suddenly attacked the police personnel, tried to snatch their weapons and escape from their custody", the spokesman said.

"In a bid to escape, Ali fell on the road and got grievously injured. Four police personnel also sustained minor injuries trying to prevent their escape," the spokesman said, adding that Ali was rushed to the GMC Hospital in Jammu where doctors declared him dead.

Police have requested Jammu district magistrate to form a board of doctors to conduct the autopsy of the deceased, the spokesman said.

"All required legal proceedings have been initiated," he said.

A case under relevant sections of law has been registered at Bishnah police station and further investigation is underway, the spokesman said.

LoP Sunil Sharma...

Amit Shah on field situation arising after this attack.

In an official statement, it has been informed that LoP Sunil Sharma visited Anantnag civil hospital and took stock of healthcare of injured victims undergoing treatment there. He also met with family members of victims who have lost their lives in this barbaric and gruesome terrorist attack on tourists.

In context with situation that has arisen after this attack, LoP Sunil Sharma also briefed Union Home Minister Amit Shah who has already arrived in valley to oversee the situation.

In his statement, Sharma said that this is a barbaric can gruesome terror attack with no words to condemn it.

He further said that Government of India and especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Sharma are closely examining the situation.

"This act, fueled by Pakistan's nefarious intentions, demands justice." Sunil Sharma said.

Body of 18-year-old with bullet injury found in Jammu Park, suicide suspected

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The body of a young man with a bullet injury was found inside a park near here on Tuesday, police said. The 18-year-old was missing for the last couple of days, and it appears that he committed suicide, they said, adding that a pistol was recovered from the park in the Digiana area of Gandhi Nagar.

Suryavansh Choudhary, a resident of Rani Talab, had a bullet mark on the right side of his head. Preliminary investigation suggests he shot himself with a pistol belonging to his father, police said. motive is being ascertained, and police are also probing whether the weapon was licensed or not, they said.