

The Hindu, 1 January 2008

Terrorists wanted to target Mumbai

New Delhi: The militants arrested in connection with last months serial blasts in U.P. wanted to carry out simultaneous explosions in four crowded areas in Mumbai, including the Gateway of India, official sources said.

The Hindu, 1 January 2008

Top HuJI militant held

KOLKATA: In a joint operation, the West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (UPSTF) have arrested Aftab Alam Ansari, a top militant belonging to the Harkat-ul-Jehad-Islami . Ansari is suspected to be one of the masterminds behind the serial blasts in the court premises at Lucknow, Faizabad and Varanasi that rocked Uttar Pradesh on November 23. Ansari was arrested on Friday from the Cossipore area in the northern part of the city and produced before the court on Saturday. The court has granted a transit remand of five days and the UPSTF will now take Ansari back to Lucknow, said Rajeev Kumar, the CIDs DIG (Operations).

The Times of India, 1 January 2008

Bomb hoax at two places in Nagpur

NAGPUR: On New Years eve, the bomb detection and disposal squad received two hoax calls. The police, along with the bomb squads, launched a thorough search in the busy Sitabuldi market area and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Marg and surrounding areas, soon after two unclaimed bags were found in the areas on Monday. Police said, the bomb detection and disposal squad were tipped-off that a leather bag was found unclaimed on Pt Jawaharlal Nehru Marg, which created tension in the area. Soon, the BDDS reached to the spot. Later, the bag was found to that of a doctor. In the second hoax call, the Sitabuldi police received an information about a bag lying in front of Ram Clothes Centre on Sitabuldi main road. But it contained computer books.

The Times of India, 1 January 2008

LeT behind militants attack on CRPF camp in UP

NEW DELHI: In a bloody start to the New Year, at least seven CRPF personnel and a civilian were killed when heavily armed militants stormed a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) recruitment camp in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh in the wee hours on Tuesday. Lashkar-e-Toiba has claimed responsibility for the attack on the camp. Armed with AK-47 rifles and grenades, the militants attacked the CRPF group centre at around 3 am on Tuesday, CRPF and police officials said. The security personnel and police patrolling the area intercepted the attackers leading to a fierce gun battle in which seven CRPF jawans and a civilian were killed, they said.

The Tribune, 1 January 2008

Foreign money aiding militancy

The interrogation of four suspects in Ludhianas Shingaar cinema blasts has revealed that militancy in Punjab continues to get financial aid from their foreign-based supporters, while safe places are still available in Punjab where militants can hide easily. The hideouts were cultivated on the basis of personal friendships or the four suspects

presented themselves as persons fighting against religious oppression, said sources. Sources in the police said that investigators have found that the four arrested suspects were getting a sort of monthly salary from their foreign-based handlers. Firstly, the suspects were given money to buy an Esteem car and later a sum was transferred through Western Union money transfer on a regular basis. The police is checking out details of the people who transferred the money and who handed over the cash to these four in India. More arrests are likely to follow.

Daily News, 1 January 2008

Tigers setting up base in Tamil Nadu

AIADMK supremo Jayalalithaa said the security situation in Tamil Nadu was turning out to be 'alarming' as "the LTTE is now attempting to establish a base" for its operations in the state due to its military setbacks in Sri Lanka. There was an 'alarming situation' in the state, where all political parties except the AIADMK were "prepared to roll out a red carpet" for the banned organisation, she told reporters at the party headquarters in Chennai. "Given the Centre's support for the State Government here, only God can save Tamil Nadu," she said. The banned outfit was looking for a base in the State as it was becoming weak in Sri Lanka following attacks by the military and also since the Tamil Nadu Government was "weak and there is no maintenance of law and order," she said. "Only I, a popular strong political leader, fully oppose the LTTE, while every party of any consequence is ready to welcome it to Tamil Nadu," she claimed.

