

the Hindu, 2 April 2006

Ready for peace but no talks with ULFA on sovereignty: Manmohan

Delhi, April 2: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday said his Government would take a tough stance on infiltration in Assam. "I want to assure the people of Assam that we will show no mercy on illegal infiltration. At the same time, all genuine citizens have my assurance that in the name of detection of foreigners they will not be harassed."... The process initiated by the United Progressive Alliance Government to restore peace in Assam would be expedited, he said but ruled out talks with the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on the "sovereignty" issue. Negotiations would be held within the constitutional framework. "The ULFA may raise the issue during talks but that does not mean all issues are open to negotiation," he said. "Doors will be open to all those who shun violence. Two rounds of talks have been held with certain groups [the discussion with the ULFA-formed People's Consultative Group] and we will accelerate the peace process."...

The Indian Express, 3 April 2006

Anti-terror robot prototypes are ready, Army will get chance to test them soon (Shiv Aroor)

New Delhi, April 2: Next month, weaponised robots will mount seek-and-destroy missions in Iraq for the US Army; another swarm of tracked robots has already begun scooping out insurgents in the West Bank for the Israeli Army. At home, a team led by DRDO scientist B Rajagopalan, has quietly built their very own Anti-terror Robot-Operated Vehicle (ROV-2). Armed with sensors, cameras and mandibles—and soon with short-range weapons—these ROVs will form a force-multiplying base, fanning out into unpredictable threat scenarios, scanning for militants, defusing improvised bombs, planting booby traps...

The Hindustan Times, 3 April 2006

Arrested LeT man planned to bomb dams in Andhra Pradesh (Press Trust of India)

Gulbarga, April 1: Police investigations have revealed that the Lashkar-e-Taiba operative, who was arrested on Thursday, had planned to target dams, power grids and installations in Andhra Pradesh. Shamim Ahmed was carrying maps of these facilities, according to Gulbarga Superintendent of Police Dr K Ramachandra Rao. A local court has remanded Ahmed to police custody for ten days. "Interrogations have revealed that Ahmed underwent 13-month training at Muzaffarabad in Pakistan so as to learn using the AK-47 rifle, grenades and bombs" Rao said. He had plans to train youths on 'jehadi' activities and later send them to Pakistan, according to police, who said ten e-mail addresses have also been recovered from him. A Bangalore Police team has arrived for further investigation.

The Hindu, 6 April 2006

Varanasi blasts mastermind, 5 accomplices arrested

Lucknow: A mastermind of the recent Varanasi blasts and five of his accomplices were arrested on Wednesday by the Uttar Pradesh police and Central security agencies. A module of the Bangladesh-based Harkat-ul-Jehadi-Islamia (HuJI) was also busted. Wali Ullah and his accomplices were arrested from different parts of the State and a large quantity of weapons and ammunition recovered from them, Jagmohan Yadav, Inspector-General of Special Task Force of the police, told reporters... Wali Ullah, who had trained with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed, was extending "all help" to the cadre of the HuJI, which is banned by India and Pakistan... Wali Ullah, who was presented before the mediapersons, said the HuJI could even be responsible for the last year 29/10 Delhi blasts, an explosion in Varanasi last year and a blast on board the Shramjeevi Express last year.

Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2006

Moradabad turning into a haven for terrorists (UNI)

Moradabad, April 6: The arrest of six terrorists from Lucknow yesterday — in connection with March seven Varanasi blast — two of whom belong to Moradabad division, indicates that this part of western Uttar Pradesh is gradually turning into a haven for terrorists. Official sources said here today that Shad Ali and Rizwan Siddiqui, two of the six ultras arrested in connection with Varanasi blast, belonged to Amroha town in Moradabad division... Sources said that immediately after the March seven Varanasi blast, two terrorists were gunned down in Delhi. Later, it was revealed that the car they were travelling in carried a number plate belonging to Moradabad — the plate, however, turned out to be fake. But a petrol pump receipt found in the car confirmed that it filled from a pump in Moradabad. Subsequently on March 13 last, a sleeper ISI agent was held from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, who had managed to get a driving licence from Moradabad, official sources added. In July 2002, a suspected Hizbul operative was arrested from Moradabad, followed by the arrest of two ultras from the Lal Masjid area here. Besides, four suspected ISI agents were also arrested in

002 from the rampur district of Moradabad division, while a Kashmiri ultra was held alongwith weapons from the house of one Mohd Zafar Alam, four years ago, in the same district. In 2002, a self-styled Hizbul commander Ulfat was arrested from the Pipalsana area here. The arrested belonged to Jammu and Kashmir and had studied in Madarsas in Moradabad and Bareilly, official sources said. Intelligence agencies have focussed attention on this region of up and a permanent office of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) here is a testimony to the serious development, sources added.

The Hindustan Times, 8 April 2006

Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist nabbed in UP (Press Trust of India)

New Delhi, April 8: In a major success, Uttar Pradesh police's Special Task Force and Jammu and Kashmir police on Friday nabbed a Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist from Atria Railway station in Sitapur district in a joint operation. Additional Superintendent of Police, STF, Vijay Bhushan told reporters that an Italian-made pistol, seven cartridges, maps of Pakistan and Afghanistan and some objectionable literature were recovered from Imran who had been absconding after an encounter with Army in Kupwara district of Kashmir in December last year. Two accomplices of Imran had been killed in the December encounter as also two Army officials while he himself suffered bullet injury in his legs but managed to escape..

