

Ultimatum to LTTE ends

Hindu, 1 February 2009

COLOMBO: With the expiry of the 48-hour ultimatum served on the LTTE by Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa for allowing safe passage of civilians out of the battle zone, the government on Saturday announced that it would continue to adhere to a 'zero civilian casualty policy' in its effort to eradicate terrorism. The Tigers ignored the ultimatum on the plea that they were not holding civilians forcibly in the territory under its control and would not facilitate 'exodus of reluctant civilians' into the military zone

It is for Pakistan to act: Chidambaram

Hindu, 1 February 2009

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram on Saturday said India had provided to Pakistan a comprehensive dossier on the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack and it was for Islamabad to act on it. "For the record, Pakistan has maintained that it will investigate and its Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) will probe," Mr. Chidambaram said, responding to a question at a press conference here. In reply to another query whether the Mumbai terror attack had come up for discussion during his meeting with Pakistan High Commissioner Shahid Malik, the Home Minister clarified that the High Commissioner had only paid a courtesy call on him after the Republic Day celebrations and it was normal for ambassadors and envoys to do so

ATS quizzes Muthalik on Malegaon blast

Hindu, 1 February 2009

MANGALORE: A team from the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad on Saturday interrogated Sri Ram Sene chief Pramod Muthalik here on Saturday for over two hours on his suspected links to the Malegaon blast. According to ATS sources, Mr. Muthalik remained calm and denied any links to the Malegaon blasts

Woman creates ruckus in PS, beats-up militant

Daily Excelsior, 1 February 2009

JAMMU, Jan 31: In a rare incident of its kind, a woman, who was gang raped by four Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants, caught hold one of them inside Bhaderwah police station in Doda district during identification parade and handed him over severe thrashing besides hurling abuses on him creating a ruckus till police officials intervened and separated him. Displaying courage, the woman forced police to register a rape case against four militants of the LeT outfit including the arrested one, Imtiyaz Ahmed, a resident of Nalthi, Bhaderwah

Eight militants killed, school blown up in Swat

Dawn, 1 February 2009

MINGORA, Jan 31: Eight militants, three soldiers and two civilians were killed and several others injured in armed clashes in different areas of Swat on Saturday. The militants attacked another school with explosives. The building of the primary school for boys in Nengolai was completely destroyed. Hundreds of families have fled the fighting in the troubled region. Troops engaged militants in Dheri, Kabal, Nengolai, Manglawar, Charbagh and adjoining areas

UN warns of massive exodus

Dawn, 1 February 2009

RAWALPINDI, Jan 31: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has projected that the situation in Swat valley and the tribal areas would aggravate during the year, causing a fresh displacement of up to 625,000 people. "An analysis indicates that there is a significant likelihood of large-scale clashes and intensified military offensives throughout 2009, and possibly into 2010," the study said. According to the OCHA's "humanitarian response plan", the displacement would exacerbate an "already complex humanitarian situation

Military strategy to change with breaking of LTTE's back

Island, 1 February 2009

With the Sri Lanka's most successful ground offensive on the Vanni front rapidly coming to a close, an appraisal of overall military strategy is on the cards. Authoritative military sources asserted that once the army liberated an area of less than 300 square kms. east of the A9, the basic strategy will have to be changed. The transformation will see giant multiple Division-sized operations replaced by a mix of operations by the infantry, Special Forces and Commandos targeting isolated LTTE units which may take refuge in the dense jungles of the northern and eastern provinces

Colombo: we will destroy LTTE shortly

Hindu, 2 February 2009

COLOMBO: Amid claims by the military of further advances into the last two remaining settlements of the LTTE, Sri Lanka Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Sunday asserted that the forces would shortly "destroy" the Tigers. A report posted on the Defence Ministry website quoted him as saying that the LTTE's refusal to pay heed to the 48-hour ultimatum issued by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to the outfit to release civilians should be an eye-opener to the NGOs and the international community

FBI wants to question Ansari

Hindu, 2 February 2009

New Delhi: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has made a request to interrogate two militants arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police and questioned by the Mumbai police in connection with the 26/11 terror strikes. The FBI made the request through proper channels for questioning Fahim Arshad Ansari and Sabbauddin of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, who were taken to Mumbai in December last as a follow-up to the probe into the 26/11 attacks, official sources said

Naxals trap, kill 15 policemen in Maha

Asian Age, 2 February 2009

Feb. 1: The Anti-Naxal Squad (ANS) at Gadchiroli was combing the thick forests of Dhanora in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra on Sunday for Naxals after 15 policemen were lured into the jungle and killed by the militants. Reports from the district said 15 members of a police party, including a police sub-inspector, were trapped and slain by Naxals after a fearsome battle. The Naxals were armed with sophisticated weapons like AK-47 assault rifles. The Naxals had surrounded the

Gyarapatti Katgul police party, which had entered the jungle on a tipoff about the presence of a few of the militants. But the tipoff turned out to be a trap and the waiting Naxals surrounded the police from all sides and started firing at them

3 top LeT militants shot dead in Handwara

Daily Excelsior, 2 February 2009

SRINAGAR, Feb 1: The security forces in North Kashmir continued their successful drive against militancy as three militants believed to be cadres of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were killed in a 10-hour long encounter in forest area of Handwara in Kupwara district, officials said. A joint team of Special Operations Group of Police and troops of 21 Rashtriya Rifles launched search operations in forest area of Wadar Bala in Handwara area in the wee hours today following specific information about presence of militants in the area, the officials said

Pakistan key to fixing Afghan problem: UK military chief

Daily Times, 2 February 2009

LONDON: Peace will only come to Afghanistan if Pakistan can sort out the Taliban on its side of the border, where US strikes are not helping, the head of Britain's armed forces told The Sunday Times newspaper. Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup said only politics, long term, could bring peace on both sides of the frontier. The chief of the defence staff said weaknesses in Afghan President Hamid Karzai's government "worries me considerably".