Hindustan Times, 2 January 2008

Why terror thrives in UP

The attack on the Central Reserve Police Force camp at Rampur marks a paradigm shift in strategy and tactics of jihadi groups, hellbent on making Uttar Pradesh their major theatre of operation the four terrorists who escaped are believed to be part of a fidayeen squad. This is the second fidayeen attack after the failed attempt at Ayodhyas Ramjanmabhoomi complex on July 5, 2005. Five terrorists were killed then. Needless to say, the state has been on the terror radar for 14 years. A fresh tide of attacks has made it the worst affected state besides Jammu and Kashmir. Security experts are baffled at the sheer intensity of terror groups and their growing presence in UP, which they say has become the best bet in keeping the cause alive.

The Hindu, 2 January 2008

Warning ignored by CRPF authorities

Srinagar: Intelligence Bureau agents warned last week that a strike on the CRPF's recruitment camp in Rampur in Uttar Pradesh was imminent, highly placed official sources told The Hindu. The warning, based on information obtained through a communications intelligence operation, led experts from the Lucknow station of the Intelligence Bureau and the Uttar Pradesh police to conduct a review of the Rampur camp security at the weekend. However, the sources said, the CRPF failed to implement their recommendations. A second warning was available on Monday morning, when the Army's Srinagar-based 15 Corps intercepted a Lashkar-e-Taiba communication authorising an attack on Rampur. However, 15 Corps analysts believed the intercept referred to an Army outpost at Rampur near the LoC in Uri and security was stepped up

there.

The Indian Express, 2 January 2008

Lost in blame game: armoury next door, open road that runs right through

NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, JANUARY 1: The Uttar Pradesh Government, led by Chief Minister Mayawati, laid the blame for the attack squarely on the CRPF's door. But officials of the paramilitary force, deciding not to join issue with the state government, said that the Rampur camp was an administrative centre not an operations base like in Jammu and Kashmir where the CRPF also acts as its own police force. In other words, local police had to provide the outer cordon of security. Caught in this cross-fire, officials say, are some disturbing aspects of the attack and the circumstances around it. Consider the following: The main road passing through the camp linking Rampur to Khagapur continues to be a public thoroughfare although the matter of restricting access was taken up with the local administration and police at a recent meeting but to no effect.

The Pioneer, 3 January 2008

Editorial: Heartland on jihad's radar

Scrappy intelligence, even when shared, is of little use in combating terrorism. The repeated terror strikes in Uttar Pradesh demonstrate this point. The jihadi attack on the CRPF centre at Rampur is an example. Bishwadeep Ghosh says shabby prosecution makes the situation worse. The gory manner in which the militants chose to herald the year 2008 at the Central Reserve Police Force Group Centre, Rampur, by storming it, has once again underlined the ominous fact that Uttar Pradesh, earlier synonymous with organised crime, mafia culture, caste feuds and politician-criminal nexus, has emerged as a happy hunting ground for Islamist groups. The killing of seven CRPF jawans, injury of six others and the death of an innocent rickshaw-puller in the heavy fusillade fired by the ultras in the early hours of January 1 does not augur well for the health of the State. Top honchos in the internal security apparatus have customarily sat up to take note and feebly tried to defend the 'resistance' put up by paramilitary jawans. Laxity of the authorities has only added to such problems; meanwhile, the malaise has struck deeper roots.

The Pioneer, 3 January 2008

UP now part of jihad arena

The jihadi attack on the Group Centre of the CRPF at Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, in the wee hours of Tuesday came amid prior information about a shift in the strategy of terror outfits to enter the hinterland. The choice of the target at Rampur, considered a 'peace area', and the recent bombings at the district courts suggest that Uttar Pradesh is high on the agenda of terrorists. Intelligence sources believe that the large number of madarasas in UP provide indoctrinated individuals for making available logistical support at the local level. The attack could have been avoided as the CRPF was well aware that such a plot was in the offing. The CRPF had in its sectoral IGs conference at its headquarters in Delhi in October last discussed the issue of Uttar Pradesh becoming a major target of the terror outfits.

