

## **Assam terror attack: Kokrajhar remains tense, toll rises to 14**

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Tension continues to simmer here a day after militants of the anti-talk faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) triggered grenade blasts and shot at civilians, even as the number of dead rose to 14 on Saturday.

The Army, who retaliated immediately, had killed one of the attackers on Friday, who has since been identified. Two others escaped and a hunt is on to apprehend them.

Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that one of the injured, who was hit by bullets, died on Saturday morning, taking the total civilian death to 14.

The Minister, who had visited Kokrajhar immediately after the incident on Friday, said that the slain militant has been identified as Manjoy Islari alias Maodang, a commander of the outfit.

Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Sarma on Saturday visited Guwahati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) to take stock of the injured who were shifted to Guwahati last night.

"The doctors here informed us that their condition is improving. We have instructed security forces to go all out against the militants. We are committed to providing security to the lives and property of the people," said the Chief Minister after coming out of GMCH.

The condition of five injured brought to GMCH last night is out of danger. Today five more of those injured will be shifted to GMCH said Sarma.

"Although the family members have identified the slain NDFB commander, we are going to go for DNA test to ascertain his identity scientifically," Sarma said.

"The situation is normal now. We are receiving seven companies of additional forces in Kokrajhar. While a few of them have already reached, some are being sent," said Additional DGP Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) LR Bishnoi while talking to IANS on Saturday.

He said that the process of identifying the militants involved in the killing on Friday is on. "We have called the family members of the slain militant to formally identify him and the process is on to gather details about the other two militants involved in the killing," said Bishnoi.

Meanwhile, a senior police official based in Assam Police headquarters at Guwahati said that inter-state borders of the state as well as all the entry and exit routes of the state have been sealed following the incident and operations have been intensified along the areas adjacent to the Indo-Bhutan border in BTAD area.

"The operation against the militants is a continuous process. Police and security forces have been carrying out operations against the militants, particularly against the NDFB faction, who had killed over 70 Adivasis in December 2014. However, after the Friday's mayhem, the operations have been intensified," he said.

Three NDFB militants opened fire at the weekly Balajan market near Kokrajhar town on Friday and instantly killed 13 civilians and injured 20 others.

The Assam government has put the police and security forces on alert in most of the districts after the Friday's incident at Kokrajhar and counter insurgency operations have been intensified in many areas to flush out the anti-talk faction of NDFB militants, who had perpetrated the Friday's terror attack.

The Assam government had also sent seven companies of additional forces to Kokrajhar district to help the existing forces in carrying out the operations against the militants and also to instill a sense of security among the people of the district.

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