

J-K infiltration sends tremors; high-level meeting tomorrow

Daily Excelsior, 1 April 2009

NEW DELHI : Amid reports of large-scale infiltration by militants mainly belonging to Lashker-e-Taiba, a high-level meeting to be chaired by Union Home and Defence Secretaries will be held in Kashmir tomorrow to review the security situation. Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta and Defence Secretary Vijay Singh will discuss with the state government officials about the recent long encounter taking place along the Line of Control in North Kashmir and the preparedness in meeting the challenge ahead of general elections

Indian buses not being allowed to ply on Pak roads : Official

Daily Excelsior, 1 April 2009

AMRITSAR: In the wake of the terror attack on the Police Training Academy in Lahore, Pakistan has stopped the movement of Indian buses beyond the Wagah border for security reasons, an Indian official said today. Lahore-bound Indian buses are being evacuated at the Wagah border and their passengers shifted to Pakistani tourist buses for their onward journey due to rising security concerns following the attack on the Academy, an official posted at the international Attari check post said. After the attack at the Police Training Centre close to the Wagah border, security agencies in Pakistan are apprehensive that Indian buses could be next on the target of terrorists

By and for the RBI

Indian Express, 1 April 2009

The RBI and the Government jointly set up a committee to self-assess India's financial system, rather than let external experts do it under the Financial Sector Assessment Programme. Its recommendations were announced by RBI Deputy Governor Rakesh Mohan, and they invite a simple question: why did the government and the RBI choose "self-assessment"? Instead of emphasising independent international assessment, as the world would like to see done for the US today, this step will strengthen arguments that countries do not need to subject themselves to the critical eyes of independent experts — government and central bank officials in each country can tell the world what a resilient and stable financial system they have. How will India defend its position of asking for a greater role for international bodies like the IMF and for international supervision and assessment after refusing to participate in the FSAP when it came to its own turn?

Anjali Waghmare willing to defend Kasab

Hindu, 1 April 2009

Mumbai (PTI): A day after seeking time to consider appearing in the 26/11 attacks trial, advocate Anjali Waghmare on Wednesday informed a special court that she was willing to represent arrested terrorist Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab. Ms. Waghmare had on Tuesday asked the court for a day to think over whether she wanted to represent Kasab following protests by Shiv Sena activists outside her residence in Worli after she was appointed defence counsel by the special court.

Manmohan, Obama concerned over growing terror in AfPak

Hindu, 1 April 2009

London (PTI): Setting the tone for their first meeting, U.S. President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday voiced deep concern over the growing hold of terrorist elements in Pakistan and Afghanistan with the Indian leadership getting increasingly worried over the dangerous situation in its neighbourhood. Mr. Singh, who will meet the new American leader here on Thursday immediately after the conclusion of the G20 summit, said that "the epicentre of terrorism" was in Pakistan and "the world

community has to come to grips with this harsh reality"

ZTE to offer over \$1 billion credit to Indian telcos
Business Line, 2 April 2009

New Delhi, April 1 ZTE Corporation has entered into a strategic partnership with China Development Bank to make available a significant portion of a \$15-billion global credit line for Indian telecom service providers for buying equipment and handsets from the Chinese company. While ZTE did not specify the exact quantum of credit specifically for India, more than \$2-3 billion credit support can be expected for Indian operators. Telecom firms, which expected to invest about \$15-20 billion on rolling out new network over the next few years, are finding it difficult to raise adequate funds given the economic slowdown

Mumbai terror architect crafts infiltration surge
Hindu, 2 April 2009

SRINAGAR: Ever since the massacre in Mumbai in November 2008, intelligence services across the world have searched, without success, for one of its architects: a Lashkar-e-Taiba commander known only by the twin aliases Muzammil and Yusuf. Now, highly-placed police and intelligence sources have told The Hindu, the man who had hands-on responsibility for the tactical training of the terrorists as well as pre-assault reconnaissance, has resurfaced in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. And he has been commanding a surge in infiltration that has sparked off some of the most intense fighting seen along the Line of Control in years

India's growth to remain below 7 per cent in current fiscal: PM
Hindu, 2 April 2009

London (PTI): Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said that India's economic growth in 2008-09 is estimated to have fallen below 7 per cent and is likely to remain at that level in the current fiscal on the back of fiscal and monetary initiatives. "Our growth rate, which was close to 9 per cent in the previous five years, will fall below 7 per cent in 2008-09... we hope to be able to achieve a similar growth rate in 2009-10, with continuous reliance on monetary and fiscal policy," he said in his remarks at the dinner hosted for leaders of the G-20 summit hereon Wednesday night.

