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NIA dispatches team...

of the area and reviewed the ongoing operations, they said.

The scope of the search operation has been expanded to encompass large areas in the adjoining districts of Udhampur and Kathua, including Basantgarh, Seoj (a high-altitude area in Udhampur), and the upper reaches of Bani, Daggar, and Kindli in Kathua district.

Special forces of the Indian Army's 'Para' unit have been deployed to conduct surgical operations against the terrorists in specific areas, the officials said.

Ground search teams are being supported by helicopter and UAV surveillance. Additionally, sniffer dogs and metal detectors are being utilized, with a particular focus on dense forest areas in the region.

The officials said that a joint cordon and search operation, involving the Army, police and CRPF, was launched in Machedi, Badnote, Kindli, and Lohai Malhar areas, with a significant area placed under cordon.

The bodies of the five soldiers were airlifted following postmortem examinations conducted at the Sub District Hospital in Billawar, Jammu and Kashmir.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Billawar, Vinay Khosla said that the bodies were handed over to the Army and subsequently airlifted.

He further said that out of eight injured soldiers brought to the Billawar hospital, six were shifted to the Pathankot Military Hospital by the Army.

The officials indicated that currently three to four groups of terrorists, mostly foreign terrorists, are active in the region, adding they have observed an increase in the presence of foreign terrorists in the Kathua-Udhampur-Doda belt and the Poonch-Rajouri-Reasi belt in recent times.

Five Army personnel, including a junior commissioned officer, were martyred, and an equal number were injured in the ambush by heavily armed terrorists in the remote Machedi area on Monday.

According to sources, three to four terrorists, mostly foreigners, are believed to have executed the ambush. They appear to be linked to the same group which was involved in Basangarh attack in which Village Defence Guard Mohd Sharief was martyred in an encounter with terrorists on April 28 in Panara village.

The attack mirrored a similar pattern to the Bhimbher Gali-Mendhar terror incident involving an Army truck on April 21, 2023, where five soldiers lost their lives. The terrorists initiated firing on the vehicle's wheels, followed by bursts of gunfire targeting its front and left sides.

The sources said that the condition of the road and the slow speed of the truck in the area likely facilitated the attack.

Investigations into the weaponry and ammunition used in the attack are currently ongoing.

In June, security forces had observed movement of a group in the upper reaches of Bani, Daggar, and Kindli areas of Kathua district, leading to subsequent search operations.

Doda encounter ends...

for the night and will be resumed Wednesday morning to get a clear picture of the situation.

The encounter in Doda comes barely a day after five army personnel, including a junior commissioned officer, were killed and an equal number injured in an ambush by terrorists in Kathua district.

This was the fourth encounter in Doda district since June 12. While three foreign terrorists were killed in a day-long operation in the Gandoh area of the district on June 26, five army personnel and a special police officer were injured in a fierce gunfight in Chattargalla pass on June 12.

Another policeman was injured when terrorists opened fire on a search party in Gandoh the next day.

Jammu lawyers protest...



terrorists when they fail to confront India directly. "They persist in supporting and sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

"Pakistan should be held accountable. It has been aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

The terror attack, the fifth in the Jammu region in a month, has drawn widespread condemnation, with political leaders, including three former chief ministers, expressing concern over the increasing number of terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the Jammu region where militancy has re-emerged after being eradicated over two decades ago.

Martyrdom of 5...

Aramane too expressed his "profound grief on the loss of five Bravehearts" in the attack and extended deepest condolences to the bereaved families.

"Their selfless service to the nation will always be remembered and their sacrifice will not go unavenged and India will defeat the evil forces behind the attack," he said. Aramane's remarks were shared on 'X' by a spokesperson of the Defence Ministry.

ISI designs would...

forces would be decisively defeated, said Chugh adding that the pace of development and progress in the Union Territory would not be allowed to slow down in any case.

"I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of our brave soldiers, who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Their martyrdom will not go in vain. This heinous act is a stark reminder of the evil forces that seek to disrupt peace and stability in our region", said Chugh.

The people here have given a befitting reply to Pakistan, which is reflected in the high voter turnout in the recent Lok Sabha elections, he said, adding that this is a big slap on the face of Pakistan, as the Kashmiri people are now standing with India.

Chugh said people of J&K want to move fast on the path of growth and development and it was amply reflected in the high turn-out of voters in the last Lok Sabha election here.

Chugh exuded confidence that the security forces have unleashed a relentless war against terrorists and it would usher in a new era in J&K.

Army troops fire...

by the drones, they said. The Jammu and Kashmir Police has announced a cash reward of Rs 3 lakh to anyone giving information about drones flown from across the border to drop weapons and narcotics, leading to the recovery of the material.

Meanwhile, two mortar shells were found near the Ban Toll Plaza along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, officials said.

The mortar shells were noticed abandoned in a ditch by police and security forces during joint patrolling this morning.

They said the experts of the bomb disposal squad were immediately rushed to the scene and both the explosive devices were safely defused around noon.