16 Taliban killed in Swat operation

Daily Times, 2 February 2009

16 Taliban killed in Swat operation

MINGORA: The military on Sunday said it had killed 16 Taliban in operations in various areas of the restive Swat valley. A spokesman for the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in Mingora said the Taliban were killed during clashes with security forces in Aligrama and Dherai areas of Kabal tehsil and Manglor area of Chaharbagh tehsil. Personnel: The ISPR spokesman said a security official was killed and two others were injured in the fighting with the Taliban

Predator strikes unhelpful: UK military chief

News, 2 February 2009

LONDON: Peace will only come to Afghanistan if Pakistan can sort out the militants on its side of the border, where the US strikes are not helping, the head of Britain's armed forces told The Sunday Times newspaper. Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup said only long term politics could bring peace on both sides of the frontier. The chief of the defence staff said that weaknesses in Afghan President Hamid Karzai's government were causing difficulties for the 8,300 British troops battling Taliban in the troubled south of the country. "The weakness of governance in Afghanistan worries me considerably," Stirrup told the weekly broadsheet

President calls LTTE to surrender

Daily News, 2 February 2009

President Mahinda Rajapaksa renewing his call to LTTE terrorists, urged them to surrender of face grave danger of being captured by the Government Armed Forces.

This renewed call was made by President Rajapaksa when he addressed a mammoth rally at the Rikillagaskada playground yesterday in support of the UPFA candidates contesting the Central Provincial Council election, scheduled for February 14

Forces advance further; Capture LTTE camp complex, weapons, assets:

Daily News, 2 February 2009

The Security Forces engaged in the final phase of the Vanni liberation operation continued its military thrust against the LTTE recovering large hauls of weapons as the 48 hour ultimatum given to the LTTE to allow civilians to reach safer areas ended on Saturday night with around 300 civilians arriving in Security Forces controlled areas, Military sources said yesterday. "Around 300 civilians arrived in the Government controlled areas in Visuamadu and Pulmudai and to Omanthai within the 48 hour period," Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara told the Daily News

Naxals trap, kill 15 policemen in Maharashtra

Asian Age, 2 February 2009

The Anti-Naxal Squad (ANS) at Gadchiroli was combing the thick forests of Dhanora in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra on Sunday for Naxals after 15 policemen were lured into the jungle and killed by the militants. Reports from the district said 15 members of a police party, including a police sub-inspector, were trapped and slain by Naxals after a fearsome battle. The Naxals were armed with sophisticated weapons like AK-47 assault rifles. The Naxals had surrounded the Gyarapatti Katgul police party, which had entered the jungle on a tipoff about the presence of a few of the militants. But the tipoff turned out to be a trap and the waiting Naxals surrounded the police from all sides and started firing at them

Zardari seeks more US aid to fight terror

News, 3 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday stressed the need for financial support from the United States and said that the war against terrorism could not be won without the financial support of the US. The president was speaking at a luncheon meeting hosted by him for a US congressional delegation at the Presidency. The delegation members discussed bilateral relations and the regional situation with the president. The delegation comprised Representatives John F Tierney, George Miller, Chris Van Hollen, Chris Welch, Christopher Murphy and Ron Kind. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nawabzada Malik Amad Khan, Adviser to the PM on Interior Rehman Malik, Finance Adviser Shaukat Tarin and US Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W Patterson were also present in the meeting

Suicide bomber kills 25 Afghan policemen

Dawn, 3 February 2009

KANDAHAR, Feb 2: A suicide bomber in police uniform killed 25 policemen and wounded several others on Monday after infiltrating their morning exercises in southern Afghanistan, authorities said. The powerful blast, claimed by the Taliban, was the deadliest in Afghanistan this year and caused a scene of bloody carnage that an ambulance driver likened to a butcher's shop. The bomber walked into the station in the town of Tirin Kot, capital of the southern province of Uruzgan, at 9:30am and detonated explosives strapped to his body, authorities said

Gunmen kidnap UN agency official in Quetta: Driver killed in ambush
Dawn, 3 February 2009

QUETTA, Feb 2: A top UN official was kidnapped and his driver was killed after his vehicle was ambushed here on Monday. John Solecki, head of the UN refugee agency in Quetta, was going to office from his nearby residence in the Chaman Housing Society when the gunmen in a white car opened fire on his vehicle. The driver was seriously injured and the vehicle crashed into a wall. Gunmen took away Mr Solecki, who is an American national, at gunpoint

Ban on women education by Taliban unIslamic: Geelani
Daily Excelsior, 3 February 2009

Srinagar, Feb 2: Hardline Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani today said the ban imposed on education of women by Taliban in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan was un-Islamic. "I have received with great distress the world electronic and print media reports regarding preventing girls to pursue education in some parts of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). If these reports are true they are far from Islamic ideals and teachings," Geelani said in a statement here

Pranab contradicts NSA, says Pak yet to respond
Hindu, 3 February 2009

New Delhi: Contradicting National Security Adviser M K Narayanan's claim that Islamabad has reverted on Mumbai attacks dossier, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday asserted that India is yet to receive any official response from Pakistan. "That he (Narayanan) has said in his own way. The fact of the matter is that after they (Pakistan) received material from us, we have not received any official communication about the progress of investigation conducted by them," Mukherjee told reporters here when referred to the NSA's comments

Swat Taliban turn their guns on lawyers, judges
News, 4 February 2009

MINGORA: Militants in Swat on Tuesday warned that all lawyers and judges, being part of an 'infidel judicial system', would be killed if they did not quit their profession. Announced on their illegal FM radio, the threat from insurgents — intent upon forcing their ideology on residents of the restive valley — has obviously scared the legal fraternity. The Swat Bar Association president confirmed the lives of 300 of his co-professionals were under threat and he was trying to contact the fighters in an effort to assure them that the lawyers were ready to work under an Islamic judicial regime

Terror funding falls, militants paid less
Asian Age, 4 February 2009

Feb. 3: There is a sharp decline in the amounts paid by terror outfits Al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba to their "mujahids" for carrying out fidayeen (suicide) attacks in India and other parts of the world. According to the latest intelligence inputs, the LeT is not paying more than Rs 2 lakhs as a one-time payment to its militants, especially Pakistani nationals, for fidayeen attacks in India. Earlier, the LeT used to pay Rs 2.5 lakhs to Rs 3 lakhs for a fidayeen attack. Indian nationals trained at LeT terror camps

located in Pakistan are now paid Rs 1 lakh. They used to get Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2 lakhs, said a high-ranking Intelligence Bureau official