Satyam is cash surplus again
Business Line, 3 April 2009

Chennai, April 2 With prospective buyers set to make their bids, Satyam Computer, which was struggling to even meet its January salary bill, now reports a small cash surplus. This is after accounting for all its liabilities including salaries and supplier payments, according to a top official who preferred to be anonymous. The company has managed its operations with collections of over Rs 2,000 crore from customers in the last three months or an average of Rs 700 crore a month. When Mr Ramalinga Raju went public with his "confession" on January 7, the company had receivables of a little over Rs 1,700 crore, all of which has been recovered in the period since, said the official

Lalu says relations with UPA are 'unbreakable'
Hindu, 3 April 2009

Lucknow (PTI): the Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samajwadi party and Lok Janshakti party on Friday insisted that their alliance was not against the Congress party and described their association with the UPA as 'unbreakable'. "UPA will remain intact after the general elections. All the alliance partners will support Manmohan Singh for the PM's post. The UPA will form the government," LJP chief Ramvilas Paswan said on Friday at a press conference in the presence of Mr. Lalu Yadav and Mulayam Singh Yadav.

CPI (M) to decide on joining government after polls

Hindu, 3 April 2009

Kolkata (IANS): The Communist party of India-Marxist CPI (M) would decide on joining a Third Front government only after assessing the post-poll scenario, the party's politburo member Biman Bose said here on Friday. "The situation this time is different. In the past moves were initiated to form a coalition after people gave a fractured mandate. But this time, the Left parties have taken the initiative ahead of the polls to form a Third Front," Mr. Bose told reporters.

400 terrorists waiting to sneak into J&K ahead of polls: Army

Daily Excelsior, 4 April 2009

NEW DELHI: Amidst reports that 400 trained terrorists were waiting to sneak into Jammu and Kashmir to disrupt coming Lok Sabha polls, the Government has ordered stepping up of security in the border State to thwart any attempts to cause violence ahead of the elections. After a visit by Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta and Defence Secretary Vijay Singh to meet top State officials this week, the order for heightened vigil was issued, Army sources said here today. There are intelligence inputs that 400 trained terrorists of Lashkar-e-Toiba are waiting to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir to disrupt the polls. We have stepped up our alertness to prevent both infiltration and attacks, the sources said

Partnership with U.S. to be strengthened, says Manmohan

Hindu, 4 April 2009

London: At their meeting in London after the G20 summit, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and United States President Barack Obama affirmed their commitment to move the relations between the two countries forward in a wide range of areas. Addressing a press conference later, Dr. Singh described the meeting as one marked by "exceptional warmth and cordiality" and said they discussed several positive and constructive steps to take the India-U.S. global partnership forward. He said India had a global strategic partnership with the U.S. and this was an excellent opportunity to strengthen it and make it productive and durable in diverse fields

Terror, naxalism, communalism challenges to nation: PM

Hindu, 4 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): Identifying terrorism, naxalism and communalism as challenges to the nation, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday said the "ferocity" of these "disturbing and disruptive" elements has to be understood and ways should be devised to defeat these. He also voiced concern over recent developments in Pakistan and other neighbouring countries, saying South Asia is in "turmoil" and India's development is affected by the events in the region. "There are today forces which seek to destabilise our economy and polity," Mr. Singh said addressing the IAS probationers at his residence here.

Intercepts suggest Taliban presence in Kashmir valley

Daily Excelsior, 5 April 2009

NEW DELHI : The militancy scenario in Jammu and Kashmir may change as wireless and satellite intercepts suggest presence of a group of nearly 15 'Taliban' militants in higher reaches of Kupwara in north Kashmir. While all central security forces and agencies and the Army are tight-lipped over the development, sources in the Home Ministry said wireless messages of a group of militants holed up in Chowkibal area of Trehgham in Kupwara were intercepted. Another such communication was heard in Lolab area, also in Kupwara, they said. The intercepts, the sources claimed, were enough to "shock" the security agencies as one group identified itself as being part of the Taliban which had crossed the Line of Control using the Global Positioning System (GPS)-enabled maps

