

NATIONAL

Myanmar operation: 70 commandos finish task in 40 minutes



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The surgical strike inside **Myanmar** was carried out by a crack team of about 70 commandos of the Indian Army who finished the operation within 40 minutes, leaving 38 Naga insurgents dead and seven injured on Tuesday..

The decision of “hot pursuit” was taken hours after the Naga militants killed 18 soldiers in an ambush in Chandel area of **Manipur** on June 4 and clearance was obtained from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the night of June 7, soon after his return from Bangladesh, said sources privy to the details.

THE HINDU

night vision goggles, were dropped at around 3 am on Tuesday from Dhruv helicopters, just inside the Indian territory near the border with Myanmar, security sources said.

Once on the ground, the contingent of the special forces split into two groups and headed for two camps being run by NSCN(K) and KYKL, who are believed to be responsible for the deadly ambush on June 4, they said.

The teams trekked through the thick jungles for at least five kilometers before they reached the training camps.

“Each of the two teams were further divided into two sub-groups. While one was responsible for the direct assault, the second formed an outer ring to prevent any of insurgents from running and escaping,” sources said.

The actual operation (hitting the camp and destroying it) took about 40 minutes. Not only did the commandos kill those present at the camps in gun fight, during which rocket launchers were also used, one of the camp was also set afire.

Sources, quoting ground reports, said 38 militants were killed and seven others were injured in the strike.

Thermal imagery was also used to track the operation about which Myanmar authorities were kept in the loop, they said.

Mi-17 helicopters of the Indian Air Force were put on standby, ready to be pressed into service to evacuate the commandos in case anything went wrong. (MORE) PTI SAP/ACB AKK AKK 06101950

“The operation was carried out based on specific and very accurate intelligence” and the operation was overseen by General Officer Commanding (GoC) of the Dimapur-based 3 Corps Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat, sources said.

Army chief Gen Dalbir Singh Suhag, who had postponed his trip to UK for the operation, was coordinating from the Army headquarters.

The decision to go in for a hot pursuit was taken just hours after the ambush on June 4 in a meeting that was chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh and attended by Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Suhag and others. The Prime Minister gave the final clearance and the operation was overseen by Mr. Doval.

Sources said that the Army will undertake more such operations in the region if required.

At the June 4 meeting, it was initially suggested that the attack on militants camp should be carried out the very next day, the sources said but the Army Chief expressed his inability to carry out the strike at such a short notice.

pursuit normally is carried out within 72 hours of an incident by militants.

Then, the top security establishment decided that the attack would be carried out on Monday and General Suhag was asked to make all the preparations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was briefed about the decision, the sources said.

The meeting explored the options of air strike using Sukhoi and MiG-29 fighters as well as ground strike by special forces of the army.

However, this option was ruled out since the possibility of collateral damage was high in an air strike.

To finetune the operation, Doval dropped out of the Prime Minister's two-day tour of Bangladesh on June 6 and 7.

When the attack was finalised, the Prime Minister was in Bangladesh and there was a necessity to brief him all aspects of the operation, sources said, adding, so, the strike was again delayed by a day and finalised for early Tuesday morning.

Meanwhile, the Army Chief undertook a visit to Manipur.

The Prime Minister was briefed about the operation after his arrival from Bangladesh on Sunday night and got his final clearance.

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