Afghani forces inflict heavy casualties on Lashkar-e-Taiba; 19 militants killed

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Kabul: In a noteworthy crackdown to dispose the terrorists' sanctuaries, Afghanistan conducted three air strikes within a week in Kunar region, circumscribing Pakistan, dispensing substantial losses on Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group.

Lashkar-e-Taiba militants

In the air strikes carried out on Saturday in Dangam district of eastern Kunar province, at least 19 LeT militants were killed and eight others wounded, Afghan Ministry of Interior said.

In a brief statement, the ministry yesterday said the LeT militants were killed in a "major operation" underway in Dangam district to clear the area from the terrorist groups. Kunar police chief Maj Gen Juma Gul confirmed the attack and the LeT casualties in Dangam district, Pajhwok Afghan news reported.

Pajhwok said the airstrike was the third in a week carried out by NATO forces in Kunar.

Taliban's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid also confirmed the air strikes. However, he denied the attack resulted in any casualties to the group affiliates.

The LeT, headquartered in Pakistan, is one of the largest and most proficient of the Kashmir-focused militant groups and it is accused of coordinating and carrying out attack on Indian consulate in Herat province of Afghanistan in 2014.

Local media reports that the LeT was attempting to set up bases in eastern Afghanistan in 2014.

Also, Ministry of Interior today said that in the past 24 hours, 31 Counter-Terrorism joint operations were carried out to clear some of the areas from terrorists and enemies of peace and stability of Afghanistan.

The operations were conducted in Kabul, Nangarhar, Parwan, Paktiya, Kandahar, Zabul, Oruzgan, Helmand, Farah, Badghis, Sar-e-Pul, Faryab, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces to eliminate the terrorists' sanctuaries and is a good step toward improving the security and stability.

Last month, Afghanistan's Vice President Sarwar Danesh had accused Pakistan of waging an "undeclared war" on its people by plotting "merciless" terror attacks and training and financing groups like the Taliban and Haqqani network. Speaking at the UN General Assembly, Danesh had said the "Taliban and Haqqani network are trained, equipped and financed" in Pakistan.

He had said more than 10 Pakistan-based terrorist groups were creating obstacles for state-building efforts and preventing the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

- (With PTI inputs)