Fear is the key for UNMIN discards
Himalayan Times, 5 February 2009

Fear is the key for a section of Maoist-affiliated People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants, who have been disqualified by the United Nations' Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). The hapless lot is battling twin fears. First, the ignominy of being denied berth in the integration process. Second, whether the PLA fighters' loved ones will be happy to accept them back into family fold. "We waged a decade-long People's War. All these years, we have been away from our families. We don't know whether the society will accept us after this long gap," said a woman PLA combatant. Life has come a full circle for many of the 5,000 PLA fighters of the Seventh Division, who are housed in several camps in Kailali. At a conservative estimate, the home away from home has seen the birth of around 400 bundles of joy in the past few years. Five babies were born yesterday alone

30 security men freed after 'promising to quit force'
Dawn, 5 February 2009

MINGORA/TIMERGARA, Feb 4: The Taliban in Swat set free 30 police and paramilitary personnel in the presence of journalists in Kotli Dadhara area of Kabal tehsil on Wednesday, after securing written promise from them that they would quit their government jobs. "The hostages have been released on humanitarian grounds, but with a condition that they will quit their jobs and never fight against the Taliban," local Taliban leaders told newsmen after a meeting of the Taliban Shura. The security personnel were kidnapped on Tuesday when the militants overran a police checkpoint in Shamoza area adjacent to the Lower Dir district. The area had been under siege for 36 hours

UN announces probe into Benazir murder: 'Chilean ambassador to head commission'

Dawn, 5 February 2009

ISLAMABAD/NEW YORK, Feb 4: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced on Wednesday that an independent commission of inquiry would be set up soon to investigate the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. "On the basis of our extensive consultations with the government of Pakistan and members of the Security Council, I intend to establish very shortly an independent commission of inquiry headed by a very distinguished person, whom I am going to nominate soon," Secretary-General Ban said at a banquet hosted by President Asif Ali Zardari

Foreigners also fighting in Swat: ISPR
Daily Times, 5 February 2009

LAHORE: ISPR spokesman Maj Gen Athar Abbas has said that foreign militants are also present in Swat – where security forces are pursuing a new strategy to rein in the Taliban. Abbas told a private TV channel, "No immediate results can be expected from the military operation in Swat ... it will take time." He said the locals were reluctant to support the army out of fear of the Taliban. "The Taliban have been targeting people who supported the security forces in the past," he said. daily times

monitor

Taliban torch 10 NATO supply trucks

Daily Times, 5 February 2009

JAMRUD/LANDIKOTAL: Army engineers on Wednesday built a temporary alternate route for traffic, including NATO trucks bound for Afghanistan – a day after the Taliban blew up a key bridge in Khyber Agency – as suspected Taliban torched 10 containers they thought were loaded with NATO supplies near Landikotal. According to an ISPR statement, the army engineers also continued repairing the bridge destroyed by the Taliban in Khyber Agency's Ali Masjid area

150 ultras 'active' in Doda, Reasi

Tribune, 5 February 2009

Around 150 Hizb-ul- Mujahedeen (HM) and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants, including 25 foreign mercenaries, are " still operational" in the twin mountainous districts of the state, well-placed sources said here today. Though three top militants, including two who were behind the 1995 Republic Day blasts in Jammu, were arrested last month, around 100-120 militants are still active in the Doda-Ramban range, the sources said

CoBRA reaches Bastar to join anti-Naxal ops

Indian Express, 5 February 2009

Raipur: Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) personnel have reached Chhattisgarh's tribal Bastar region, one of the worst Maoist affected regions in the country, to join the anti-Naxalite operations. As many as 400 personnel of the CoBRA force are now based at a camp of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at Masgaon and the remaining 657 personnel of the battalion are expected to be in Bastar by April this year, official sources said

Give up hostilities, India to LTTE, SL Govt

Indian Express, 5 February 2009

New Delhi: Voicing concern over the loss of lives in embattled Sri Lanka, India on Wednesday asked the LTTE to lay down arms and come to the negotiating table while urging Colombo to suspend hostilities. "We are deeply anguished at the loss of lives. We are not happy that the Sri Lankan Government has resumed hostilities. It is for both sides to cease hostilities," Union Home Minister P Chidambaram said

52 dead, 80 injured in Sri Lanka

Hindu, 5 February 2009

COLOMBO: Amid confirmation by a United Nations representative here that at least 52 people were killed and 80 wounded in continued fighting between the Sri Lankan forces and the LTTE and a cluster bomb targeted the only functional hospital in the fast shrinking area under the control of the Tigers, Sri Lanka Co-Chairs on Wednesday appealed to the government and the LTTE to declare a 'temporary no-fire period.'

Quotes taken out of context have given a distorted view: Narayanan

Hindu, 5 February 2009

New Delhi: In a case of one man's (sound) bite being worse than another's bark, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan has rushed to clarify that his remarks about the new American President "barking up the wrong tree" on Kashmir were really aimed at underlining the "high expectation India had from the Obama administration." And that "selective quotes taken out of context have tended to give a distorted idea of what was actually said" by him

Indian held for Al-Qaeda link

Hindu, 5 February 2009

New Delhi: An Indian national has been arrested in Spain for alleged links with Al-Qaeda and India has sought consular access to him, the government said here on Wednesday

Base of Tiger chief's bodyguards captured

Island, 7 February 2009

Army's 57 Division yesterday afternoon captured a building complex in Visvadamu East from where the Radha Regiment, which provides LTTE leader Prabhakaran with personal security, had operated. The LTTE leader's bodyguards had left the place a long time ago. Army sources said there were over one hundred weapons of all types used for training Prabhakaran's bodyguards

Helicopter attacks in Darra

Dawn, 7 February 2009

KOHAT, Feb 6: Helicopter gunships shelled militants' positions adjacent to Khyber and Orakzai agencies on Friday. The helicopters attacked camps set up by Darra Adamkhel militants in government schools and the hujra of levy subedar Resham Khan, officials said. The buildings were damaged and three militants were killed. AFP quoted a security official as saying that Frontier Corps troops killed 52 militants, targeted five hideouts and destroyed an ammunition dump and eight vehicles in Chapri Ferozekhel.