Hindustan Times, 3 January 2008

How college dropouts were lured to terror school

The Shingar blast probe has revealed how over 10 college dropouts were trained to become militants after a rigorous training at a terror school at Garhi Mansowal, a remote hamlet on a hill bordering Himachal Pradesh's Una district. The group, comprising youth aged between 22 and 28, were given a 16-week training in assembling bombs, shooting, handling improvised explosive devices (IED) and triggering blasts using mobile phones. The bomb, which claimed six lives and injured 37 at Shingaar cinema hall on October 14, was made and the blast given a dummy run at the terror school run from a double-storeyed house at the village. During interrogation, Gurpreet Singh (25), the Shingar blast mastermind who headed the training outfit, said he had undergone training at a camp in Pakistan. Since it was not possible to send all group members to Pakistan for training, the house at Garhi Mansowal served as his base camp, he said.

The Hindu, 4 January 2008

Security agencies sound alert throughout Uttar Pradesh

New Delhi (PTI): Central security agencies sounded a general alert throughout Uttar Pradesh following intelligence input of a possible terror strike at places of large congregation. Official sources said that the alert has been sent to all district administrations especially to Allahabad which will be hosting Magh mela. According to sources the militants of banned Harkhat-ul Jehadi Islamia (HuJI) were planning to hit back following the arrest of five of its men in connection with the serial blast of November 23.

The Indian Express, 4 January 2008

Under scanner: mole role in Rampur terror attack, mystery car drop-off

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 3: A mysterious drop-off from a vehicle shortly before the attack, a possible insider role and a misguided security alert, are under the scanner after preliminary investigation conducted by the CRPF into the New Year's Day terrorist strike in which seven of its security personnel were killed at its recruitment centre at Rampur in Uttar Pradesh. The probe has not only raised several questions over the security set-up at the centre but also contradicts the official version. Consider these: A white Tata Sumo carrying a Bahujan Samaj Party flag is said to have dropped two persons outside the recruitment centre at around 1 am, about 90 minutes before the shoot-out began. The UP police security picket at the centre waved the Sumo through after seeing the party flag. The two passengers, it is suspected, were involved in neutralizing personnel posted at the CRPF picket and the guardroom. And in preparing the ground for the other two attackers.

The Pioneer, 4 January 2008

Maoists push border in Uttarakhand

Tension prevails at No Man's Land (NML) between India and Nepal after Young Communist League (YCL), the youth wing of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), hoisted its flag there. This is the second time that YCL has unfurled the red flag on the India-Nepal border. The Uttarakhand Home Department has written letters to the Centre for the third time in the past seven days to bring to the latter's notice the tense situation prevailing at No Man's Land after the YCL hoisted its flag. A senior officer said the reason behind such an act was to get media attention. But he refused to comment on the Union Government's reaction. In response to Maoists' action, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi

Parishad (ABVP) workers tried to unfurl the national flag at NML, Tanakpur, on Wednesday. When the Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) with the help of local police tried to control the ABVP members, they shouted slogans and pelted stones, in which three Nepali citizens were injured. Over 400 YCL volunteers had tried to unfurl their flag at Pillar No 3 at Khatima. Soon ABVP had announced that they would unfurl the national flag at NML. The SSB had tried to block them, which led to brickbating between ABVP workers and the security forces.

The Hindu, 5 January 2008

Kill plot foiled, Babbar Khalsa militants held

NEW DELHI: The Delhi police on Friday claimed to have foiled an attempt to kill Baba Pyara Singh Paniharewala, a Ropar-based religious leader, with the arrest of four alleged Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terrorists. On the hit list of the terrorists were four other prominent personalities of Punjab, the police said. Four pistols and 124 live cartridges were allegedly seized from their possession. Addressing a press conference here, Joint Commissioner (Special Cell) Karnal Singh said the terrorists Baljeet Singh, Bikkar Singh, Kulwinderjeet Singh and Tirlochan Singh had carried out a dry run and were planning to assassinate the religious leader this Saturday.