India to seek \$5.2bn more from Bank Asian Age, 5 April 2009

April 4: Assured of a greater say in the affairs of multilateral lending institutions, India will seek additional assistance of \$5.2 billion from the World Bank for its financial sector and infrastructure projects, officials said. India normally gets assistance worth \$3 billion from the World Bank annually. The main component of this assistance is for recapitalisation of state-owned commercial banks over the next two to three years, Indian officials said here after the conclusion of the G-20 summit. The rest is for infrastructure finance firms and power grid corporations

Third Front will come to power, says Karat Hindu, 5 April 2009

Agartala (PTI): After the elections, the Third Front will come to power and formulate a new economic and independent foreign policy, CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat said on Sunday. "We face questions from some quarters that whether BJP would be benefited by CPI(M)'s withdrawal of support from UPA government. But we know that BJP has nothing to benefit from it. This time people would present a new government led by the Third Front which will formulate new economic and independent foreign policy," Karat said, addressing a public meeting.

26/11: Hafiz Saeed, three others challenge detention Hindu, 5 April 2009

Lahore (PTI): LeT founder Hafiz Saeed, who was put under house arrest by Pakistan government after his outfit was blamed for the Mumbai attacks, has challenged his detention in the Lahore High Court, along with three of his associates. A petition filed by Saeed and his aides Amir Hamza, Col (retired) Nazir Ahmed and Mufti Abdur Rehman in the Lahore High Court said they should be produced before the court so that it could see that they had been detained unlawfully

Alertness along J&K will neutralise infiltrators Daily Excelsior, 7 April 2009

NEW DELHI : Terror groups aided by Pakistan's state agencies are making determined efforts for infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir and security forces are maintaining a "heightened sense of vigil" to thwart those attempts, Home Minister P Chidambaram said here today. "There is a determined effort to infiltrate across the international border and the Line of Control ... But our security forces are on alert and have been able to neutralise these infiltrators in the last three or four weeks," he said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here

Private Equity money dries up for India Inc Economic Times, 7 April 2009

CHENNAI/BANGALORE: Weak market sentiment continues to spook private equity funds. Private Equity players invested dramatically lower sums in India in the last three months, as risk aversion continued despite a steep decline in valuation. Private Equity deals have dropped a staggering 87% year on year and 56% sequentially, according to data from Venture Intelligence, a research service focussed on private equity and M & A transaction in the country. Not only has the deal pipeline slowed down, but the size of deals has also reduced

Strengthen security for 11 CMs, Centre tells DGPs Hindu, 7 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): Amid intelligence inputs suggesting threat to 11 chief ministers of

different states from terrorists and naxals, the Centre has sent an advisory to the police chiefs to review their security. The ten chief ministers include Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (West Bengal), Mayawati (Uttar Pradesh), Naveen Patnaik (Orissa), Ashok Chavan (Maharashtra), Narendra Singh Modi (Gujarat) and Omar Abdullah (Jammu and Kashmir), official sources said.

Chidambaram faces shoe missile from scribe

Hindu, 7 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): The anti-Sikh riots of 1984 returned to haunt the Congress party when a Sikh journalist on Tuesday hurled a shoe at Home Minister P Chidambaram at a press conference here protesting against CBI's clean chit to accused Jagdish Tytler but missed the target by a whisker. As the incident brought into focus the alleged role of Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar in the riots, the Congress party indicated that it may not be averse to having a relook at their candidatures. The BJP and its ally Akali Dal asked the Congress to look into the reasons behind the incident, though they did not approve of the method adopted by the journalist.

Tempers run high ahead of Lok Sabha elections

Hindu, 7 April 2009

New Delhi (IANS): The political temperature was rising ahead of Lok Sabha elections just nine days away with arrest orders against Railway Minister Lalu Prasad for threatening BJP candidate Varun Gandhi, now in jail, and an emotional Sikh journalist hurling a shoe at Home Minister P. Chidambaram at a Congress press conference on Tuesday. As political parties slug it out in what is expected to be one of the toughest general elections, a few candidates, including high profile ones, are stooping low and offending the Election Commission.

Cong indicates openness to review Tytler, Sajjan candidatures

Hindu, 7 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): Apparently concerned over the political fallout of hurling of shoe at Home Minister P Chidambaram, the Congress on Tuesday indicated it was open to review the candidatures of Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar, who were facing allegations of involvement in the anti-Sikh riots. "The Congress is a large party and it takes considered decisions at appropriate time. Let us see what solutions emerge in the future," party spokesman Ashwini Kumar said at the AICC briefing held hours after the incident.

