

Hindu, 1 January 2009

Anti-terror laws come into force

New Delhi: With President Pratibha Devisingh Patil giving her assent to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Bill and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, the new anti-terror regime came into force on Wednesday, about a month after the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai that claimed nearly 200 lives. The Bills were passed by Parliament in the last session that ended on December 23

Hindu, 1 January 2009

Terrorism: are stronger laws the answer? By Prashant Bhushan

The terrorist attacks in Mumbai have led to a lot of jingoism and muscle flexing in the media and on the streets. 'Enough is enough,' 'we will not pay our taxes,' 'we must destroy terrorist training camps in Pakistan' are the kind of cries heard most frequently. 'Get tough on terror' is the new mantra and, among other things, getting tough means bringing tougher laws. The United Progressive Alliance government, which repealed the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) just four years ago because it was found to be draconian, misused and counterproductive, has now used the jingoism to enact a tougher terror law in the form of amendments to the already draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. These amendments were introduced in Parliament on December 15, 2008 and adopted the next day. There was virtually no debate

Indian Express, 1 January 2009

'We've given enough proofs, Pak in denial mode'

'We've given enough proofs, Pak in denial mode' India slammed Pakistan for being in a denial mode on involvement of elements based in that country in the Mumbai attacks and said Islamabad's "defiance" of the world opinion would not be conducive for the overall stability of the region. "We have given enough evidence (against perpetrators of last month's Mumbai Terror attacks). Evidence is not only with India but also with the investigating agencies of the US and the UK," Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma told reporters in Chandigarh

Indian Express, 1 January 2009

No hot pursuit on terrorists operating from Pak: India

India on Wednesday virtually ruled out any hot pursuit on terrorists operating from Pakistan's soil by taking a leaf out of the Israeli air strikes on Gaza strip. "So that incident or that event, (Israeli air strikes) we cannot draw any lessons for the way we deal with Pakistan," Union Home Minister P Chidambaram said when asked whether New Delhi can draw lessons from the Israeli air strikes to pursue terrorists in Pakistan. He recalled that India had strongly criticised the Israeli strikes and urged the country to stop those attacks on Palestine

Asian Age, 1 January 2009

Hasina: We'll join India's war on terror

Dec. 31: Bangladesh wants good neighbourly relations with India so that problems such as poverty and terrorism can be tackled in a spirit of cooperation across the subcontinent, Bangladesh's Prime Minister-elect Sheikh Hasina Wajed told this newspaper in an exclusive over the telephone from Dhaka. "It is a victory of democracy, secularism, peace ... the people of Bangladesh today long for a better life and a prosperous nation," Sheikh Hasina said the morning after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh congratulated her. Leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani and Congress president Sonia Gandhi also spoke to her

Hindu, 2 January 2009

FBI team visited Faridkot?

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani media have reported that a team of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation visited Faridkot in Pakistan's Punjab province but could find no evidence that the surviving gunman in the Mumbai attacks came from there. The News said Rehman Malik, who heads the Interior Ministry, however, denied the report. U.S. embassy spokesman Lou Fintor told The Hindu that he had 'no information' about the visit of an FBI team to Faridkot or even to Pakistan

Hindu, 3 January 2009

'Pakistan doesn't require treaty'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's contention that it does not have an extradition treaty with India to hand over possible suspects in the Mumbai terror attacks does not hold water, say diplomatic observers, as it is a signatory to international conventions that demand that states either prosecute terror suspects or extradite them to the country that wants to try them. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said in an interview that Pakistan would not extradite any of its nationals suspected of involvement in the Mumbai attacks as there was no extradition treaty with India. If any such person was found in Pakistan, the Minister said, he would be tried under Pakistani laws

Hindu, 3 January 2009

TNT used in blasts: experts

Guwahati: Trinitrotoluene (TNT) was used in the three improvised explosive device (IED) blasts in the city on New Year's Day . Experts of the State Forensic Science Department revealed this to the State Home Department after preliminary examinations of the blast sites and laboratory analysis of the blast remnants

Asian Age, 3 January 2009

A reminder that ISI alive in N-E

The Guwahati blasts on New Year's Day are yet another reminder of the unsatisfactory state of alertness of our intelligence agencies and security apparatus. The Indian state has enemies without that seek to enlist the willing cooperation of violent disgruntled groups operating within its borders. This has been known to be the case for long. By now prevention of terrorist blasts, particularly in states that have a history of violent extremist activity, should have been internalised routine. This is not to say that actions of terrorists will never surprise, but to suggest that the incidence of such nasty surprises can be considerably reduced if the system prides itself on its wakefulness. Only recently Ulfa had struck hard and the Assam state capital had been rocked by serial blasts that took a high toll. Yet, the departments that deal with foiling the violent designs of malcontents have been found wanting. Even the route to be taken by the Union home minister could not be sanitised. The state administration as well as the pertinent agencies of the Centre need to be asked some tough questions. News reports suggest the minister had a narrow shave and that is a matter of serious concern

