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Indian army carries out surgical strike against militants inside Myanmar

(Xinhua)

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Indian army soldiers carry a flag-draped coffin containing the body of their colleague, who was killed in an attack by tribal separatist guerrillas in India's Manipur state, during a wreath-laying ceremony at the air force station in Chandigarh, India, June 6, 2015. [Photo/Agencies]

NEW DELHI - Indian troops killed at least 15 illegal armed militants inside the Myanmar territory in a cross-border operation Tuesday, said the military.

The attack came after 18 Indian army soldiers were killed in an ambush by militants last Thursday near the Indian-Myanmar border in the northeast state of Manipur.

Special forces of the army carried out a surgical strike inside Myanmar, slaying about 15 insurgents of the groups believed to be responsible for the deadly ambush, said Press Trust of India.

The strike was carried out by commandos on specific intelligence input in coordination with Myanmar authorities, with the Army saying that "significant casualties" had been inflicted on two militant groups called NSCN(K) and KYKL, or "National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang and "Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup", which both claimed responsibilities for the killings of Indian soldiers.

No casualties were reported on the side of Indian troops, who made two raids against the rebels from two separate states.

Major General Ranbir Singh, Additional Director General Military Operations of the Indian Army, told the media in Imphal, state capital of Manipur, that in the course of last few days, "credible and specific intelligence" was received about further attacks that were being planned within Indian territory to be carried out by some of the groups involved in earlier attacks.

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"Any threat to our security, safety and national integrity will meet a firm response" while ensuring peace and tranquillity along the border and in the border states, he added.

The strike was carried out inside Myanmar with the coordination of local authorities of the states of Manipur and Nagaland.

In the worst attack it faced in three decades, the army lost 18 soldiers in the attack in Chandel district of Manipur on June 4.

Militants attacked a convoy of 6 Dogra, which was being de-inducted from the area, with rocket-propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices.

The attack was seen as a major intelligence failure and the advanced weapons used also raised suspicion of international involvement, said Indo-Asian News Service.

Indian Army chief Gen. Dalbir Singh visited Manipur a day after the attack, and while the army remained tight-lipped over the counter measures, a major combing operation was launched, according to the news agency.

The last time India and Myanmar had launched a joint operation was "Golden Bird" in 1995 against the militant group "United Liberation Front of Assam", killing several of its top leaders inside Myanmar territory.

The northeast India is haunted by a dozen armed rebel groups waging war against New Delhi.

The restive area is inhabited by peoples who are ethnically different from other parts of India and closer to those of Southeast Asian countries.

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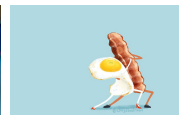
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