Four of a...

The deceased have been identified as Fatima Begum, wife of Ifal Wani, their son Altamash Wani and two daughters Madiya Wani and Radia Banoo. All are residents of Sounder Dachhan and all the dead bodies of deceased have been shifted to Sounder Dachhan.

The Injured persons have been identified as Ifal wani, son of Sanaulah Wani and his daughter Khatija Banoo, residents of Sounder Dachhan. They have been and shifted to district hospital Kishtwar for treatment.

In a heart-wrenching incident, two young brothers from Tehsil Chilli Pingal in Doda district tragically drowned in a stream. The Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) Vice President and former Minister, Ghulam Mohammad Saroori, has expressed profound grief and sorrow over this unfortunate event.

Ghulam Mohammad Saroori, in his statement, expressed deep condolences to the bereaved family. He empathized with their immense loss and urged the community to exercise caution, especially during the rainy season. Saroori appealed to the public to refrain from allowing children to bathe in streams to prevent such tragic incidents.

ACB arrests fair...

team was constituted and caught the accused red handed while demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 4,000 from the complainant," spokesperson added.

"The bribe amount was recovered from his possession in the presence of the independent witnesses and further investigation into the case is going on," spokesperson added.

Over 5,800 pilgrims...

1,971 devotees in 89 vehicles chose the short but steep 14-km Baltal route, officials said.

With this, 67,698 pilgrims have left the Jammu base camp for the valley since June 28 when Lt Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the first batch.

The 52-day yatra formally began on June 29 from twin base camps of Baltal and Pahalgam in Kashmir and will conclude on August 19.

More than 4.5 lakh pilgrims paid obeisance at the cave shrine last year.

SC closes PIL...

State Commission for Women, the state commission for persons with disabilities and the consumer disputes redressal commission are non functional.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala on Tuesday took note of the submissions of the solicitor general that the statutory panels are functional and the powers of some of them are now being exercised by central panels owing to the change in the status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The law officer said the powers of three commissions out of the seven are being exercised by the central panels and the rest are functional in the union territory.

He also referred to the affidavit of the law, justice and parliamentary affairs department of Jammu and Kashmir in support of his submissions.

"We will close the case," the bench then said.

"It has been submitted that with the passing of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, now the laws applicable to UTs are made applicable to the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir...moreover, the central government is vested with the power to direct that the central commissions to function as state commissions," the bench said.

It disposed of the PIL, saying that in view of the present position, the plea has become infructuous and no further directions are required to be issued.

The petitioner had made the DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training), the National Human Rights Commission and the Law Commission of India parties to the PIL.

In August 2019, the Centre bifurcated Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories and abrogated the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution which accorded special status to the erstwhile state.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 5, 2019 and passed the same day. The Lok Sabha cleared it the next day.

CS takes stock of progress on construction of highways across J&K

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Tuesday held a detailed meeting with representatives of various executing agencies like NHAI, NHID-CL, BRO, Beacon and Project SAMPARK to take stock of progress made so far in laying out of vast network of National Highways across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was also attended by senior functionaries from J&K government including ACS, Forests; Principal Secretary, APD; Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/Jammu; Secretary, R&B; Secretary, Revenue; Deputy Commissioners; Chief Engineers of PWD, besides other concerned officers.

During this meeting, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned executing agencies to improve their performance with regard to showcasing physical progress on ground.

He observed that frequent change in timelines is not good sign and should be corroborated with clear justifications. He maintained that such unilateral change in deadlines should be avoided in future.

Dulloo directed the concerned Divisional and District administrations to regularly monitor the pace of work on these important road projects for their timely completion. He also urged them to extend full assistance to the concerned executing agencies by resolving court cases, land disputes

handing over of land and other issues faced by them in smooth execution of these projects.

Moreover, the Chief Secretary took project wise appraisal of progress made so far. He enquired about the possible date of completion of work on each phase of these projects.

Regarding the different phases of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, it was apprised that the project has been distributed in several phases and work on each phase is going on simultaneously. It was given out that some phases of this project including Balsua-Hiranagar, Hiranagar-Vijaypur, Vijaypur-Kunjwani and Kunjwani-Sidhra would be completed before September, 2025.

As far as the work on Ring Road Jammu is concerned, it was revealed that the work has largely been completed with just few minor works and a tunnel to be finished now. It was given out that the same would be completed by June, 2025.

Giving details about the incomplete phases of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44), it was divulged that the work on



CS Atal Dulloo chairing a meeting at Srinagar.

In addition the status of Khanabal-Pahalgam Road (NH-501), Rafiabad-Trehgam Road, Magam-Surankot Road were reviewed. The progress on Bemina, Sanatnagar and Nowgam flyovers was also taken besides other works like rehabilitation of Jawahar Tunnel and old Chanapora Bridge was also discussed during the meeting.