Suicide attack on trailer in Jamrud

Dawn, 7 February 2009

LANDI KOTAL, Feb 6: Seven people, three of them children, were injured when a suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into a trailer on the main Peshawar-Torkham highway on Friday. Officials said the bomber struck near Teddi Bazaar in Jamrud at about 8:15am when the Khasadar personnel signalled his speeding jeep to stop. The driver rammed his jeep into an empty trailer returning from Afghanistan. The resulting blast destroyed the jeep while the trailer overturned and fell off the road. The blast also created a crater in the road. A Khasadar man, three children and three passers-by were injured

Zardari says victory against militants only option

Dawn, 7 February 2009

PESHAWAR, Feb 6: President Asif Ali Zardari said on Friday that parts of the NWFP were not facing a simple law and order situation but an insurgency by some trained elements. He was addressing a meeting held at the Governor's House to brief him on

law and order situation and development activities in Fata and the NWFP. This was Mr Zardari's first visit to Peshawar after his election as president

Ex-Ulfa man: ISI sponsors Bangla camps

Asian Age, 7 February 2009

Feb. 6: After Pakistan pointed towards a Bangladeshi hand in the 26/11 terror attacks, former commanders of the outlawed Ulfa came forward on Friday to allege that the ISI was sponsoring training camps for Ulfa cadres on Bangladeshi soil. The former leaders of one of the fierce wings of the Ulfa exposed the nexus between the ISI and Bangladeshi spy agency DGFI who were sponsoring terror activities being carried out in India. These commanders who came overground last year admitted that the Ulfa had sent its cadres to Pakistan-Afghanistan borders for training till two years ago. "The top Ulfa leadership has close links with the ISI, DGFI and some Islamic organisations. Without their support, it is not possible for anyone to have bases in Bangladesh," Mrinal Hazarika, former chief of the Ulfa's 28th battalion, who had come overground deserting the organisation along with 150 other cadres, told reporters here on Thursday. Hazarika, who described his group as pro-talks, said the Ulfa has several camps, offices and shelter places in Bangladesh, including some in cities

Prabhakaran feasted, others ate crumbs

Asian Age, 7 February 2009

Feb. 6: A "menu card" seized by the Sri Lankan Army from LTTE chief Velupillai Prabhakaran's hideout offered a rare glimpse into the Tiger chief's dietary preferences. It revealed, the Army said, that while the regular Tiger cadres were poorly fed, Prabhakaran and his confidants enjoyed sumptuous meals. The Sri Lankan Army recovered the menu card from a palatial mansion reportedly frequented by Prabhakaran at Visvamadu, in the jungles of Mullaittivu

Menon: Pakistan must come back with clear, unqualified response

Hindu, 7 February 2009

Paris: Pakistan must come back to India with a clear and unqualified response on the probe into the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, "even if it involves screwing up the courage to face facts and talk to us," Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon told The Hindu in an exclusive interview here on Thursday. Although India has still not received what could be described as a clear and forthright response, Mr. Menon said: "I think so far we have seen more from Pakistan in terms of response than we have seen ever before. It has created trouble within Pakistan — General Durrani lost his job for commenting on it in public — but they need to sort it out among themselves. This they have to sort out. They have to choose where they stand on this."

Mumbai terror 'a crime against humanity, totally unacceptable'

Hindu, 7 February 2009

New Delhi: "I would not pre-judge what the Pakistan government will say. But I am convinced that the Pakistani government is also committed to addressing terrorism," United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told The Hindu in an interview in New Delhi on Thursday. He was asked whether he was confident that Pakistan would heed his appeal to "fully cooperate" with the Indian government in getting to the bottom of the Mumbai terror attacks. Mr. Ban, who was in New Delhi for a day, revealed that

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani had informed him the Pakistan government "was going to enact the legislation to allow them to punish those Pakistani people who engage in terrorist acts outside Pakistan."

52 Taliban killed in Khyber operation

Daily Times, 7 February 2009

BARA/JAMRUD: Army helicopter gunships killed 52 Taliban when they targeted hideouts in Chapri and Feroz Khel areas along the border of Orakzai and Khyber Agencies on Friday. "Fifty-two militants were killed and a huge ammunition depot and eight vehicles were destroyed in an attack by army helicopters," Khyber Agency Political Agent Tariq Hayat told Reuters. Separately, a suicide bomber rammed his explosives-laden car into a trailer carrying supplies for NATO forces in Afghanistan and injured seven people in Tedi Bazaar area of Jamrud tehsil. Eyewitnesses told Daily Times the bomber was heading for Landikotal when Khasadars signalled him to stop. They said that he rammed his car into the trailer instead of stopping

'Armed forces prepared for surgical strikes'

Indian Express, 9 February 2009

Feb. 8: Post-Mumbai terror attack, after months of debate on the option of surgical strikes against terror targets in Pakistan, Army Chief Gen. Deepak Kapoor has stated that such strikes were militarily very feasible. "Surgical strikes are definitely feasible but whether you wish to take that decision or not is a separate issue," Gen. Kapoor said. "Whether you would like to look at doing it (carrying out such strikes) by air or artillery or by another means or physically there," he said

PC says Ram Sene crossed limits, RSS favours ban

Indian Express, 9 February 2009

Terming the Sri Ram Sene as a 'threat' to the country, Home Minister P Chidambaram on Monday said the Centre was watching its activities and expected the Karnataka Government to take firm action against the outfit, accused of being involved in the Mangalore pub attack. "Sri Ram Sene is a threat to the country. The Centre is watching its activities with great concern", the minister told reporters

17 FC men hurt in Bannu suicide blast

News, 10 February 2009

BANNU: At least 17 Frontier Constabulary (FC) personnel were injured in a suicide attack on Baran Pul check-post of the Frontier Reserve Police (FRP) in the jurisdiction of Bakkakhel police station early on Monday. Sources said a suicide bomber driving a explosives-laden mini truck hit the building of the FRP check-post at Baran Pul, injuring 17 FC personnel, including Noor Daraz, Muhammad Sabir, Ikramullah, Ajab Noor, Zafrullah, Shakirullah, Sultan Azam, Khan Zali, Samadullah, Khidmatullah, Lukman Ali, Sanobar Khan, Maqayaz Khan, Razmali Khan, Obaidullah, Hidayatullah and Aqal Zaman. The injured were taken to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH). Security forces cordoned off the area to collect evidence while the security measures were also beefed up in the district, especially on the exit and entry points of the Cantonment Area

Editorial: Holbrooke lands in troubled waters

Daily Times, 10 February 2009

Richard Holbrooke, US President Barack Obama's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, arrived yesterday in Pakistan for a 4-day official visit. The duration of the visit is significant, as also the fact that Mr Holbrooke has chosen to kick off his itinerary with Pakistan before visiting India and Afghanistan. Not just geographically but, it seems, also geopolitically, Pakistan lies at the centre of the special envoy's brief. This can both be positive and negative depending on how the game is played by all the actors in the days and months ahead