The Hindu, 11 April 2006

Lashkar operative remanded for 10 more days

Belgaum (Karnataka): Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative Shami Ahmed Shah, who was arrested on March 30 at the Belgaum railway station, was remanded on Monday to police custody for 10 more days by Principal Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) V.B. Joshi. Shah, who was first remanded to police custody for 10 days on March 31, was on Monday produced in the court at the end of the custody period. The prosecution urged the court to extend the remand order by another 15 days to enable the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to complete investigation...

The Hindu, 15 April 2006

Blasts in Delhi Jama Masjid leave 14 persons injured (Devesh K. Pandey)

New Delhi: Fourteen persons, including a woman and a girl, were injured in two explosions inside the Jama Masjid in the Walled City area here soon after evening prayers on Friday. Initial investigations indicated that low-intensity crude bombs were used. No outfit has claimed responsibility for the blasts... The Jama Masjid's Shahi Imam appealed to the people over the public address system to maintain calm. He said the explosions were the acts of certain people who wanted to whip up communal passions and create disturbance in the country. He asked the people to pray for communal harmony... The bombs appear to be similar to the ones used by the Pakistan-based top Lashkar-e-Taiba militant, Abdul Karim Tunda, to trigger explosions in the capital in 1996-98...

The Indian Express, 15 April 2006

Jama Masjid bombs were crude, meant to scare, not kill; pattern indicates bid to raise communal tension (Pranab Lal)

New Delhi, April 14: Hours after the Jama Masjid blasts, the Government wasn't jumping to conclusions. Reason: The nature of the explosive. It was a crude device using acid as timer to set off an explosion with small quantities of phosphorus and sulphur. Security agencies have no record of terrorists using this mix before. Sources said one thing that was clear from a preliminary examination of the explosive was that it was not meant to kill or destroy. Both the bombs were kept 15 feet apart in plastic bags. The quantum of the phosphorus-sulphur mix did not exceed 100 grams which shows the intent was to create panic and doubt. Moreover, there was no specific intelligence of an attack on Jama Masjid. For this reason, the site was not even on the list of religious places surveyed by the National Security Guard after the Akshardham attack to upgrade security procedures and put in place a plan to deal with a terrorist incident. It is, in fact, for the first time in over a decade that the mosque has been targeted...

The Hindu, 17 April 2006

Role of Lashkar militants in Delhi blasts not ruled out

New Delhi: Though the Special Cell has been working round-the-clock on the twin blasts that took place at the Jama Masjid in the Walled City area on Friday, it has not achieved any major breakthrough. It is learnt that apart from the involvement of an extremist group, the angle of mischief by some local criminal elements is also being probed by the Special Cell. The use of a crude bomb, apparently assembled using materials easily available, indicates that someone who had no access to lethal explosives was behind the low-intensity blasts. Also, the culprits knew the bombs placed near the

unk at the centre of the mosque would not cause much damage as it was an open area. "In many such cases, it has been found that the motive is to create communal disturbance. As was seen in the recent blasts in Varanasi," said a senior police officer... On Saturday, the Special Cell interrogated about 15 people... The police are contemplating drawing sketches of suspects based on eye-witness accounts and the questioning of those 'detained'.

Hindustan Times, 19 April 2006

Nepal Maoists threaten to blast Kosi barrage (Indo-Asian News Service)

Patna, April 18: Security was tightened in north Bihar's Virpur village on Tuesday following a threat by Nepal's Maoist rebels to blast the nearby Kosi barrage on the India-Nepal border. The state government was taking all necessary measures to protect the barrage on the Kosi river, said a Bihar home department official. The state government had alerted the local administration and security forces were deployed at Virpur, about 10 km from the barrage, to keep a close vigil, an official said. The Kosi barrage lies in Nepal's territory near the international border and has been in operation for several decades. It serves the purpose of irrigation and hydropower generation, benefiting both the countries. "The security of the barrage is the responsibility of the Nepal government while India only looks after its maintenance," the official said. The chief engineer responsible for the maintenance of the barrage informed the state government of the Maoist threat. "The chief engineer also informed the government that security personnel deployed at the barrage have fled following the threat," the official said. Parts of north Bihar could be flooded if the barrage was damaged, the official added. The state government had already informed the external affairs ministry about the threat and sought its urgent intervention, the official said.

The Hindu, 22 April 2006

SI behind Jama Masjid blasts?

New Delhi: Though no arrests have been made so far in connection with the twin blasts inside the historic Jama Masjid here a week ago, the Delhi police now believe it could be the handiwork of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Joint Commissioner of Delhi Police (Special Cell) Karnal Singh on Friday said that from the evidence gathered so far, it appeared that the ISI was behind the explosions. It is learnt that during interrogation, two alleged Bangladeshi militants belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Anishul Murshlin and Muhibul Muttakin, who were arrested this February, had revealed that the ISI planned to cause communal violence in India. The militants disclosed that they along with 14 other young men from Hyderabad had undergone training at ISI-run camps near the Balochistan border in Pakistan. During the training, the ISI trainers purportedly directed them to target religious places, including mosques, to trigger communal violence in India. In view of these facts, the police suspect that the Jama Masjid attack was carried out at ISI's instance.

The Hindu, 29 April 2006

Taliban kidnaps Indian (AP)

Kandahar: Taliban militants kidnapped an Indian mobile phone contractor in southern Afghanistan on Friday, according to a provincial official and the Taliban's purported spokesman.