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Army Colonel, Major...

on army personnel on August 4 martyring three jawans in the higher reaches of the Halan forest area of Kulgam district.

The operation against the terrorists began on Tuesday evening in Garol area but was called off during the night.

This morning, the hunt for the terrorists resumed after information started trickling that they were spotted at a hideout, the officials said.

Colonel Singh, leading his team from the front, attacked the terrorists. However, he was critically injured in the bullets fired by the terrorists.

Singh, who belonged to 12th Sikh LI, was a recipient of Sena Medal. Dhonack belonged to 15th Sikh LI.

Dhonack and Bhat were also hit by bullets resulting in critical injuries, the officials said.

Senior army and police officers, GoC 15 Corps Lt General Rajiv Ghai and DGP Dilbag Singh rushed to the spot to assess the situation.

Earlier Jammu and Kashmir Police had posted on social media handle that an "encounter has started in #Kokernag area of #Anantnag. Officers from Army and JKP injured. Details shall follow".

Kashmir-based XV corps also gave details that "based on specific intelligence on presence of terrorists a Joint Operation was launched by #IndianArmy & @JmuKmrPolice on the intervening night of 12-13 Sep in Area Garol, Anantnag.

"Contact established and firefight ensued. Two Army personnel and one J&K Police personnel injured. Operation in progress."

In the evening, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh, Additional Director General of Police (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar along with other senior officers paid floral tributes to the slain DySP.

The attack comes a day after an Army personnel and Kent, a six-year-old female Labrador of the Army's dog unit, were killed and three security personnel injured in the gunfight in South of Pir Panjal at Rajouri in Jammu region. Two terrorists were killed in an encounter in the remote Narla village.

Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah offered his condolences.

"Terrible terrible news from J&K. An army colonel, a major and a J&K Police DYSP gave the ultimate sacrifice in an encounter in Kokernag area of South Kashmir today. DySP Humayan Bhat, Major Ashish Dhonack, and Colonel Manpreet Singh laid down their lives in an encounter with terrorists. May their souls rest in peace & may their loved ones find strength at this difficult time," he posted on X.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti while offering condolences to the bereaved families said there was no place for such acts of violence.

People's Conference chairman Sajad Gani Lone also condoled the death of the brave-heroes.

Paying tributes to the three fallen officers, BJP leader Altaf Thakur said the security forces are committee to root out terror from Jammu and Kashmir.

Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, paid heartfelt tributes to the courageous martyrs -Army Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Ashish, and Deputy Superintendent of J&K Police Humayun Bhat - who made the ultimate sacrifice today while combating terrorists in south Kashmir's Kokernag.

In his message, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari expressed his heartfelt grief and sorrow. He said, "The entire nation mourns the loss of these valiant heroes who laid down their lives while courageously facing terrorists in Garol village, Kokernag, Anantnag, today. My deepest condolences go out to the families of Army Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Ashish, and Deputy Superintendent of J&K Police Humayun Bhat. May Allah grant them the strength to bear this irreparable loss, and may the departed souls rest in eternal peace. I urge our security agencies to swiftly bring these terrorists to justice."

Congress Working Committee (CWC) Member Ghulam Ahmad Mir expressed pain and anguish over the martyrdom of Army Colonel, Major and Deputy SP of J&K police in Kokernag encounter;

Mir condemned the incident in strongest words and demanded exemplary punishment to militants and their handlers.

Mir condemned the incident in strongest words and said the officers laid down their lives in line of duty, their sacrifices shall always be remembered. The terrorists and their handlers responsible for the Martyrdom of officers should be punished sternly, he said.

JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla on Wednesday expressed pain and anguish over the martyrdom of Army Colonel, Major and Deputy SP of J&K police in Kokernag encounter and conveyed heartfelt condolences to the families of Martyred Officers.In a condolence message he said: "Tributes to our courageous soldiers and security personnel martyred in Kokernag. Their valour and sacrifice will never be forgotten. They served the nation with utmost dedication and worked tirelessly to protect our citizens. Condolences to their families and friends," Bhalla said.