Hindu, 4 January 2009

26/11: India to step up diplomatic offensive

NEW DELHI: India will launch a diplomatic offensive next week to convince the world of Pakistani complicity in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Home Minister P. Chidambaram will travel to Washington on Thursday and hand over 'dossiers' on the involvement of elements from Pakistan to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Early next week, top Foreign Office officials are expected to release details of the links between the Mumbai attackers and their Pakistan-based handlers, said

authoritative government sources. Simultaneously, a high level meeting will assess security preparedness to thwart any mischief from the other side

Hindu, 6 January 2009

Evidence handed over to Pakistan

NEW DELHI: India on Monday summoned Pakistan High Commissioner Shahid Malik to the Foreign Office here to hand over 'material' about Pakistani involvement in the Mumbai terror attacks. The move is part of the diplomatic offensive by New Delhi to convince the international community and Islamabad to take tangible action against the masterminds of the Mumbai attacks

Hindu, 6 January 2009

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Hindu, 7 January 2009

Telephone trail key part of evidence shared with Pakistan

New Delhi: The evidentiary dossier given to Pakistan on Monday marks the first systematic Indian presentation of what ongoing investigations into the Mumbai terrorist attacks have revealed so far. Though many of the facts about how the attacks were staged have been known for some time now, the 69-page document - a copy of which is with The Hindu - provides crucial details about the telephone links between the attackers and Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives and identifies for the first time the names of six 'Pakistan-based handlers' who were constantly in touch with the gunmen even as they wreaked havoc in the city during the November 26-29, 2008 incidents

Hindu, 7 January 2009

Manmohan points the finger at Pakistan

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday squarely blamed the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba for the Mumbai terror strike and pointed out that there was enough evidence to show that the attack, executed with military precision, had the support of some official agencies of Pakistan. The Prime Minister said terrorism was largely sponsored from outside the country, mainly Pakistan, which 'utilised terrorism as an instrument of State policy.'

Hindu, 7 January 2009

No proof given, says Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Tuesday the information given to it by India on the Mumbai attacks did not constitute 'proof' and, responding to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech in New Delhi, warned that allegations against the Pakistani state could end 'all prospects of serious and objective investigations' into the incident. In the National Assembly, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Malik Adam Khan and Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir told the Committee on Foreign Relations that the material handed over by India was 'not sufficient' and could not be regarded as 'evidence.'

Hindu, 10 January 2009

ISI has responded to Indian dossier, says Gilani

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani on Friday described the Indian decision to 'freeze' the composite dialogue process in the wake of the Mumbai attacks as 'regrettable,' and urged the world not to let tensions between the two countries escalate. His remarks came as U.S. Vice-President-elect Joe Biden arrived here on a day's visit during which he met President Asif Ali Zardari. Mr. Gilani and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi were also present. The outgoing chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a separate meeting with Army chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani

Indian Express, 10 January 2009

Not just in our backyard By Ashley J. Tellis

Whenever New Delhi points a finger at Pakistan in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in India, a weary world seems to say, 'Here we go again!' The old enmity between the two countries can tire spectators who often quickly dismiss Indian accusations of Pakistani malfeasance as little other than political recriminations. Yet, the latest terrorist assault in Bombay leaves no doubt about the authenticity of the Indian charge. The West would do well to take notice that this bloodbath was not the work of homegrown militants aggrieved by India's failure to integrate its Muslim minority but of the dangerous Pakistani terrorist group, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), whose wider goals threaten not only secular India but also the West and even Pakistan itself

Asian Age, 10 January 2009

Superpower India: Don't just talk, act like one By Arun Kumar Singh

The series of events after 26/11 (including the January 1 Guwahati bomb blasts) have left no one in any doubt about a few facts. Any naval specialist will agree that the manner in which the 10 terrorists attacked Mumbai, including the transit in the Indian fishing boat Kuber, could only be possible with the involvement of the ISI, the Pakistani Army and Navy. Media reports indicate that about 70 per cent of my proposals made in various articles in this paper since May 2008 have been accepted by the government. I hope that they are implemented urgently, especially since the recent roller coaster - initial "vehement denial" followed by "yes, Kasav is Pakistani"), ISI leaflets given to Pakistan Army about dismembering India by 2020 - indicate that Pakistan does not have peace on its mind. Poonch firefighting indicates the shape of things to come from the "epicentre of terrorism".