Delhi's dossier insufficient': Pakistan seeks concrete evidence

Daily Times, 10 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) has said that a dossier of information given by India to Islamabad is 'insufficient' to make headway in a conclusive investigation into the Mumbai attacks, and called on India to provide substantial evidence, Daily Times has learnt. The committee met here under Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani to deliberate on the findings of an inquiry – conducted by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) – into the Mumbai attacks

Bomber kills 28 in Lanka

Asian Age, 10 February 2009

Feb. 9: An LTTE woman suicide bomber posing as a civilian blew herself up at a checkpoint for refugees fleeing Sri Lanka's war zone, killing at least 20 Army personnel and eight civilians. About 24 soldiers and 40 civilians sustained injuries. The suicide bomber had mingled with the civilians to arrive at a refugee camp at Surantherapuram, north of Visvadamu in Mullaittivu, on Monday morning. The soldiers were to screen the civilians before sending them to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) further south

Militant returns to Valley for politics

Asian Age, 10 February 2009

Feb. 9: In a significant development, Zahoor Ahmed Butt, the younger brother of JKLF co-founder Maqbool Butt, has returned to the Valley after spending about 18 years in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Accompanied by his Pakistani wife and their four children, the former militant commander has decided to pursue his separatist agenda as a politician. The homecoming comes days after chief minister Omar Abdullah announced here that the National Conference-Congress government was pursuing with the Centre the matter of seeking the return of Kashmiri youth stuck in PoK. The main Opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) strongly supports the idea but the BJP and some like-minded groups have their reservations

Hizbul chief arrested in Kashmir

Indian Express, 10 February 2009

Srinagar: J-K Police on Monday achieved a major success when they arrested the Chief operational commander of Kashmir largest militant outfit Hizbul Mujahideen-Muzaffar Ahmed Dar- in Srinagar. 39 year old militant commander of Hizb was one among the most wanted militants in J-K. Inspector General of Police Kashmir, S Srinivas said that Muzaffar Ahmad Dar was arrested at 3:30 pm from Saderbal near Kashmir University

Mumbai attacks: anatomy of a failed strategy By Kanwal Sibal

Hindu, 10 February 2009

Our post-Mumbai strategy has lacked purposefulness and coherence. We have been overly cautious in our reaction to the Mumbai carnage, as if the overriding concern was to somehow salvage the policy of engagement with Pakistan pursued in recent years. We were defensive in accusing "elements in Pakistan," and not the state agencies, of the outrage, despite the common sense view that such a highly organised, skilful commando-style operation could not have been mounted without institutional connivance and notwithstanding the earlier evidence of the involvement of the Inter-Services Intelligence in blasting our Kabul Embassy. Subsequently, the Prime Minister chose to mention the involvement of "official agencies."

Kidnapped Indian in Afghanistan dead

Hindu, 10 February 2009

NEW DELHI: Simon Paranthaman (39), kidnapped in Afghanistan for ransom, is dead, according to official sources here. "We have lost him," they said. Paranthaman, who hails from a village near Kallakurichi in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu, was abducted along with two Afghans in October last from the Herat province in western Afghanistan. He is survived by wife Vasanthi, daughter Nirmala (10) and son Ajit (8).

Pakistan seeks more information on 26/11

Hindu, 10 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will register a case on the Mumbai attacks to bring the perpetrators to justice under its own laws but says it needs more information from India to complete its investigations, or will find it "exceedingly difficult" to proceed. This was the outcome of a marathon four-hour meeting of the Pakistan Cabinet's Defence Co-ordination Committee that Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani chaired on Monday to take stock of a report prepared by the Federal Investigation Agency on the material provided by India on the Mumbai attacks

26/11 partly planned in Pakistan: Malik

Hindu, 13 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday delivered a big part of its promise of cooperation with India on the Mumbai attacks by registering a case of terrorism against eight Pakistani suspects, and formally acknowledging that part of the planning for the attacks was done in this country. The move is unprecedented and marks an important milestone in India-Pakistan relations. Rehman Malik, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior, who also heads the crucial Ministry, told journalists that the case was registered under sections of the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act that enable the prosecution of Pakistanis for directing, abetting, conspiring or facilitating a terrorist act in another country

New Delhi sees a positive development

Hindu, 13 February 2009

NEW DELHI: India on Friday said certain actions taken by Pakistan with regard to the Mumbai terror attacks were a "positive development." It, however, urged Islamabad to take credible action of dismantling the terror infrastructure on its territory. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) offered to share "whatever" it can

after examining the issues raised by Pakistan in its communication to the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad

Islamabad hands over Mumbai probe report to New Delhi

Daily Times, 13 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has formally handed over the details of its investigation into the Mumbai terror attacks to India, the Foreign Office said on Thursday as Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior Rehman Malik admitted that the attacks were 'partially planned' in Pakistan. "The Indian high commissioner was ... [on Thursday given] material pertaining to the Mumbai terror attacks probe by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), by the foreign secretary," said Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit

Four Taliban killed in Bajaur

Daily Times, 13 February 2009

KHAR: Security forces on Thursday retaliated to a Taliban rocket attack against a checkpoint at Shundi More in Bajaur Agency, resulting in the killing of four Taliban. According to sources, the security forces continued the military operation to establish the government's writ in the region by shelling and destroying suspected Taliban hideouts in Inayat Qillay and Bhai Cheena in Khar tehsil and Umrai in Mamoond tehsil. They said curfew was relaxed in Khar and adjacent areas from 8am to 4pm but remained in place in other areas. Meanwhile, local journalists have said that they are facing great difficulty in providing coverage, saying that two journalists have been killed in the ongoing insurgency while the houses of three others have been destroyed. staff report

India: take action to logical conclusion

Hindu, 14 February 2009

NEW DELHI: While reiterating that the official Pakistan response to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks was a positive development, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told Parliament on Friday that "much depends on actions in the Mumbai case reaching their logical conclusion." Making suo motu and unscheduled statements in both Houses of Parliament, Mr. Mukherjee underlined that India had no quarrel with the people of Pakistan and wished them well. "We do not think that they should be held responsible or face the consequences of this situation. We have, therefore, consciously, and after due deliberation, not thought it necessary or fit to curtail people-to-people contacts, trains and road links," he observed

US drones fly from base in Pakistan?