Gaurav Gupta, former General Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jammu, expressed profound grief and sorrow and termed it as an immense loss to the nation and a stark reminder of the sacrifices made by our brave security forces. Gaurav stated, "The sacrifice of our Army Colonel, Major, and Dy SP is a great loss not only to their families but also to the entire nation. Their dedication and unwavering commitment to safeguarding our borders and ensuring our security is unparalleled." Gaurav further extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred heroes and prayed for their strength during this difficult time.

"Shocked and anguished to hear the sad news of sacrifice of Col Manpreet Singh , Maj Ashish Dhonchak , DSP Humayun Bhatt and Rifleman Ravi. My deepest condolences to the bereaved families and salute to these brave hearts ! The Nation is proud of your sacrifice!" RS Chib Gen Secy DPAP in his message said.

AC gives nod...

Station, and Capsule-type cabins with panoramic views. There will also be parking available at the Intermediate Station.

The Administrative Council also accorded Administrative Approval to the construction of a 125-bed hospital at Reshipora, Budgam.

Upon completion of the hospital at an estimated cost of Rs. 49.32 Crore, it is expected to improve access to quality healthcare for the people of the area.

The upcoming hospital besides enhancing healthcare for the public will also provide for employment opportunities to skilled/unskilled professionals, medics/ paramedics etc. The hospital will also help address increased patient rush and is expected to benefit a large chunk of population living in and around district Budgam.

Pak making full...

day Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Ashish and Deputy Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police Humayun Bhat were killed in a gunfight with terrorists in Kokernag area of Kashmir's Anantnag district.

Replying to another question about the Rajouri encounter, he said that in Poonch and Rajouri "we tried to neutralise foreign terrorists on Line of Control (LoC) itself".

"But some come... and try to do some acts here. We have done good action in this recent encounter: One of jawan was martyred", he said.

Two terrorists were killed in an encounter in the remote Narla village.

On the death of sniffer dog Kent in gunfire by ultras, he said, "Our Kent laid down his life to save his handler. He attacked the terrorist by moving ahead first."

Kent, the six-year-old Army dog that was killed saving the life of a soldier during an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir, had participated in nine operations before this.

The female Labrador-type dog of 21st Army dog unit was killed on Tuesday while trying to save her handler in the Union Territory's Rajouri district.

"Kent was leading a column of soldiers pursuing fleeing terrorists. It was shot dead by hostile fire," a defence official said.

Kent's body was wrapped in the tricolour; a wreath laid on it as Army personnel paid their last respects to her on Wednesday.

Carrying an Army number 08B2, golden-coloured Kent was a special tracker dog which participated in its first operation on Poonch link up day on November 14 last year; followed by the induction in operation on December 30 last year; a press brief released by the Army said.

Kent took part in search operations on January 27, September 11 and an investigation into a theft case on April 4.

She also took part in refresher courses and several training sessions to refine her skills.

Second terrorist killed...

articles that were recovered by the search parties.

A wreath-laying ceremony was held for Ravi Kumar, the slain rifleman from Kishtwar district, at the Army garrison in Rajouri early on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner (Rajouri) Vikas Kundal and senior Army officers along with those from other ranks laid wreaths on Kumar's coffin. His body is being airlifted to his hometown for last rites with full military honours.

"White Knight Corps salutes the supreme sacrifice of Rifleman Ravi during 'Op Sujaligala' in the highest traditions of the Indian Army. His unwavering dedication and service to our nation will always be remembered," the Kammu-based XVI Corps said in a post on X.

Most of the terrorists were killed while attempting to sneak into this side from across the border, the officials said.

My highest obligation...

health schemes in urban and rural areas.

At the programme, the Lt Governor talked about the unprecedented progress registered by the country in health sector over the last few years.

Despite the challenges of Covid, Conflict and Climate Change, India has achieved several milestones in health parameters for all the citizens. The reflection of the country's achievements is also visible in the transformation taking place in the health sector of UT of Jammu Kashmir, he said.