Dawn, 10 January 2009

Gilani says ISI's response forwarded to India

ISLAMABAD, Jan 9: Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Friday said that premier intelligence agencies of the United States and Pakistan had been working closely to untangle the knots of the Mumbai carnage mystery and recently the Inter-Services Intelligence had provided a detailed response to questions and issues raised by US investigators on behalf of their Indian counterparts. 'Our ISI has given its feedback, which has been forwarded to India,' he told reporters after addressing a seminar on 'Democracy in Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges'.

Hindu, 11 January 2009

Dossier is credible, but give Pakistan some time: Mulford

New Delhi: The U.S. has contended that the dossier given by India to Pakistan on the Mumbai attacks was 'credible' but suggested that New Delhi should allow time to Islamabad to act on it. U.S. ambassador to India David C. Mulford said the dossier contains extensive inputs from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). 'From what I have seen it is a very credible material. The FBI is cooperating in Mumbai...It is information which tells and gives a very accurate account of what has happened,' he

told Karan Thapar's programme 'Devil's Advocate.'

Dawn, 11 January 2009

Hafiz Saeed's detention extended

LAHORE, Jan 10: The Punjab government has extended the detention of Jamaatud Dawa chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and five others for 60 days. The others are Col (ret'd) Nazir, Amir Hamza, Yasin Baloch, Mufti Abdur Rahman and Qazi Niaz. The home department extended their detention after the expiry of the earlier order for a 30-day detention

Dawn, 14 January 2009

Pakistan, Afghanistan will be Obama's priority: Hillary

WASHINGTON, Jan 13: US Secretary of State-designate Hillary Rodham Clinton told her confirmation hearing on Tuesday that fighting terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan would be the highest priority of the Obama administration. 'It is imperative that we work with our friends in both Pakistan and Afghanistan' to defeat terrorists in that region, she told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. 'The democratically elected government in Pakistan seems to be much more aware (than the previous government) of how this is their fight, not just ours,' she added

Hindu, 15 January 2009

Chidambaram, MEA sing different tune on civil society links with Pakistan

New Delhi: In all briefings the Ministry of External Affairs has conducted since the Mumbai terrorist attacks of November 26-29, 2008, senior officials have gone out of their way to emphasise that India was not looking at a repeat of the measures it took in 2001-2002 when it recalled its High Commissioner and snapped air and road links with Pakistan in the aftermath of the December 13, 2001 terrorist strike on Parliament. Yet, in an interview to The Times of London published on Monday, Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram has raised the possibility that ending people-to-people and trade contacts with Islamabad is something New Delhi might consider if Pakistan fails to investigate the involvement of its citizens in the Mumbai incident. 'There are many, many links between India and Pakistan, and if Pakistan does not cooperate and does not help to bring the perpetrators to heel, those ties will become weaker and weaker and one day snap,' he was quoted as saying

Hindu, 15 January 2009

War is last option, says Army Chief

Jan. 14: Confirming that Pakistan had moved troops from its western to its eastern borders, Indian Army Chief Gen. Deepak Kapoor said on Wednesday that India was keeping all its options open, and that the "military option is the last option". Addressing his annual press conference here on the eve of Army Day on Thursday, Gen. Kapoor said: "There is a larger amount of tension since 26/11. We feel the perpetrators (of the Mumbai terror attack) came from Pakistani soil. We in India are keeping all our options open. This is not hysteria for war, but all options are open - diplomatic, economic and the last resort is the fighting option." He went on: "The military option is the last option. The decision is on the political leadership. The political leadership has said that war is not an option but (that) all options are open."

Dawn, 16 January 2009

124 held in massive crackdown: Five camps and 20 offices of Dawa, LeT closed

ISLAMABAD, Jan 15: The government said on Thursday that it had shut down five training camps of the outlawed Jamaatud Dawa and Lashkar-e-Taiba, banned their

seven publications and blocked all their websites. The authorities have detained 124 people, several leaders and officials of the organisations among them. Addressing a news conference, the Prime Minister's Adviser on Interior Affairs, Mr Rehman Malik, assured India that Pakistan would do its utmost to bring the people involved in the Mumbai attacks to justice

Hindu, 16 January 2009

Check infiltration of Bangladeshis, Centre told

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Union government to take immediate steps for issue of Multi-Purpose National Identity Cards (MPNIC) to Indian citizens in Assam and other north-eastern States. The court also asked it to prepare a National Identity Register (NIR) to check the infiltration of Bangladeshis. A Bench of Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justices P. Sathasivam and J.M. Panchal said the cards should be the basis for citizens to avail themselves of benefits such as ration card, school admission and inclusion of name in electoral rolls