Daily Times, 14 February 2009

WASHINGTON: CIA's unmanned Predator aircraft striking terrorist targets in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas are flown from an airbase inside Pakistan, a senior US lawmaker said on Thursday. The disclosure by Senator Dianne Feinstein, chairwoman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, marked the first time a US official had publicly commented on where the Predator aircraft patrolling Pakistan take off and land

Pakistan must allay Indian fears: US spy chief

News, 14 February 2009

WASHINGTON: Pakistan holds the key to defusing tensions with nuclear rival India by executing a serious clampdown on Islamic militants, US Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair said on Thursday. Without such action from Islamabad, President Barack Obama's new chief of intelligence told Congress, New Delhi could feel compelled to ignite a wider conflict in a region already fraught with security risks. The best efforts of Indian and Pakistani leaders to improve relations "could unravel unless Islamabad takes sustained, concrete, meaningful steps to allay Indian concerns about Islamabad's support to anti-Indian militant groups."

LTTE fired at bus, says Colombo
Hindu, 15 February 2009

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan military on Saturday accused the LTTE of attacking a bus carrying civilians with a hand grenade and small arms fire killing one and injuring over 13 at Pulliyankualam in Wannai. The Defence Ministry said the bus was transporting a group of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) — who had recently fled from the LTTE clutches in Wannai — from Kilinochchi to Vavuniya. A 60-year-old mother of two was killed while 4 children and 9 elderly people were among the injured

Suspects not produced in Pakistan court
Hindu, 15 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Contrary to expectation, Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency has failed to produce in court the suspects in the Mumbai attacks two days after the government announced the registering of a first information report against them and declared six of them to be in its custody. The case was registered on Thursday. It was widely anticipated that the six would be produced in an anti-terrorist court in Rawalpindi on Friday, in keeping with the rule that suspects must be produced 24 hours after their arrest. But that did not happen, and they were not produced on Saturday either

After 26/11, infiltration goes down on LoC, IB
Daily Excelsior, 15 February 2009

JAMMU, Feb 14: A steep decline in infiltration has been observed on Line of Control (LoC) in twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri during last one and a half month of this year. Official sources attributed this new phenomenon to closure of training camps of major militant outfits and shifting of militants inside Army camps to hide them in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the aftermath of 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai. According to sources, very rare intrusion bids were noticed on the LoC in Jammu region and there was no Intelligence report of any successful infiltration attempt either from Rajouri and Poonch districts during first 45 days of 2009

Drone mows down 28 in S. Waziristan
Dawn, 15 February 2009

WANA, Feb 14: Two missile strikes on a site suspected to be housing militants loyal to Baitullah Mehsud killed 28 people and injured 15 others in Ladha sub-division of South Waziristan on Saturday. Official and local sources said that a missile strike by drones flattened a 'hujra' (guest house) of Roshan Mehsud, an associate of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan chief Baitullah Mehsud, in Showngai Naserkhel area. The compound was situated in an isolated area. Residents said that three unmanned aerial vehicles

were hovering over the area when two loud explosions were heard at about 8.30am. This is the third and the deadliest drone strike in the tribal region near the Afghan border since US President Barack Obama assumed power on Jan 20.

Taliban trying to take over state: Zardari **Dawn, 15 February 2009**

NEW YORK, Feb 14: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan is fighting for "survival" in the face of an onslaught by the Taliban who have "established themselves across a large part of the country". "The Taliban do have a presence in huge amounts of land in our side. Yes, that is the fact," he said in an interview with CBS. The interview will be broadcast in the network's "60 Minutes" programme on Sunday night. "We're not doing anybody a favour. We are aware of the fact it's ... Taliban... trying to take over the state of Pakistan. So, we're fighting for the survival of Pakistan. We're not fighting for the survival of anybody else," Mr Zardari said in the interview

12 more killed in Swat violence **News, 15 February 2009**

MINGORA: At least 12 people, including a soldier, were killed and 10 others injured in violence in restive Swat Valley on Saturday. Sources said the militants attacked security forces stationed in a school at Dherai area of Kabal Tehsil. Security forces also retaliated and a soldier, whose identity could not be confirmed, was killed in the ensuing gunbattle, which continued for sometime. It was reported that security forces also fired mortar shells on the hideouts of the militants and one of the shells hit a house in the area, killing four members of a family, including Malang, his wife and two daughters

Baloch demands **News, 15 February 2009**

The Baloch Liberation United Front (BLUF), that little known group that holds UNHCR chief John Solecki, has released a video tape in which an obviously scared Solecki has called on the UN to help facilitate his release. The kidnapers, who have warned the UN official could be killed within 72 hours if their demands are ignored, have called on the UN to play its part in securing the release of 142 Baloch women who kidnapers say are held by security agencies, to seek the whereabouts of 6,000 people from the province who they say are missing and to work for the grant of fundamental rights to the Baloch people

Jets destroy Tiger suicide boats **Asian Age, 15 February 2009**

Feb. 14: Sri Lanka Air Force fighter jets destroyed "several" LTTE suicide boats on the beach north of Mullaittivu on Saturday morning, Air Force spokesperson Janaka Nanayakkara said here.

The military has alleged that a woman was killed and 13 others sustained injuries when the LTTE attacked a bus full of fleeing civilians with hand grenades and small arms past midnight Friday at Pulliyankualam, in Vanni. A woman died in the incident and the wounded included four children, the defence spokesperson, Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara, said. The military has been accusing the Tigers of holding civilians as human shields and firing at those trying to escape to government-held territory

'Remand' for 6 terror suspects in Pakistan

Hindu, 16 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency has obtained a 14-day remand for at least six suspects it has arrested in connection with the Mumbai attacks, according to media reports. A judge granted the remand after recording the statements of the suspects at a secret location, Dawn and Geo Television said. Dawn newspaper, quoting sources, said the FIA had obtained remand for seven suspects

"Prabakaran still holed up in Wannii"

Hindu, 16 February 2009

COLOMBO: LTTE chief Velupillai Prabakaran is still holed up in Wannii and is holding an estimated 75,000 to 80,000 civilians as human shield in 140 sq km area still under the control of the Tigers, according to confessions made by two Black Tiger (suicide squad) cadre who surrendered to the military over a fortnight ago. The state-owned English weekly, Sunday Observer, in an interview with the Tiger cadre quoted them as saying Prabakaran's elder son, Charles Anthony, is among the top leaders leading the cadre in their last-ditch attempt to halt the military advance