No information about presence of Taliban in Kashmir: Army spokesman

Daily Excelsior, 8 April 2009

SRINAGAR: There was no information about the presence of Taliban in any part of the Kashmir Valley, including frontier district of Kupwara, a Defence Ministry spokesman said here today. He told UNI that so far there was no information that any Taliban militant had infiltrated into this side from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK)

U.S. concerned over reports of Taliban trying to enter India

Hindu, 8 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): The U.S. on Wednesday voiced "grave concern" over reports that Pakistani army is helping Taliban to infiltrate into Kashmir and said Washington was making efforts to address issues related to support for terror groups. "I have seen the same reports which you speak about ... Those are grave concern and we continue to address those," U.S. Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen told reporters here when asked to comment on reports that Taliban fighters are trying to cross over into Jammu and Kashmir with the help of Pakistan army.

MUMBAI: The rupee rose to its strongest close in more than a month as the share market extended a winning streak

Economic Times, 9 April 2009

MUMBAI: The rupee rose to its strongest close in more than a month as the share market extended a winning streak into a sixth session on Thursday, raising expectations of sustained capital inflows that would support the currency. The partially convertible rupee ended at 50.00/02 per dollar, its strongest close since Feb 25, having risen to 49.85 during trade, according to Thomson Reuters data

No govt possible sans our support: Lalu-Pawan-Mulayam trio
Hindu, 9 April 2009

Saifai (UP) (PTI): In a show of strength, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu Prasad and Ram Vilas Paswan on Thursday addressed a joint rally claiming that "the key" to the next government was in their hands. Addressing the public meeting, RJD supremo Mr. Prasad asked the people to "free" Samajwadi Party chief Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav from UP politics apparently hinting that he could play a role at the Centre.

Congress drops Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar
Hindu, 9 April 2009

New Delhi (IANS): The Congress announced on Thursday it had dropped Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar as its Lok Sabha candidates in the wake of protests over their alleged involvement in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Congress spokesman Janardhan Dwivedi told reporters that the party had decided that "they will not be Lok Sabha candidates" from Delhi in the general elections set to start April 16

Worries mount on LTTE threat to Sonia
Hindu, 9 April 2009

Worries mount on LTTE threat to Sonia

NEW DELHI: India's intelligence services have become increasingly concerned about the prospect of an election-time attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on top political leaders, including Congress party chairperson Sonia Gandhi. Sources in the intelligence services have told The Hindu that while there is no substantive intelligence to indicate that assassinations or attacks have been ordered by the LTTE, the inflammatory language being used by the terrorist group's supporter in India was a cause for concern

No threat to Sonia, says LTTE; don't believe, says Sri Lanka
Hindu, 10 April 2009

Colombo (PTI): The LTTE has refuted reports that there was a Tamil Tiger threat to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and her children, a claim rejected by the Sri Lankan Government which on Friday cautioned India not to trust the outfit as it has a "well-organised" international network. The Home Ministry in New Delhi had last week issued an alert to States to provide tight security cover during the visit of Congress President Sonia Gandhi and her children — Rahul and Priyanka — as they face a threat from LTTE.

Assam: One dead, 14 injured as ultras attack train
Hindu, 10 April 2009

Haflong (PTI): A CRPF man was killed and 14 passengers were injured when Dima Haram Daogah (Jewel) ultras opened fire at a running train at Wadrenghisa station in Assam's North Cachar hill district on Friday. The DHJ ultras, armed with automatic weapons, fired from a hill top at the Badarpur-Lumding Barak Express as it left the Wadrenghisa station under Maibong police station, 60 km from here.

Kashmir's 'Kasab' story casts light on NWFP threat

Hindu, 11 April 2009

NEW DELHI: For the past week, prime-time television news has been saturated with lurid speculation on the prospect of an invasion by the Taliban, fuelled by an early spring surge in infiltration across the Line of Control. Now, the Jammu and Kashmir police have found one of the hundreds of jihadists who have made up that surge: a 15-year-old boy with only the beginnings of a beard, hiding, paralysed by fear, behind a clump of rocks in the north Kashmir mountains.