Hindu, 16 January 2009

Five training camps shut down: Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Thursday that it had shut down five training camps and detained or kept under surveillance over a hundred people linked to the Lashkar-e-Taiba/Jamat-ud-Dawah in connection with the Mumbai attacks. It was also setting up a team of its Federal Investigation Agency to probe the incident. The government, however, said it needed more information from India to proceed with investigations, including access to the site of the terror attacks, and reiterated the offer of a joint probe

Daily Excelsior, 16 January 2009

800 militants active in J&K: GOC-in-C

AKHNOOR, Jan 15: Cross-border infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir has been on a decline since 2004, but about 600 to 800 militants are active in the State as per the assessment of various security agencies, the Army's Northern Command chief said today. "About 600 to 800 militants are active in Jammu and Kashmir as per the assessment of various security agencies," General Officer Commanding in Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command, Lt Gen P C Bhardwaj told reporters soon after conclusion of Northern Command Investiture Ceremony here today

Hindu, 17 January 2009

No dilution of position, says Pranab

New Delhi: A day after saying the perpetrators of the Mumbai terrorist attack could be tried in Pakistan provided this was done in a transparent manner, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee changed tack to stress there was 'no question' of India giving up its demand that they be handed over to face justice here. With the Opposition parties accusing the government of contradicting itself after insisting that the Mumbai plotters must all be extradited, Mr. Mukherjee met briefly with television reporters on Friday in an attempt to set the record straight

Hindu, 17 January 2009

Act faster on 26/11: Miliband

Islamabad: Stepping up pressure on Pakistan, Britain on Friday asked it to go 'farther and faster' in taking action against those involved in the Mumbai attacks and root out terrorist infrastructure within the country. 'The whole international community wants Pakistan to go farther and go faster,' British Foreign Secretary David Miliband told a press conference here after meetings with Pakistani leaders,

including Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani

New York Times, 17 January 2009

Older Son of bin Laden Believed to Be in Pakistan

WASHINGTON - A son of Osama bin Laden who spent years under Iranian house arrest has left Iran and is now probably operating inside Pakistan, a senior American intelligence official said Friday. The son, Saad bin Laden, is one of a number of senior operatives of Al Qaeda detained inside Iran in recent years. American officials have long puzzled over the exact circumstances of their captivity, but they believe that Iran was holding the militants in part as a deterrent against a Qaeda attack on Iranian soil. Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, told reporters on Friday that Saad bin Laden was probably in Pakistan. He gave no details about whether Mr. bin Laden had escaped from custody, whether his departure reflected a deal between Iran and Al Qaeda or whether he was simply let go by Iranian officials

Hindu, 19 January 2009

Pakistan gives probe team 10 days

ISLAMABAD: A three-man team of Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency tasked with conducting an investigation on the basis of the Indian dossier on the Mumbai attacks has been given 10 days to report back with its findings. Rehman Malik, who heads the Interior Ministry, told journalists that the government would also try to 'convert' the information given by India into evidence so that cases could be registered against the perpetrators in Pakistan, in order to bring them to trial in the country. He asked India to come up with more information to help the Pakistani end of the investigations

Hindu, 19 January 2009

Lashkar offers to end jihad

NEW DELHI: In a statement released to Srinagar-based journalists on Saturday, a Lashkar-e-Taiba spokesperson said it was willing to terminate its terror campaign in return for international intervention on the Kashmir issue. 'If the world listens to our cries and plays its role in resolving the Kashmir issue, there is no point in continuing fighting,' said the spokesperson, who uses the code-name 'Dr. Abdullah Ghaznavi.' 'Our struggle is only confined to Kashmir,' he claimed, 'and we have no relations or association with armed groups operating at international level. We have no global agenda. We just want freedom of Kashmir and if it comes peacefully we will welcome it. We don't see armed struggle as the only way to achieve our goal. If the world listens to our cries and plays its role in resolving the Kashmir issue there would be no reason for us to fight.'

