

Plan to leave terrorists headless

Security forces launch ops to neutralise 21 most-wanted terrorists in Kashmir and make their cadre shake in boots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Security forces have launched major operations against 21 most-wanted terrorists in Kashmir with the objective of throwing the lower ranks of the militant organisations into disarray by neutralising the top leadership. Some of the top terrorists carrying a reward of more than ₹12 lakh each and categorised A++ include Altaf Kachroo, Zeenat UL Islam, Riyaz Ahmed Naikoo and Zakir Musa. Most of these terrorists owe allegiance to Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), while others are from Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Tayyebba (LeT).

With the Centre calling off the month-long unilateral ceasefire during Ramzan on Sunday, security forces, including the Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Jammu & Kashmir Police, have moved into top gear to conduct anti-terror operations against these militants, sources said here on Friday.

Explaining the rationale behind going after the top terrorists, the sources said if the security forces were able to neutralise them or restrict their movement, it will create a void in the three terror "tanzeems" (organisations). The next generation of top leadership will take time to come up as the aspiring commanders will have to prove their mettle time and again to gain "respect" of the cadre, they said.

On categorisation of terrorists, officials said it was done on the basis of types of crimes committed by these terrorists, including killings, organisational capabilities, control over the "tanzeem" and statements issued by them from time to time to mark their presence. While category A++ is the highest one carrying a reward of more than ₹12lakh, A+ is the second in the list with a reward of ₹8 lakh. C is the third category of wanted terrorists.

Giving an example, they said Altaf Kachroo (Hizbul Mujahideen), category A++, has survived since 2006 after joining the terror ranks. He is a division commander of his "tanzeem" in south Kashmir. Similarly, Riyaz Naikoo has been managing to avoid the security dragnet since 2012. He is also categorised A++.

Giving the break-up organisation-wise of 21 most-wanted terrorists, sources said 11 are from HM, seven from LeT, two from JeM and one from Anzar Ghazwat ul-Hind. Incidentally, all the LeT terrorists figuring in the list are A+. Officials also informed that all the most-wanted terrorists have their bases in south and north Kashmir.

While Hizbul is local ter-

rorist organisation, JeM and LeT are Pakistan-based outfits comprising mostly foreign fighters. Of late, some misguided local Kashmiris have joined these two organisations, officials said.

LETHAL BLOW

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Army personnel walk towards the house where terrorists were hiding during an encounter at Srigufwara in Anantnag district of south Kashmir on Friday

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People shift to safer places after an encounter between terrorists and the Army started at Srigufwara in Anantnag district of south Kashmir on Friday

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