Infiltration to rise due to polls; women trained across LoC: Gen Kapoor

Daily Excelsior, 14 April 2009

NEW DELHI : Cautioning that infiltration attempts from across the border were expected to rise before the general elections, Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor today said there were reports of women being trained on the other side of the Line of Control. However, a three-tier defence system had been put in place on the Line of Control (LoC) to deal with any situation as the Army was aware of plans to escalate infiltration bids in the run-up to the polls, Gen Kapoor told on the sidelines of an international seminar here

Pak finds DNA identical to Kasab's

Asian Age, 14 April 2009

April 13: Pakistan on Monday said it will not be possible to continue its investigation of the Mumbai terror attacks with the information given to it by India. The information, it said, was "not specific" and included identical DNA samples but from two persons — slain terrorist Mohammed Ismail and the only terrorists captured alive, Ajmal Kasab. "We need specific information. We cannot continue investigations with general information. We have asked India to give us specific details," said Mr Rehman Malik, the head of Pakistan's interior ministry

India willing to provide more info to Pak on Mumbai attacks

Hindu, 14 April 2009

Jangipur (WB) (PTI): A day after Pakistan sought more specific information from New Delhi on its probe into the Mumbai attacks, India on Tuesday agreed to provide the same, but said Islamabad should not delay investigations on the pretext of clarifications. "I have just had a discussion with our Foreign Secretary. We have received the papers (from Pakistan). We are examining them and if there be further information necessary, then we will give them the further information," External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told newsmen here.

Editorial: Mining lessons

Indian Express, 15 April 2009

In 2007, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warned that Naxalites were India's "greatest internal security threat." Two years on, that threat has only grown greater, with 150 of India's 600 districts currently declared "Naxal-affected." Even so, the Naxalite siege of the National Aluminium Company's bauxite mines in Koraput in Orissa — the largest in Asia — is unprecedented in the choice of target (a corporate installation) and in its implications (the threat to India's economy). The Election Commission has quickly responded by changing poll timings in Naxalite-infested areas — booths will be open from 7 am to 3 am — so that attackers cannot rely on the cover of darkness. But it will take more than just sunlight to combat the threat.

Kasab appears in court, demands Pakistani lawyer

Hindu, 15 April 2009

Mumbai (IANS): The lone terrorist captured in the Mumbai terror strike, Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab on Wednesday demanded a Pakistani lawyer to defend him as the trial started here with his assigned counsel Anjali Waghmare being removed on grounds of "professional misconduct". Kasab, the prime accused in the Nov 26-29 Mumbai terror attack in which over 170 people were killed, was present in person for the first time in the Special Court in the Arthur Road Central Jail, where the 26/11 trial opened for the first time under a tight security blanket

20 Indian fishermen remanded to judicial custody
Hindu, 15 April 2009

Karachi (PTI): Twenty Indian fishermen, arrested for illegally fishing in Pakistani waters, were remanded to judicial custody till April 28 by a court here on Wednesday. The Indian fishermen were arrested and their four boats — Poona Putra, Raj Mensi, Jal Ganga and Suneel Raj — were seized by the Maritime Security Agency on Monday

Shootout in Karbi Anglong, IEDs recovered
Hindu, 16 April 2009

Diphu, Assam (PTI): Gunfight erupted between security forces and militants at a polling station in Karbi Anglong district while two powerful IED were recovered in Assam's Autonomous District (ST) constituency where voting was held in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections day. BSF personnel deployed a polling station at Kharsing Athoi school in Karbi Anglong district exchanged fire with Karbi Longri National Front (KLNLF), who had allegedly planted an IED in the area which was recovered by the securitymen.

Sixty per cent turnout in first phase of poll amidst naxal attacks
Hindu, 16 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): An estimated 60 per cent of the 14.30 crore voters exercised their franchise in the first phase of Lok Sabha poll in 124 constituencies on Thursday even as largescale violence by Naxals in four states killed 18 people, including five poll officials and 10 security personnel. Simultaneous elections to assemblies in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa also drew about 60 voters' response with the polling on Thursday covering more than half of the constituencies in the two states.

Terror camps still 'existing' on other side of LoC: Army
Daily Excelsior, 17 April 2009

NEW DELHI : The Army today said that terror training camps are still "existing" on the other side of the Line of Control and Pakistan is continuing its "support" for infiltration into India. "The camps, which were there on the other side are still existing ... There is definite support for infiltration from the other side," Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor said

Inflation close to zero
Hindu, 17 April 2009

New Delhi: Inflation eased to 0.18 per cent, a new low in over 30 years, although vegetables cost 25 per cent more than it did a year ago and so did other food items — making it a political scoring point in Parliamentary polls underway from Thursday. Inflation fell by 0.08 percentage points during the week ended April four against 0.26 per cent in the previous week, but a number of food articles such as pulses, cereals, processed fish, common salt, tea, coffee, and liquor turned dearer, besides vegetables.