The Hindu, 6 January 2008

2 held in Kerala for links with Hizb

Kottayam: The Idukki police arrested two persons for their alleged links with the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Althaf Ahmed Khan (29) of Srinagar and Jahangir (21) of Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir are being questioned. Althaf, involved in crimes in Jammu and Kashmir during 1998-99, had been living in Kumily for seven years. Recently, he applied for passport and during enquiry he admitted to the crimes. Jahangir joined Althaf six months ago.

The Hindu, 7 January 2008

Suspected Hizb operative remanded

KOTTAYAM: Althaf Mohammed Khan (29), who was arrested at Kumily in Kerala on Saturday for suspected terrorist links, was produced before the First Class Judicial Magistrate Court at Nedumkandom on Sunday. Althaf, who hails from Kashmir, was remanded to police custody. He has been charged under 41(1) A of the Cr.PC and also under 468 and 471 of the IPC for forgery. Vinson M. Paul, Inspector-General of Police, Ernakulam Range, told The Hindu that the arrest of Althaf followed information given by the Kashmir police during verification of a passport application filed by him. According to the information received by the Kerala police, Althaf was an operative of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

The Hindu, 7 January 2008

2 Sri Lankan Tamils held in Mangalore

MANGALORE: Police arrested here on Saturday two Sri Lankan Tamils allegedly having connections with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Credit cards, fake passports and jewellery worth Rs. 3 lakh were seized from the two, a press release from Superintendent of Police N. Sathish Kumar said. A team headed by Mangalore North and

Rural Circle Police Inspectors Umesh G. Shet and Jayanth V. Shetty raided a lodge and arrested them. They are Bala Roban alias Roban alias Kadirvelu Gunaselvan (22), resident of Vavuniya district, but settled in Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore. The other is Selvathambi Jayasheelan alias Sheelan (25), resident of Sangana district, North Jaffna. He was also residing in Ramamurthy Nagar, the release said.

The Indian Express, 8 January 2008

CRPF constable questioned as police stick to insider line in Rampur attack

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 7: A week after terrorists targeted a CRPF recruitment centre at Rampur, the Uttar Pradesh police, the paramilitary force and the intelligence agencies continue to pass the buck, with the state police convinced that the attack on New Years eve was an insider job. On Saturday, National Security Advisor M K Narayanan had to intervene to calm heated tempers at a meeting, also attended by CRPF Director General S I S Ahmed and top officials of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB). The Uttar Pradesh police have already questioned CRPF constable Javed Ahmed, who has drawn suspicion for surviving the attack unscathed even as his colleague who was with him in the guard room was shot no less than 16 times.

The Statesman, 9 January 2008

Militants smuggling narcotics to raise funds, say police

KOLKATA, Jan. 8: Extremists operating on India-Nepal and India-Bhutan international borders are trafficking banned narcotic substances to India to raise funds, said inspector-general of police, Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB), Mr M Chandra Kharkwal today. Addressing SSB jawans at the agency's raining camp at Amdanga in North 24-Parganas today, Mr Kharkwal said: "Officers belonging to the Intelligence wing of the agency, which guards the India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders, have identified some refugee camps from where banned narcotic substances were being smuggled." He also said that cadres belonging to the CPI-Maoist and the KLO had been encouraging smuggling to raise funds for their operations. Those who have been staying in some refugee camps in the border areas are being used as traffickers, said Mr Kharkwal. He added that sleuths belonging to the Intelligence wing of the SSB had identified a few refugees camps where agents of those extremist outfits were staying.

The Times of India, 14 January 2008

Hizb threat to blow up Kerala House

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Security in Kerala assembly was stepped up on Friday following an anonymous letter threatening to blow up the building to avenge the arrest of a Hizbul Mujahideen (HuM) terrorist in Idukki district. The letter addressed to the city police commissioner was received in the office of the district collector on Thursday evening. Police said it was initialled Hizbul Mujahideen, Kerala unit, and warned of an explosion in the complex on Friday. Not wanting to take chances, police security was stepped up in Thiruvananthapuram. Special teams kept vigil on all the key points and visitors and vehicles to the assembly complex were thoroughly checked. By the end of the day, however, things seemed normal.