"My first duty and highest obligation is the health of the common man", the Lt Governor said.

He observed that the most valuable investment is to ensure Health for All. The Administration is making earnest efforts to provide accessible, affordable and quality healthcare to every citizen, he added.

We have developed robust public health infrastructure in J&K and Universal Health Insurance Coverage, Digital health services have ensured an improved public health delivery system, the Lt Governor said.

He said the use of modern technology has positively impacted diagnosis, treatment and patient monitoring systems.

The Lt Governor called upon the health officials and all stakeholders to actively participate in the Ayushman Bhav Campaign and the upcoming Seva Pakhwada.

He directed for convergence of the campaign with the celebration of Gandhi Jayanti and to promote the values of selfless service towards the people, especially the needy, poor and marginalized sections of the society. Swachhta Abhiyan should be carried out at Health Facilities across the UT, he added.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor awarded Shopian, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Kathua, and Pulwama as best performing districts in ABHA ID generation, Golden Cards creation & distribution, NCD screening, examination & Diagnosis, registration in Ni-kshay mitras and distribution of Kits to TB patients, respectively. He honoured the Aarafah Food and Spices for adopting TB patients.

The Lt Governor also distributed Nutrition Kits to TB patients and urged the people and the community leaders to register themselves as Ni-Kshay Mitras.

Several events were organized at various levels across the UT to mark the launch

of the Ayushman Bhav campaign and more than 1.22 lakh people, including ULB & PRI members from J&K were connected during the programme.

Ayushman Apke Dwar 3.0 aims to provide Ayushman cards to remaining eligible beneficiaries enrolled under the PM-JAY scheme, ensuring that more individuals have access to essential health services.

Ayushman Melas at HWCs and CHCs will facilitate the creation of ABHA IDs (Health IDs) and issuance of Ayushman Bharat Cards. They will also offer early diagnosis, comprehensive primary health care services, tele-consultation with specialists, and appropriate referrals. The above activities will start from 17th September and will continue till 31st December 2023. Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to Lt Governor; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor; Bhupinder Kumar, Secretary Health and Medical Education and other senior officers were present at Raj Bhawan.

Govt calls all...

specific agenda for it. "Amid Amrit Kaal, looking forward to having fruitful discussions and debate in Parliament," Joshi had posted on X. With no specific agenda announced so far for the session, speculations have been doing the rounds if it could be about women's reservation bill, uniform civil code, simultaneous polls or other subjects. It is also expected that the Parliament proceedings will move from the old building to the new one during this session. Opposition parties have slammed the government for not spelling out the agenda of the session even with just a few days left for its commencement.

Union Cabinet passes...

was moved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and was passed unanimously.

The Cabinet noted that the successful hosting of the G20 Summit was a matter of great pride for the entire country with several initiatives proposed by Prime Minister Modi such as the launch of Global Biofuels Alliance and the inclusion of African Union in the bloc being adopted with a consensus, the minister said.

"The G20 Summit in Delhi was held successfully under the leadership of PM Modi. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh moved a resolution congratulating the prime minister on behalf of the entire country for the success of the summit. The successful hosting of G20 Summit is a symbol of Prime Minister's efficient leadership and strong will and it is being talked about in the entire world," he said.

"The Union Cabinet appreciated the contribution of all organisations and individuals involved in the success of the G20 Summit. It recognised the enthusiasm with which the people of India, especially the younger generation, participated in its activities. It recognized the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in giving the Indian G20 Presidency a strong direction with a view to promoting growth and development in the world," the resolution adopted at the meeting of the Union Cabinet said.

"The Cabinet lauded the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in setting out various aspects of the theme 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. The Prime Minister's approach of Jan Bhagidari involved broad sections of our society in the G20 programmes and activities. The 200-plus meetings in 60 cities represented an unprecedented footprint for G20 events. As a result, the Indian G20 Presidency was truly people-centric and emerged as a national endeavour," it also said.

