

Two killed in Gulmarg blast, Amarnath route closed after firing

Two people were killed and five were wounded after separatist militants hurled a grenade at a bus stand in Jammu and Kashmir's resort town of Gulmarg even as the Amarnath Yatra route was closed for pilgrims after guerrillas attacked security forces.

Militants tossed a grenade near the bus stand in the mountain resort of Gulmarg, 45 km from here, Sunday. The grenade exploded close to a tourist bus, a police official said.

Officials said seven-year-old Muhammad Yusuf Chopan had succumbed to his critical splinter wounds. A tourist identified as Ashok Kumar from Uttar Pradesh died in the Tangmarg hospital here, where he was shifted immediately after the explosion.

Five injured were also undergoing treatment in various hospitals.

The blast triggered panic and tension in the tourist resort famous for its breathtaking beauty and skiing slopes. The mountain resort is a favourite destination of domestic and foreign tourists who throng the Valley.

In another attack, militants struck on the Amarnath cave shrine pilgrimage route near Nagbal in Ganderbal district of north Kashmir Sunday evening, hurling grenades and firing indiscriminately at a road opening team of the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

'The CRPF troopers also retaliated and engaged the militants in an encounter (gun battle). Army troops were also rushed to the spot and the Nagbal area and adjoining Darend village were surrounded. Searches are being conducted,' a senior police officer said.

Hundreds of pilgrims use the route every day to reach the Baltel base camp on their way to the shrine. 'We will re-open the road once the searches are completed,' the officer said.

The two terrorist attacks come a day after after nine army men were killed in a powerful bomb blast at Narbal on the Srinagar-Uri highway.

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