Satyam's independent directors clean, says SFIO
Hindu, 17 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI): Independent directors of Satyam were not involved in the multi-crore accounting fraud in the IT company and were kept in the dark by founder-chairman B

Ramalinga Raju, the Serious Fraud Investigation Office has concluded. The over 14,000-page report submitted to the government, marking the end of three month-long investigation, the probe agency of the Corporate Affairs Ministry said four independent directors of the company were questioned in connection with the scam.

Mumbai terror attack trial begins, Kasab wants to retract
Hindu, 17 April 2009

Mumbai (PTI): The trial in the Mumbai terror attack case opened on Friday with the sole surviving terrorist Mohammed Amir Ajmal Kasab seeking retraction of his confession and the prosecution saying he and the other killed terrorists were given military and intelligence training in Pakistan. The trial commenced with the new defence lawyer S G Abbas Kazmi, appointed by the court after Anjali Waghmare was replaced, filing an application that Kasab wanted to retract his statement made before a magistrate.

Editorial: Call this defence?
Indian Express, 18 April 2009

The murder of 11 Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) men in the NALCO siege in Orissa exposed Naxal savagery and state ineptness. Now come revelations of the pathetic conditions the jawans lived in. As this newspaper reported on Friday, 14 jawans were provided with just one fan in the summer heat; 26 jawans were left to share a single toilet; the water provided to them was muddied with impurities. If this were a factory, it would be a sweatshop. And it would be illegal.

FBI and foreign experts will depose in 26/11 terror case
Hindu, 18 April 2009

Mumbai (PTI): Foreign experts, including members of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), would be examined by the prosecution to throw light on Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment and cell phones used by Mohammed Amir Ajmal Kasab and nine others to strike terror last year. Disclosing to the court the evidence gathered against Kasab, the lone terrorist captured during the November 26 terror strikes, and other accused, special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam said on Saturday 100 potential witnesses from a list of 1,820 would be examined to establish the role of the accused in the crime.

'Kasab', Ismail had planned to attack Malabar Hill locality
Hindu, 18 April 2009

Mumbai (PTI): Mohd Amir Ajmal 'Kasab', the lone terrorist captured during the Mumbai terror strikes last November, and his team member Abu Ismail had plans to strike at the VIP locality Malabar Hill area, where bungalows of Governor, Chief Minister and other important Maharashtra ministers are located, a court was told here on Saturday. However, the plan could not take off as only Ismail knew the plan and he was killed in a police encounter, special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam told judge M L Tahilyani.

Sporadic incidents in Assam
Hindu, 18 April 2009

Guwahati: An estimated 60 to 65 per cent votes were cast in the first phase of polling for the three Lok Sabha constituencies of Assam — Silchar, Karimganj and Autonomous District — that went to the polls on Thursday. The polling was marred by sporadic incidents of violence and alleged incidents of rigging and snatching of electronic voting machines. Brisk polling was reported in Silchar constituency where Union Minister for Heavy Industries Santosh Mohan Dev is seeking a third consecutive term and is locked in a multi-cornered contest with the former Union Minister, Kabindra Purakaystha, of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and AUDF president Badruddin Ajmal.

PM, Advani, Tata, Ambanis among India's most powerful
Economic Times, 19 April 2009

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Opposition leader L K Advani, business tycoons Mukesh and Anil Ambani, corporate czar Ratan Tata and star cricketer Sachin Tendulkar have been named among the 50 most powerful people in India by American magazine BusinessWeek. Congress President Sonia Gandhi, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee, music maestro A R Rahman, BSP chief Mayawati, Olympics gold medallist Abhinav Bindra and Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman C B Bhave also feature in the league of 50

Army again recruiting Gorkhas
Asian Age, 19 April 2009

April 18: India is learnt to have once again initiated a recruitment drive to recruit Nepalese Gorkhas for the Gorkha regiments in the Indian Army. Last year, the Maoists in Nepal had threatened to stop further recruitment of Nepalese Gorkhas by the Indian Army. India is understood to have subsequently taken up the matter with the Maoist-led government in Nepal. Indian Army sources in New Delhi, however, emphasised that the Indian Army had never officially suspended the recruitment of Nepalese Gorkhas. "However, we were aware of the Maoist position earlier and it is true that there was no recruitment for several months. The recruitment is also done as per vacancies," Army sources in New Delhi told this newspaper

Cong. not responsible for Babri demolition: Muslim outfit
Hindu, 19 April 2009

Kishanganj (PTI): The All India Imam Organisation (PTI) on Sunday said the BJP alone was responsible for the Babri Masjid demolition. The organisation was referring to the allegations of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad that the Congress was also to be blamed for the demolition of the Babri mosque. "There is no substance in their allegations against the Congress on the Babri demolition issue. None else than the BJP, L K Advani and the then Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh were responsible for the nation's shame," the organisation's vice-chairman, Aari Hibjur Rehman Merutti, told PTI.

