

Ceasefire ends, ops against J&K militants to resume

Official cites enhanced threat to Amarnath yatra commencing on June 28

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday that the government has decided not to extend the suspension of operations (SoO) in Jammu and Kashmir and that operations against terrorists would resume.

The SoO was announced on May 16, when the month of Ramzan started.

The prime reason for the decision was the enhanced threat to the Amarnath yatra that commences on June 28, a senior government official said.

Hurriyat blamed

The official said that by ignoring the government's initiative, the Hurriyat Conference had failed to seize the opportunity.

"Operations against terrorists to resume. The government commends the security forces for having shown exemplary restraint during Ramzan, despite grave provocations," Mr. Singh said.

He said the government was committed to creating an environment free of terror and violence in the State. "It is important that all those who have the interests of the people of J&K, and especially the youth in mind, isolate

No let-up in violence

There was no major dip in the number of casualties (table) in Jammu and Kashmir even after the Centre's announcement on May 16 of stopping military operations in the month of Ramzan



Ceasefire announced: **May 16** | Ceasefire annulled: **June 17**

Month	Civilians	Security force personnel	Terrorists
January	2	4	10
February	4	11	8
March	1	7	26
April	16	6	20
May	13	4	17
June	2	10	10

SOUTH ASIA TERRORISM PORTAL DATA TILL JUNE 17

the terrorists and work towards bringing back the misguided youth to the right path... On the other hand, terrorists indulge in wanton killing of innocent civilians and attacks on security forces," Mr. Singh said.

Interestingly, the government had made up its mind not to extend the SoO last week itself when it reviewed the security preparedness for the yatra. The assassination of *Rising Kashmir* Editor Shujaat Bukhari only

firmed up the decision.

"There were multiple incidents reported in the month of Ramzan. It would have reflected badly on the government if taking advantage of the SoO militants attack the Amarnath yatris," said the official.

Last year, eight persons were killed when a bus carrying pilgrims from Gujarat was attacked by Lashkar-e-Taiba militants.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

Operations against J&K militants to resume

When told that the attack took place last year when SoO was not in effect, the official said, "All the stakeholders were consulted and they were of the view that in the wake of the heightened threat to the yatra, not carrying out cordon and search operations against militants would embolden them. The safety of the yatris will be in jeopardy."

Formal announcement

Mr . Singh had said on Saturday that he will make a formal announcement on Sunday on the government's decision and the reasoning behind it.

The cease-ops were announced on May 16, following successive reports given by Special Representative Dineshwar Sharma to the

government that killings and encounters were not yielding the desired results and the emotional upsurge at funerals of militants killed in encounters was aiding recruitment by terror outfits.

In an interview to *The Hindu* last week, Mr. Singh had said, "This is a decision that has been taken after consulting everyone and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on board."

'No discrimination'

"Our government doesn't discriminate on the basis of religion but a terrorist doesn't have religion or doesn't belong to any caste or creed. The decision was taken so that those Muslims who want peace do not face inconvenience during Ramzan," he said.