The Times of India, 14 January 2008

'Pak terror camps cause of concern'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Talking tough on terrorism, BJP president Rajnath Singh on Sunday called for joint international military action to neutralise terrorist training camps in Pakistan. Speaking at the BJP Kerala state council meet in Kochi, Rajnath expressed concern over the terrorist training camps in Pakistan. Referring to the Benazir Bhutto's assassination and subsequent violence, Rajnath asked the central government to take the international community into confidence and if necessary launch a joint military action against militant training camps inside Pakistan. He accused the UPA of doing away with a "tough anti-terror law" like Pota for vote bank gains and regretted that the Centre had not made any alternate law to deal with the issue.

The Hindu, 21 January 2008

Serial blasts rock Bhutan

Thimphu (BHUTAN): A woman was injured and some property damaged as four serial blasts rocked poll-bound Bhutan on Sunday, including one in the capital, police said. The four blasts took place within a span of three hours between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., a spokesman for the Royal Bhutan Police said.

The Tribune, 21 January 2008

Two arrested Indians shifted to Madrid

Fourteen suspected Islamic militants, including two Indians, detained on the suspicion of planning a terror attack in Barcelona have been transferred to Madrid for questioning at the National Court, officials said today. Meanwhile, India has sought details of the arrested citizens. Investigators in Spain were painstakingly sifting through evidence uncovered during yesterday's arrests, which were triggered by reports from several European intelligence agencies, an Interior Ministry spokesman said. The suspects were detained in the northern port city's Raval neighbourhood, home to many Arabic-speaking and Muslim immigrants. The police made the arrests as they searched five houses in the area, seizing three large bags containing four timers and substances that could have been used to make bombs, the spokesman said on condition of anonymity in keeping with government rules.

The Indian Express, 22 January 2008

UK wants more India cooperation on terrorism

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown called for greater cooperation with India on combatting terrorism as he began a visit to New Delhi on Sunday. Brown wants India to become a member of an international body that counters terrorist financing -- the Financial Action Task Force -- and also wants to help it to acquire sophisticated equipment to detect people carrying weapons or explosives at ports and airports.

The Tribune, 23 January 2008

LTTE influx: Security up in TN areas

With virtual war going on in Sri Lanka and the LTTE pushed to the wall by the Sri Lankan defence, security agencies along with the Tamil Nadu police have stepped up

vigil on all coastal areas of the state, particularly in this area. They are not only monitoring the influx of refugees as LTTE cadres might sneak in due to heavy bombings and attacks by the Sri Lankan military but also keeping a watch on hospitals and private nursing homes in this area. The Q branch of the state police, which deals with terrorism, is carrying out a check as some injured LTTE militants might sail across from Jaffna, as this is the closest point in India to Sri Lanka, for medical help. Said an intelligence officer, "All the medical facilities are kept under watch but we have intensified the surveillance, particularly after there has been a renewed war in Sri Lanka and the LTTE has suffered heavy casualties. We are verifying the antecedents of the people who recently got admitted to these medical facilities."

The Tribune, 24 January 2008

UP blasts: 5 get life term

A fast track court (FTC) today pronounced life imprisonment to five associates of Waliullah, the reported mastermind behind the March 7, 2006 Varanasi serial bomb blasts killing 20 persons. The FTC court of additional sessions judge Dharmaraj Mishra today announced life terms for all five, who had been arrested along with Waliullah by the STF from Lucknow in April 2006. They have also been asked to pay a fine of Rs 40,000 each. Charges under various sections of the Arms Act have also been made against them. The five are Mahboob Ali Mandal, Mohd Farhan, Sayed Shoib Hasan, Mohd Saad Ali, alias Shaad alias Babbloo and Rizwan Siddiqui. The case of Waliullah is being heard in a FTC of Ghaziabad.