The resolution further said the Cabinet felt that the outcomes of the Summit were transformational and would contribute to the reshaping of the global order in the decades ahead.

In particular, the focus on realising Sustainable Development Goals, in reforming international financial institutions, in establishing digital public infrastructure, in promoting a green development pact and encouraging women-led development were noteworthy, it said.

Thakur said the adoption of the Leaders' Declaration also proved that India is playing a key role in global agenda-setting and its leadership gets credit for that.

"India has always talked about making the G20 an inclusive forum and the inclusion of African Union proves that. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is also a big success and so is the Global Biofuels Alliance, which was an idea mooted by the prime minister," he added.

Terrorism has not...

to the table for holding talks to find a solution," Abdullah told PTI after a meeting at the party office here.

On the removal of additional duty on the import of apples, walnuts and almonds from the US, Abdullah said there are concerns that the move might lead to a fall in the prices of local produce.

"We have concerns that our fruit industry in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand will be affected. The farmers, who have spent a lot of money, are worried that the prices of local produce will fall and they will suffer losses.

"I request the government to pay attention to this issue so that the farmers do not suffer. If they suffer losses, it will not be good for the country," he said.

The former chief minister refused to comment on the agenda of the opposition INDIA bloc's coordination committee meeting, which is scheduled to be held in the national capital on Wednesday.

"Omar Abdullah has gone to attend the meeting on behalf of the National Conference. You will be told about what was decided after the meeting," he said.

Cabinet approves Rs...

by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters here.

With the provision for an additional 75 lakh Ujjwala connections, the total number of beneficiaries under the PMUY scheme will increase to 10.35 crores.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched by the Prime Minister in May 2016 to provide LPG connections to women of below poverty line (BPL) families.

'During current FY Rs. 1447.06 Cr spent': 97 pc of critical work components in Jal Shakti sector awarded through transparent e-tendering system, says ACS

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Additional Chief Secretary Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra on Wednesday gave an overview of the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Jammu and Kashmir since the inception of the mission.

Addressing a press conference here at DIPR Auditorium, the ACS said that like all other States and UTs of the country Jal Jeevan Mission-a flagship program of Govt of India is being implemented in the UT of J&K with an aim to connect each and every rural household with Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC).

Flanked by Mission Director Jal Jeevan Mission, Dr GN Itoo; Director Information, Minga Sherpa and Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Kashmir, the ACS said that the program shall be capable of providing drinking water at a minimum service level of 55 litres per person per day and its quality confirming to BIS 10500 Standards, regularly on a long term and sustainable basis. In UT of J&K, 3244 water supply schemes (including standalone schemes for Schools, Angawadi Centres, Health Institutions & Gram Panchayats) have been planned at an estimated cost of about Rs. 13000 crore to provide new and upgrade existing tap water connections of 18.67 lakh rural households for a sustainable, reliable and potable supply of drinking water to improve the living conditions of about 1.10 crore rural population.

Divulging further information, the ACS said that these water supply schemes comprise of about 6600 components like source development in the shape of Bore-wells, tube-wells & dug-wells besides Rapid Sand Filtration Plants, Over Head Tanks, Slow Sand Filtration Plants, Ground Service Reservoirs and pipe laying works aimed to augment the existing water supply system and to provide the new tap water connections in uncovered areas.

He informed that as on date about 97% of the critical work components have been awarded, all of them through transparent e-tendering system involving about 1700 contractors. This is in contrast to 14% in June, 2022. Similarly, the start of works has also picked up from 6% in June, 2023 to 73% as on date thereby indicating that the implementation of the mission is in full swing all across the UT. There is absolutely no complaint regarding any of the allotments, he said.

He said that as the infrastructure is being built to meet the requirements for next 30 years and a huge quantum of work is involved including laying of a vast pipe distribution network, hence the requirement of pipe material is equally large for which timely availability was to be ensured to avoid the delay in implementation of the mission without compromising on the

fairness, accountability and transparency of the procurement process as envisaged in the GFR 2017 and Manual for Procurement of Goods 2017.