The meeting also held a detailed discussion over the pace and progress made on Jammu-Akhnor elevated corridor. It took note of the development of Tawi 4th Bridge-Satwari-Airport-Miran Sahib-RS Pura-Suchetgarh Road besides the Katra-Basholi-Bani-Baderwah-Doda Road for more reliable and alternate connectivity between these areas.

Other significant roads which came-up for discussion include Chenani-Sudhmahadev Road, Baderwah-Chamba Road, Goha-Khellani, Khellani-Khanabal Road and Rajouri-Poonch Highways to augment Road network in the Pirpanjal region.

The meeting also discussed the pace of work on major tunnels, viaducts, flyovers, Bypasses to major towns across Jammu and Kashmir.

It also took note of work on Z-Morh tunnel that would ensure reliable connectivity to the tourist destination of Sonamarg. It was given out that work would be completed shortly in the month of August this year and that on Zojila tunnel by September, 2026.

The probe will ascertain any "common angle" in last year's attack with the recent terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said, adding the involvement of Pakistan-based handlers in the case cannot be ruled out.

Five Army personnel lost their lives and another was seriously injured after their vehicle caught fire following a terrorist attack on April 20, 2023, in the Bhata Dhurian area under Poonch district. The Army had said the vehicle carrying soldiers came under fire from unidentified terrorists and it caught fire because of the likely use of grenades. The victims of the attack were from a Rashtriya Rifles unit deployed for counter-terror operations.

NIA to probe 2023 Poonch terror attack case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency will probe last year's terrorist attack on an Army convoy in Poonch that left five personnel martyred, officials said on Tuesday.

The process to take over the investigation into the matter has started and a case will be registered soon, they said.

The probe will ascertain any "common angle" in last year's attack with the recent terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said, adding the involvement of Pakistan-based handlers in the case cannot be ruled out.

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CJ inaugurates Legal Aid Clinic

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority, Justice N. Kotiswar Singh on Tuesday inaugurated Legal Aid Clinic at the MIET School of Law here.

The Chief Justice was accompanied by Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Atul Shreedharan, Judges of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, and Executive Chairmen, J&K Legal Services Authority and Ladakh Legal Services Authority respectively.

On their arrival, the Chief Justice and other dignitaries were received by Principal District & Sessions Judge, Jammu, Sanjay Parihar; Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Amit Gupta; Prof. Ankur Gupta, Director MIET, Ruchika Gupta, Joint Director; Prof. Sunita Koul, Dean, MIET School of Law and Prof. Sahil Sawhney, GM Strategic Initiatives.

The inauguration of Legal Aid Clinic was followed by an impactful awareness program for law students on the topic "Access to Justice through Legal Services and the Role of Law Students" organized by the J&K Legal Services Authority, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority, Jammu and MIET, School of Law, Jammu.

According to Chief Justice, legal aid clinic is a significant initiative at the MIET School of Law which aims to enhance access to justice for the underprivileged and provide practical legal experience to law students besides enhancing their legal acumen while serving the needs of underprivileged sections of the society.

In his inaugural address, the Chief Justice highlighted the critical role of legal aid in ensuring justice for marginalized communities. He emphasized the importance of legal services authorities in bridging the gap between the law and the people.

The Chief Justice emphasized the need for every student of law to remember the preamble of our Constitution, which defines our core values as a nation. He lauded the MIET School of Law for provisioning high quality infrastructure for the Legal Aid Clinic and promised full support of the J&K Legal Services Authority in ensuring that the Legal Aid Clinic meets its stated objectives to reach out and help those entitled to free legal aid.

He also highlighted the challenges confronting the legal system in our country and outlined the initiatives that the students at MIET School of Law can undertake to play a constructive role in transforming the legal system while alleviating the sufferings of the poor.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, in



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his special address, underscored the need to raise awareness about legal rights and the availability of legal services. He also spoke about the unique challenges faced by law students in today's dynamic legal environment and encouraged them to contribute actively to the legal aid movement.

In his welcome address, Prof. Ankur Gupta, Director, MIET, School of Law, Jammu, extended a warm welcome to the Chief Guest and the Guests of Honour. He expressed his gratitude for selecting MIET, School of Law, for establishing a legal aid clinic and emphasized the significance of conducting such awareness programs, which play a crucial role in raising awareness and steering students towards positive societal change.

Asni Abrol, a law student, delivered a valuable presentation depicting the importance of legal services and the proactive role, law students can play in ensuring access to justice for all.

The programme was attended by M. K. Sharma, Principal Secretary to the Chief Justice, Rajinder Sapru, Registrar Rules, Sandeep Kour, Registrar Judicial, Jammu, Prem Sagar, Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee, Rajni Sharma, Joint Registrar Judicial, Jammu, Anil Sharma Chief LADC along with his team, Advocates, staff and PLVs of J&K Legal Services Authority.

The event also witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 240 law students, faculty members, and administrative staff of MIET, School of Law, Jammu.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Smriti Sharma, Secretary, DLSA Jammu, who expressed her gratitude to the management of MIET, School of Law, Jammu, for their support in organizing this awareness program.