The Hindu, 26 January 2008

HuJI chief shot dead

NEW DELHI: Police in the mountain district of Doda, Jammu and Kashmir, have shot dead Bashir Ahmed Mir, the Harkat ul-Jihad-e-Islami's commander-in-chief for operations across India. Operating under the code-name Hijazi, Pakistan-trained Mir is believed to have ordered a string of strikes across north and south-east India last year, including the court complex bombings in Uttar Pradesh, the bombing of the Ajmer Sharif shrine in Rajasthan, and the multiple bombings which took place in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, in May and August. Investigators believe Mir supplied cadre with the Research Department Explosive (RDX) used in the November 2007 serial bombing of three court complexes in Uttar Pradesh. A part of the explosives used in the attacks were transported from Doda by Mir's subordinate, Kishtwar resident Sajjad Ahmad Wani.

The Hindu, 26 January 2008

Terror strike report leads to exodus

Moradabad (UP): A large number of people have been leaving Gajraula in Uttar Pradesh for safer places after a media report about the possibility of a terrorist attack in a chemical factory triggered panic in the town. After the report of a possible terrorist strike on the Jubilant Organosys appeared in a newspaper, rumours spread rapidly in the town,

with people fearing that if such an attack really takes place, it will lead to a Bhopal-type situation. Many residents of the town and nearby villages have fled their homes, officials said adding, they have been trying their best to dispel rumours and stop the exodus. The situation has been created by the publication of the unauthentic news.

We are doing our best to normalise the situation, J P Nagar Senior Superintendent of Police Beena Bhookesh said.

The Hindu, 27 January 2008

HuJI chief shot dead

NEW DELHI: Police in the mountain district of Doda, Jammu and Kashmir, have shot dead Bashir Ahmed Mir, the Harkat ul-Jihad-e-Islami's commander-in-chief for operations across India. Operating under the code-name Hijazi, Pakistan-trained Mir is believed to have ordered a string of strikes across north and south-east India last year, including the court complex bombings in Uttar Pradesh, the bombing of the Ajmer Sharif shrine in Rajasthan, and the multiple bombings which took place in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, in May and August. Investigators believe Mir supplied cadre with the Research Department Explosive (RDX) used in the November 2007 serial bombing of three court complexes in Uttar Pradesh. A part of the explosives used in the attacks were transported from Doda by Mir's subordinate, Kishtwar resident Sajjad Ahmad Wani.

The Hindu, 30 January 2008

Nasir was in Hyderabad before twin blasts

HYDERABAD: The Hyderabad police suspect that city youth Ziyuddin Nasir, arrested in Davangere, Karnataka on vehicle theft charge and suspected to be having links with terrorist outfits, was trained in Pakistan to be a suicide bomber. Highly placed police sources say that this was indicated by those arrested in connection with the Mecca Masjid blast and the August blasts in the twin cities. The arrested persons had told their interrogators that Nasir was not only trained in making improvised explosive devices but also in carrying out terror strikes. Sources said police had stumbled upon evidence indicating that Nasir stayed in Hyderabad for a couple of months before the explosions at the Lumbini Park and the Gokul Chat were triggered by the Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI) operatives on August 25.

The Times of India, 31 January 2008

India worried about Al-Qaida hold on Pak

NEW DELHI: As Pakistan continues to wallow in instability, India's internal assessment about the internal situation in Pakistan is looking more and more grim. Despite all the protestations from Pakistan's leadership, India has concluded that the al-Qaida is now in virtual control of Pakistan's tribal areas, and Islamabad and the Pakistan army are making little headway. The proliferation of militants and terrorists is having an exponential increase on India's threat perception from across the border, said high level sources in the government, citing their most recent assessment. The real fear is that the Pakistan-

sponsored terrorist groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and those controlled by the Pakistan intelligence agency, ISI, may undertake "maverick missions" which is spook-speak for assassination attempts on high-profile targets.