Parties divided on general strike on Lankan Tamils issue
Hindu, 22 April 2009

Chennai (PTI): The general strike called by ruling DMK on Thursday on the Lankan Tamils issue has evoked a mixed response with its allies including Congress backing it but AIADMK and its partners refusing to take part, slamming it as a "farce". Chief Minister and DMK President M Karunanidhi, under mounting pressure ahead of the Lok Sabha polls for not doing enough on the Lankan issue, last night gave the strike call to protest the 'killings of innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka' and to demand immediate steps for a ceasefire.

Pak must dismantle terror infrastructure: Patil
Hindu, 22 April 2009

Pak must dismantle terror infrastructure: Patil
Madrid (PTI): The issue of terrorism emanating from Pakistani soil figured prominently on Wednesday in talks between President Pratibha Patil and the Spanish premier here, with the Indian leader asserting that the terror infrastructure in the neighbouring country must be dismantled. President Patil also told Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero that India does not want to "destabilise" Pakistan, Minister of State for Industrial Policy and Promotion Ashwani Kumar said at a media briefing after the two leaders met.

Editorial: Hearts and minds

Indian Express, 22 April 2009

As it prepares for what is being viewed as the final offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Colombo has the onerous responsibility to minimise a great humanitarian tragedy that is about to unfold in north-eastern Sri Lanka. The government of Sri Lanka must make and be seen as making every possible effort to save the thousands of Tamils who are being held hostage by the LTTE in a very small area that had been declared a no-fire zone until now. Given its brutal record, the LTTE has not shocked anyone by attacking the fleeing Tamil civilian population. If Colombo is itching to wrap up a prolonged military campaign against the secessionist rebels, there should be no doubt that the LTTE will try and leverage the trapped Tamil population as a human shield until the bitter end.

Centre admits around 50 militants infiltrate into J and K

Daily Excelsior, 22 April 2009

NEW DELHI : The Centre today admitted that around 50 terrorists had infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir through the Gurez sector and said the entire security apparatus was alert to ensure peaceful Lok Sabha elections in the border state. The extent of the infiltration was given by the Home Ministry while dismissing as "grossly exaggerated" reports that 158 terrorists had sneaked into the state through the Gurez sector in North Kashmir

Over 55 per cent turnout in Phase 2, stray violence by naxals

Hindu, 23 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI) More than 55 percent of the nearly 200 million voters on Thursday exercised their franchise in the second phase of Lok Sabha polling across 12 states which was by and large peaceful barring stray violence in naxal-infested areas Jharkhand and Bihar. Two poll officials and a magistrate had a narrow escape when Maoists carried out blasts in Bihar and Jharkhand where security forces repulsed a naxalite bid to disrupt the second phase of elections after a fierce hour-long gunbattle.

Millions vote in step two of Election 2009

Hindu, 23 April 2009

New Delhi (IANS) As the proverbial Indian summer gathered force, millions of people across 12 Indian states voted on Thursday in step two of Election 2009 in an exercise that was largely peaceful barring insurgent violence in Assam and Jharkhand and political clashes in Andhra Pradesh. Polling stations in 140 constituencies across 12 states opened at 7 a.m. for the second round of the five-phase elections that conclude May 13. Tens of thousands of the 194 million electorate queued up at many of the 222,350 polling stations to choose their nominees in the Lok Sabha from amongst the 2,034 candidates in the fray.

Maoists hijack, release train in Jharkhand

Hindu, 23 April 2009

RANCHI: Even as an "indefinite bandh" called by them got under way in Jharkhand and parts of Bihar, Maoists on Wednesday unleashed a reign of terror in the two States. In Jharkhand, the Maoists hijacked a passenger train in Latehar district and bombed a railway station in Palamu district. In Bihar, the naxalites bombed a Block Development Officer's office in Aurangabad district and shot dead a truck driver after setting eight trucks ablaze in Gaya district.