Top naxal leader surrenders

Hindu, 16 February 2009

HYDERABAD: Konapuri Ilaiah alias Sambasivudu, secretary of the State committee of CPI (Maoist), surrendered to the police on Sunday evening. Sambasivudu who carried a reward of Rs. 10 lakh on his head belongs to Nalgonda. He was involved in several offences, prominently the killing of Congress MLA of Makthal C. Narsi Reddy at Narayanpet in Mahabubnagar district on August 15, 2005. A top police official said the government would take a lenient view towards him in the criminal cases that he was involved in since he offered to surrender

Govt, TNSM agree on Nizam-e-Adl in Malakand

Daily Times, 16 February 2009

PESHAWAR: The NWFP government and Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat Muhammadi (TNSM) leader Sufi Muhammad have agreed on the implementation of Shari Nizam-e-Adl Regulations in Malakand, an official source told Daily Times on Sunday. The decision was taken after a meeting between the government and Sufi Muhammad in Dir district. A member of the Swat Qaumi Jirga told Daily Times the two sides had signed an agreement whose key points were peace in Malakand division and implementation of sharia. Another key point was the formation of a committee to work towards freeing captured Taliban, Aaj Kal added.

EDITORIAL: Sharia "justice" comes to Swat again?

Daily Times, 16 February 2009

Shara'i Nizam-e-Adl Regulation is about to be applied to Swat once again. This time, one hopes, it will stick and not become a ruse for the Taliban behind which to gain reprieve from military attacks and regroup. The last time the ANP government wrote up an accord on the subject with the followers of Sufi Muhammad of the Tehreek Nifaz Shariat Muhammadi, (TNSM) the son-in-law of the great sufi warrior, Fazlullah, did not abide by it and the people of Swat, who are propagated to be relentlessly "demanding sharia", suffered untold misery at the hands of his gunmen. The earlier agreement had the authority of the Sufi's word not to destroy girls' schools, but the schools had gone on being blown up

Militants swapped for Chinese engineer?

News, 16 February 2009

PESHAWAR: The government has released over a dozen Taliban prisoners, several of them from Waziristan, for securing the release of the Chinese telecommunications engineer, Long Xiaowei, official and militant sources said on Sunday. Long Xiaowei was freed on Saturday after 170-day captivity and shifted to Chinese Embassy in Islamabad. Militants loyal to Maulana Fazlullah had kidnapped him along with his colleague Zhuang Guo from Khal town of Lower Dir district on August 29. Both the captives attempted to escape on October 17, 2007, in which Zhuang succeeded to get away but Long got his leg fractured in the move.

Bajaur TNSM wants Shariah, supports Army presence

News, 16 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: The Bajaur chapter of the Tanzim Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) on Sunday demanded immediate implementation of the Shariah in the troubled Bajaur Agency and in return assured the government of its cooperation to establish complete writ of the state, demanding the Army to stay in the region till reconstruction work was completed. TNSM Bajaur chief Dr Ismail Muhammadi made this demand while reacting to the finalisation of a five-point agreement for enforcement of Shariah in the Malakand division after successful talks between the NWFP government and TNSM chief Maulana Sufi Muhammad.

Pakistani bases not being used for drone attacks: Qureshi

News, 16 February 2009

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Sunday that Pakistani bases were not being used for drone attacks. Talking to media persons at the airport before his departure for the federal capital late on Sunday night, he said drone attacks were affecting Pakistan's sovereignty and made it clear that they did not fly from Pakistan. He said Pakistan has always condemned the drone attacks, adding that, neither "we have allowed it nor there exists any understanding". Qureshi said Pakistan took up the issue of drone attacks with the Special US envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke, during his recent visit. The minister said he honestly conveyed the sentiments of the people of Pakistan and parliament to the envoy on the drone issue and its negative impact. He said that drone attacks were causing collateral damage and proving counter productive. He said that these attacks were also causing loss of lives of innocent people

Indian Mujahideen wanted bases in Maharashtra

Hindu, 18 February 2009

Mumbai: The terror outfit Indian Mujahideen (IM), with its network spanning the length and breadth of the country and abroad, wanted to set up its bases in Maharashtra, according to a charge sheet filed on Tuesday. The Mumbai Crime Branch filed the 1,809-page charge sheet against 21 members of the IM, who engineered blasts across the country since 2005. Its masterminds, however, are still at large

Child soldiers in peril: UNICEF

Hindu, 18 February 2009

COLOMBO: The UNICEF has raised serious concern over the growing number of children recruited by the LTTE being killed or injured. It said on Tuesday it had clear indications that the LTTE had intensified forcible recruitment of civilians and children as young as 14 were being targeted. It had recorded more than 6,000 cases of

children recruited by the LTTE between 2003 and 2008. It also said it was alarmed at the high number of children being injured in the fighting

N-weapons could be brought through sea: Navy
Indian Express, 18 February 2009

New Delhi: In the backdrop of the Mumbai attacks having exposed the vulnerability of Indian coastline, Navy Chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta on Wednesday said cargo containers could be used to transport nuclear weapons. "Today, 70-75 global cargo is containerised. It is acknowledged that the container is the most likely means for terrorist organisations to illegally transport a nuclear weapon and, hence, there is a serious concern about container security," he said while inaugurating a seminar organised by the National Maritime Foundation in New Delhi

Sufi wants Islamic rule worldwide
Daily Times, 18 February 2009

LAHORE: Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat Muhammadi (TNSM) chief Sufi Muhammad, who signed a controversial peace deal with the NWFP government on Monday, said he hated democracy and wanted supremacy of Islam over the entire world. "From the very beginning, I have viewed democracy as a system imposed on us by the infidels. Islam does not allow democracy or elections," he told Deutsche Presse-Agentur in an interview held a few days before the government accepted his demand of enforcing sharia in the region. "Had the government accepted our demands in 1994, we would have not seen the violence we are seeing today," he added. Sufi Muhammad's son-in-law, Mullah Fazlullah, has fostered the violence in the name of Islam