Hindu, 20 January 2009

Pakistan briefs envoys on Mumbai attack probe

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday briefed representatives of diplomatic missions here on the 'concrete steps' it had taken in the course of its investigation of the Mumbai attacks. Through a PowerPoint presentation, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Rehman Malik, who heads the Interior Ministry, informed the assembled diplomats of the detention of suspects, the launch of a formal inquiry and the setting up of a team of the Federal Investigation Agency comprising anti-terror experts from the Special Investigations Group

Hindu, 20 January 2009

Kasab remanded in police custody till Feb 2

Mumbai: Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab, the lone terrorist arrested in the November

26 Terror attacks in the city, was remanded in police custody till February 2 in the CST firing case. Kasab has been in police custody since his arrest on the night of November 26 and has been booked in 12 cases by the city police. He was last remanded in police custody on January 4 for his involvement with accomplice Ismail Khan in the shootout at the Cama and the Albless Hospital in south Mumbai

Hindu, 24 January 2009

Prosecution not possible: Gilani

ISLAMABAD: After assurances that it would swiftly bring to book any Pakistani found involved in the Mumbai attacks, Islamabad on Friday said prosecution of the suspects would not be possible unless amendments were made to its own laws. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said Pakistan's anti-terror laws did not cover acts committed outside the country. 'There are some discrepancies in the law. Our anti-terror laws need some alteration. If the offence is committed outside the country, we cannot prosecute unless we make amendments,' he told journalists in Lahore

Asian Age, 24 January 2009

Pak, Afghan are central to terror: Obama

Washington/New Delhi, Jan. 23: US President Barack Obama on Friday said Pakistan and Afghanistan were the "central front" in America's war on terrorism and described the "deteriorating" situation in the region as "truly an international challenge of the highest order". Moving quickly to reshape US security policy, Mr Obama also named former UN ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who helped write the peace deal that ended Bosnia's 1992-95 war, as special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. Warning that the terrorists in Pakistan and Afghanistan posed a grave threat to global security, Mr Obama said the two countries would be tackled as a single problem under a wider strategy. "This is the central front in our enduring struggle against terrorism and extremism," he said. Addressing state department officials, Mr Obama said, "There, as in the Middle East, we must understand that we cannot deal with our problems in isolation."

Hindu, 25 January 2009

Somali pirates release Indian sailors

Mumbai: After nearly two months in captivity, 25 Indian sailors were released by Somali pirates on Thursday, though there was no word on whether any ransom was paid to the brigands. An official of the Directorate General of Shipping said 25 Indian and three Bangladeshi crew members of MT Biscaglia, a Liberian flag vessel that was hijacked on November 28 by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden, were released on Thursday night. 'The crew of the ship MT Biscaglia have been released. All are safe,' National Union of Seafarers of India General Secretary Abdulgani Serang told PTI here

Hindu, 25 January 2009

Pakistan taking Indian dossier "extremely seriously"

Islamabad: Pakistan is taking India's dossier on the Mumbai terror attacks "extremely seriously" and will "have to act fast" to complete its probe, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has said. "We are taking it [the dossier] extremely seriously, and we have already started [an] investigation and the results will come soon," he told the Financial Times daily in an interview. Mr. Gilani also hinted that Pakistan could consider extraditing terror suspects to India if bilateral relations were normalised

Hindu, 25 January 2009

Militant held on Bangladesh border

Shillong: A suspected cadre of Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA) was apprehended on Saturday by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the India-Bangladesh border. A MULTA cadre Sharul Islam of Gopalganj in Bangladesh was arrested at Sadartilla on the cross-junction of Meghalaya-Assam border with Bangladesh, the BSF sources said

Hindu, 26 January 2009

Two terrorists killed in police encounter at Noida

NOIDA: Two suspected Pakistani terrorists allegedly planning to target the Republic Day celebrations in Delhi were killed in a gun battle with the Uttar Pradesh police in Sector 97 here on Sunday. Two AK-47 assault rifles, four magazines, 120 rounds of ammunition, five hand-grenades, nine suspected RDX rods, detonators and Rs.18,000 in cash have been seized

Hindu, 26 January 2009

Terrorism: Kazakhstan stands firmly with India

NEW DELHI: Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Mumbai and reiterated the need for intensifying global cooperation in combating international terrorism. Mr. Nazarbayev also assured that Kazakhstan stood firmly with India in dealing with the scourge of global terrorism. In a joint declaration issued late on Saturday night, the two sides expressed the hope that the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks would be brought to justice at the earliest. Both sides also called for early conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the U.N. framework

Daily Excelsior, 26 January 2009

LeT bid to push fidayeens foiled

JAMMU, Jan 25: Ahead of Republic Day, a group of three to four militants made an unsuccessful attempt to breach border fencing and sneak into this side from Kanachak sector in wee hours of this morning to create mayhem in the City. Alertness shown by the border guards, however, thwarted the militants plot. In another success against terror today, police destroyed a well maintained 10' x 8' hide-out of Hizbul Mujahideen militants at Wagan near Sher Bibi, just yards away from Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in Ramban district. The under-ground hide-out, covered with grass to make it look like a normal walking route, had enough space inside to accommodate half a dozen militants