Voters defy militants' threat

Daily Excelsior, 23 April 2009

NAWAPACHI (Kishtwar, J-K) : Posters by Lashker-e-Toiba and other militant outfits warning people against voting today failed to deter residents of Nawapachi, dubbed as a hotbed of foreign mercenaries, with people exercising their franchise in the hope of

bringing "peace and development" to this remote area."I voted again today. I do not care about the militants' threat. My vote is for peace and construction of road communication to this area," 90-year-old Ashiya Begum told

Pranab rules out taking Left support to form govt.

Hindu, 24 April 2009

Burdwan/Arambagh, (WB) (PTI) Two days after saying in Kolkata that the Congress was open to Left support to form the next government at the Centre, senior Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee on Friday ruled out the possibility."The Congress had always formed government at the Centre without the support of Left parties. In 2004, they themselves came forward to support the Congress-led UPA to stop the BJP and save their existence," Mr. Mukherjee said in a poll rally at Parul village near Bhatar in Burdwan district.

Kasab ordered to undergo age tests to see if he is juvenile

Hindu, 24 April 2009

Mumbai (PTI) A special court on Friday ordered Ajmal Kasab, the lone surviving gunman on trial over the Mumbai attacks, to undergo dental and bone tests to determine his age following his claim that at the time of the strike he was a 'juvenile' which would help him escape the gallows.Judge M L Tahiliyani allowed special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam to examine witnesses comprising doctors and the jailor at Arthur Road prison on April 28 to prove his claim that Kasab, a Pakistani national, was above 18 and not a juvenile at the time of commission of offence.

Editorial:Maoist Victory

Indian Express, 24 April 2009

The West Bengal government's decision to relocate 40 polling booths near Lalgarh in West Midnapore district — as per the demands of the People's Committee against Police Atrocities, supposedly backed by the Maoists — has the obvious advantages of allowing elections to be held in the troubled area as well as keeping the tribals happy by precluding police presence near their homes. But the compromise worked out by the state government, the Election Commission and the People's Committee is also the official acknowledgement of the extent of administrative failure. For sure, the Lalgarh tribal leadership has shut the police out since late last year, when agitations began following police raids and arrests days

Congress attack gets the Modi edge after court order

Hindu, 27 April 2009

New Delhi (IANS) Two days ahead of the third round of polling in the parliamentary elections, political knives were once again sharpened as the Supreme Court asked for a probe into Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi's role in the 2002 riots in the state, an event that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its prime minister-in-waiting has found it hard to live down.As the Gujarat riots, in which 1,180 people, mostly Muslims, were killed, came to occupy political centrestage once again, the Congress got the leverage it was looking for.

Govt. issues travel advisory for visit to swine flu-hit nations

Hindu, 27 April 2009

New Delhi (PTI) With swine flu outbreaks in several countries, India on Monday initiated precautionary measures to guard against it, issuing an advisory for those visiting the affected nations and putting in place a screening mechanism for passengers coming from these nations.Acting swiftly, the Union Health Ministry held a meeting to discuss measures to prevent the flu, which spreads among humans through contact with infected pigs, from reaching the country.

50 percent voter turnout in West Bengal, landmine injures two Hindu, 30 April 2009

Kolkata (IANS) Two security personnel were injured in a landmine blast triggered by suspected Maoists in West Bengal's Purulia district even as the state recorded more than 50 percent voter turnout for 14 Lok Sabha seats on Thursday. "The percentage will definitely be over 50 percent. There are long lines of voters still before a large number of booths," an election official said here. However, the voter turnout was low in most areas where Maoist extremists have a strong presence.

EC bans BJP's ad campaign Hindu, 30 April 2009

Jaipur (PTI) The Election Commission has banned an audio and video advertisement campaign of the BJP allegedly ridiculing Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, an official spokesman said on Thursday. Issuing the orders on the EC's direction, state's Chief Electoral Officer Vinod Zutshi asked the BJP and Lok Seva Sansthan to stop the campaign forthwith and submit an amendment advertisement for approval, if desired, the spokesman said.

Thousands defy separatists to vote in Kashmir Valley Hindu, 30 April 2009

Anantnag (Jammu and Kashmir) (IANS) Tens of thousands defied death threats from Pakistan-based terrorists to vote on Thursday in the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency in the Kashmir Valley. Nearly 15 percent of Anantnag's 1.16 million electorate had voted by 1 p.m. across the southern Kashmir constituency despite a shutdown called by the separatists to trip the electoral process, officials said.