Sufi in Swat to woo militants
News, 18 February 2009

MINGORA/PESHAWAR: Life returned to near normalcy in Swat on Tuesday as the elderly cleric Maulana Sufi Mohammad, heading a peace caravan of hundreds of his black-turbaned followers, reached Mingora after a three-hour drive from Timergara. A great rush was witnessed in bazaars of the twin towns of Mingora and Saidu Sharif and rest of Swat in anticipation of peace finally returning to the once peaceful valley. Displaced people started returning to their homes carrying their bare belongings that they had managed to bring along while fleeing their villages following the military operations

ULFA pro-talk faction demands 'full autonomy'
Indian Express, 20 February 2009

Guwahati: Giving up the demand of 'Independent Assam', the ULFA pro-talk faction submitted a charter of demands to the Prime Minister demanding "full autonomy" to Assam within the constitutional framework, and said it would return to arms struggle if the Centre failed to "discharge its responsibilities". "We sincerely believe that full autonomy to the state can be the only solution to the Assam-India conflict. It will remove the fear and insecurity from the minds of the indigenous people and provide safeguards to land, language, economy and right of self-determination", the charter said

3 CRPF personnel die in C'garh Maoist attack
Asian Age, 20 February 2009

Raipur, Feb. 19: Three Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) troopers were killed and nine others injured in a Maoist attack early on Thursday morning in Chhattisgarh, the police said. The incident took place in the thickly-forested Mahakal area of Kanker district, about 350 km from capital Raipur, in the state's restive Bastar region.

"It was a Maoist ambush. The insurgents first triggered blasts and then opened indiscriminate fire on a joint patrolling team of the CRPF and the district force," deputy inspector-general of police, Pawan Deo said. He said that the troopers belonged to the 111 CRPF battalion

47 private firms ask for CISF security cover

Asian Age, 20 February 2009

Feb. 19: In total, 47 private sector organisations, including Infosys, Reliance Jamnagar Refinery, Oberoi Hotels, Taj Hotel, Delhi, IT Park, Bengaluru and DLF, have requested for security from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). "We have received requests from total 47 private sector organisations for security cover. We are examining it," additional DG, CISF, Manjari Jaruhar said. The role of CISF has changed over the years, she said adding that there is a significant increase in CISF clientele. There has been a huge demand and surge for CISF security after the November 26 Mumbai attacks, she said

Taliban safe havens in Pakistan expanding: US

News, 20 February 2009

WASHINGTON: US Special Representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke said on Wednesday those who were involved in the 9/11 incident and the Mumbai attacks, and the people who seized Swat all come from the same roots and all are located in the same area. Talking to an American TV after a five-hour-long meeting of the committee set up by US President Barack Obama to review US policy on Pakistan and Afghanistan, Holbrooke said the Taliban are resurgent. They have an increasingly large sanctuary in Pakistan and the events in Swat only highlight that.

TNSM in talks with Swat TTP to end fighting

News, 20 February 2009

MINGORA: The leaders of the Tanzim Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) held talks with the Swat chapter of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) somewhere in Matta Tehsil of the troubled Swat Valley on Thursday to convince them to lay down their arms after the enforcement of the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation. Till the filing of this report, two rounds of talks were held while the third round was reported to be in progress. Maulana Sufi Muhammad, along with his hundreds of black-turbaned activists, marched through the troubled areas — Kabal, Matta and Khwazakhela — to garner the people's support for peace after the promulgation of the Nizam-e-Adl

EDITORIAL: Omens against peace in Swat...

Daily Times, 20 February 2009

As if in response to the Tehreek-e Nifaz-e Shariat-e Muhammadi (TNSM) leader Sufi Muhammad's "peace march" from Mingora to Matta in Swat, a gang of Taliban kidnapped journalist Musa Khankhel on Wednesday and then rigged him with bullets and beheaded his dead corpse. The Sufi did not comment, but the act was clearly addressed to him as a message. Musa Khankhel was following the grand procession of sharia led by Sufi and exhorting all to support the accord. At the very least, Sufi should have condemned the act. But he didn't. Now the media is outraged over the fourth journalist killed in Swat. Significantly, however, no one is ready to name the killers

LTTE aircraft attack Colombo; two killed

Hindu, 21 February 2009

COLOMBO: At least two persons were believed dead and 40 others injured as two

light wing aircraft of the LTTE dropped a bomb in the heart of the national capital on Friday night. Power was switched off in the city after the radar system detected two aircraft heading towards the capital around 9 p.m. Sounds of explosions and continuous firing could be heard

IB: LeT team out to kill Kasab
Asian Age, 21 February 2009

Feb. 20: The Intelligence Bureau (IB) has said there is a fresh threat to the life of Mohammad Ajmal Amir Kasab, the only terrorist taken alive during the November 26 terror raid. It has told the Mumbai police that a team of six highly-trained Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) operatives under the command of one Altaf would attempt to kill Kasab. Consequently, the Mumbai police has shifted Kasab to an unknown location. "We had intercepted a message, which stated that one Altaf, an LeT-trained militant, along with five other militants from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, have been given the job of killing Kasab," said an IB source

32 killed at DI Khan funeral blast
Daily Times, 21 February 2009

PESHAWAR: A curfew was imposed in Dera Ismail Khan on Friday and the army called in to quell riots immediately after a suicide bomber killed at least 30 Shias and injured another 157 who were attending a funeral in southern Dera Ismail Khan district, police and locals told Daily Times. Witnesses said police 'ran off' when gunfire broke out after the blast at the funeral of Shia leader Sher Zaman – who was gunned down a day earlier

Editorial: US-Pak perceptions of anti-terror war should not differ
Daily Times, 21 February 2009

The US special envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Mr Richard Holbrooke, has told a meeting in Washington that the "militants involved in 9/11, the Mumbai attacks and unrest in Swat have common roots" and that "the US was troubled and confused about the development in the Swat valley". Some other reports appearing in the press on Friday implied that Mr Holbrooke was "not sure if the Pakistan military and the ISI backed President Zardari's commitment to eradicate terrorist sanctuaries from the NWFP".

More JMB grenades, explosives seized
Daily Star, 21 February 2009

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in separate drives arrested seven more operatives of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) from Gazipur, Jamalpur, and Nilphamari districts yesterday morning and Friday night. They also recovered three grenades and a large amount of other explosives from the possession of the arrestees. Gazipur police arrested four of the activists of the banned militant Islamist outfit, including a woman, with grenades and other explosives in their possession during a raid on a one-storey house in East Kalomeshwar of Sadar upazila early yesterday