Talking about the financial powers, Kabra said that in strict compliance to the GFR 2017, Manual for Procurement of Goods 2017 and S.O 15 dated 09-01-2020 delegating the financial powers for award/ sanction of contracts, UT of MK has been able to purchase 60% of the total pipe requirement as on date through complete e-tendering and scrutiny through a UT level purchase committee headed by Development Commissioner Works and with members across the departments like Finance, I&C, MED etc. which was less than 5 % in June, 2022.

"About 24 OEMs have been involved in supply of pipes through competitive tendering. While doing so, on the advice of the National Jal Jeevan Mission and in view of the difficulties

'Start of works also picked up from 6 pc in June, 2023 to 73 pc as on date'

being faced in timely supply of GI pipes, cost effective and technically feasible HDPE pipes are also being used, especially in Jammu province which has not only resulted in increase in supply rate but a saving of about Rs. 430.00 crore is expected in the overall estimated cost of the projects," he informed.

Under Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance, he added, a component under Jal Jeevan Mission which aims to ensure that quality of water being supplied is as per the standards of BIS 10500 to improve the health conditions in rural areas especially children & women.

"98 water testing laboratories have been set up/ strengthened across the UT, and 11 of them have been accredited by NABL,for testing of water samples the reports of which are made available on the WQMIS portal which is in the public domain," the ACS said.

In order to involve the communities in the surveillance of the water quality, the ACS informed that they field testing Kits (FTKs) have been made available to Pani Samiti Members. As on date 7200 FTKs have been distribute and 32000 women have been trained for use of these FTKs.

Also, he said to involve the communities in planning, monitoring & implementing the Jal Jeevan Mission in villages, Pani Samitis have been constituted in all the villages of the UT who are involved in monitoring of the works at village level and on the completion of these schemes. About 23000 meetings of Pani Samitis/ special Gram Sabhas/ Jan Sabhas have been held in connection with the planning and monitoring of JJM works besides Har Ghar Jal Certification of the villages where

100% FHTCs have been provided. As on 31st August, 3088.00 Crore has been expended since the start of the Mission, out of which Rs. 2600.00 Crore have been spent during last 12 months. The ACS informed that during the Current financial year, the UT has spent Rs. 1447.06 Crore and has been able to lift two tranches of funds amounting Rs. 1433.56 Crores from GoI.

He said that from last few weeks, some incorrect and malafide information has been propagated in respect of the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission in the UT of J&K and in this backdrop, it is imperative to make few points clear to the general public and to all the stakeholders.

He said a scam of 13000 crore has been alleged when on the other hand it has been stated that only 800 Crore have been spent till August, 2023. But the public is being misled in both these aspects as neither any scam has taken place nor the figures given in respect of the expenditure are correct as the total expenditure in JJM as on 31st August is Rs.3088.30 Crores and every allotment/ contract has been awarded strictly following the process laid down in the GFR. Such allegations are complete nonsense and made by people who have no understanding.

All the works have been awarded through a transparent and

Skill course in English for employability begins at GCOE Jammu

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: IQAC, Placement Cell and English Department of GCOE, Jammu jointly organized a 10 days Skill Course, "Basic English for Employability." The program was formally inaugurated by Prof. Aekta Gupta, Principal of the College. She conducted the first session and elaborated upon the importance of communication skills in the contemporary globalized world. She added that India is a multilingual



Faculty, resource person and students during the programme.

country and in order to make it a global power we need to have good command over English language besides having good command in Hindi, our national language as well

as our own mother tongue, Dogri. The first session was followed by an interactive session by Geetika Kohli. Her session was activity based in which the students got the opportu-

nity to practice situational conversation. She also suggested various means of developing interpersonal skills, conflict resolution skills and leadership skills. The ten days skill course event is convened by Prof. Shalini Rana while Dr. Taahira Shah and Prof. Ramandeep Kralia are the co-conveners of the program. The student managers were Sidhant,. Neha Basha, Shyista, Heena, Arushi Sharma and Shalhu Khajuria.