

Hindu, 1 July 2008

Towards free and fair elections in India (K. Subramanian)

When the Commission discharges its obligation of implementing the law, political parties are accusing it of throttling democracy; there is a danger of our democracy being hijacked by the demon of unaccounted wealth earned unscrupulously and spent to grab power; unscrupulous candidates are hijacking elections with their money power; nobody who has closely watched the scenario all these years can say money and liquor do not play a part in the elections; the value of hard cash, liquor and goodies seized in Karnataka was Rs.45.57 crore; if muscle power is employed in poorer States, it is money power in richer States; and if we do not want our democracy hijacked by unaccounted wealth, we should sit up and take notice before it is too late

Asian Age, 1 July 2008

Naxalites fired grenades taken from govt unit

July 1: The grenade launchers fired by Maoists on the Andhra Greyhounds returning from Orissa after a joint operation on Sunday, in one of their biggest planned attacks, leading to the possible death of three dozen jawans, had possibly been looted from a government installation in Orissa itself. Security agencies are probing this angle on the basis of documents available with them, a copy of which is available with this newspaper, showing that the Maoists had seized grenade launchers after attacking vital installations in Ramgiri, Udaygiri and Ganpati districts in Orissa recently. During these "multiple surprise raids", beginning 2006, the state government lost 103 weapons -including SLR launchers, 72 SLRs, AK-47s, 25 LMGs, besides 4,000 magazines, resulting in a huge gain for the Maoists. The Maoists also acquired M-36 grenades - each grenade bearing two ignition sets. This is besides the three six-plated bulletproof jackets and uniforms and helmets of soldiers engaged in combat with them during the raids

Daily Excelsior, 1 July 2008

Total bandh in Jammu amid massive protests

JAMMU, June 30: Following the unprecedented bandh in entire Jammu region today, the saffron parties this evening extended the bandh call for two more days, till July 2, in protest against State Government's decision to take control of Shri Amarnath yatra and Kashmiri leaders outburst against the Shrine Board and yatra. The bandh call for today evoked spontaneous and massive response from every nook and corner of the region with people holding high intensity protest demonstrations throughout the day to express their anger against State Government's decision to take control of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra and Kashmiri leaders outburst against Shri Amarnath Shrine Board. Governor, N N Vohra also came under severe criticism for his pro-separatists decision giving up Board's claims over the land

Asian Age, 2 July 2008

40 Maoists attack village in Orissa

July 1: As the police and soldiers search the remote ravines in south Orissa for dozens of elite anti-insurgency officers feared dead after suspected Maoists attacked and sank their boat in the Balimela reservoir, the rebels attacked Rehana village in Keonjhar district on

Monday night. Around 40 heavily armed Maoists entered the village and attacked the house of Kumbha Mahanta. Two members of Kumbha's family were seriously injured in the attack. They have been rushed to the district headquarter h

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Indian Express, 3 July 2008

Amarnath land row: 3 killed in MP bandh violence, curfew in Indore

Bhopal, July 3: Even as the VHP-BJP's nationwide bandh over the Amarnath land issue affected normal life in parts of the country, Indore was worst hit, with at least three persons being killed in the violence. Curfew was imposed in four police station areas of the BJP-ruled state's commercial capital. Unofficial sources put the total toll at four. The trouble began in Muslim-dominated Khajrana locality, where local shopkeepers resisted the attempts of the VHP and Bajrang Dal activists to enforce the bandh. According to eyewitnesses, the activists returned with policemen, who allegedly forced the shopkeepers to down shutters. The locals refused to fall in line and reportedly stoned the police, who later returned with more personnel

Times of India, 3 July 2008

Assam sets Ulfa 3-week deadline

July 3: The Assam government has given crack units of the United Liberation Front of Asom three weeks' time to finalise the modalities for a ceasefire and to deposit their arms and ammunition with the security forces, besides confining their cadres to designated camps. A senior state home department official told this newspaper on Thursday that it was yet to get a formal ceasefire proposal from the Ulfa commanders. "The Ulfa commanders have been informed of the government's terms and conditions, which was finalised by the strategic group of the Unified Command for a ceasefire with any armed groups," he said

Hindu, 3 July 2008

All northeast capitals will be linked by rail: Manmohan

NEW DELHI: All capitals of the northeastern States will be linked by rail, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said here on Wednesday. Infrastructure deficiency in the region remained a major concern. So infrastructure projects there were given the status of 'national projects' with a special funding pattern. 'Airports are being modernised and new ones are being built. An ambitious programme of road building has been taken up under the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme and Rs. 31,000 crore is being invested in roads in the 11th Five Year Plan period. There are relaxed guidelines for rural roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana so that even the farthest hamlets on

the border are linked by road.'

Indian Express, 4 July 2008

Naxals now active in 22 states: report

New Delhi, July 3: The growing strength of Naxal groups has emboldened them so much that they are harbouring ambitions of controlling more than a third of India's territories in the next two years, a latest intelligence report has said. Basing its information on literature and pamphlets seized by the security forces in anti-Naxal operations, and also on interrogation of arrested guerillas, the intelligence report says the Naxal groups are aiming to liberate and control 35 per cent of India's land by the end of 2009, Home Ministry sources said. In a fresh assessment of the Naxalite movement in the country, the report points out that ultra-Left groups having faith in Maoist ideologies have spread their activities to as many as 22 out of 28 states in the country, including states that were earlier not known to have any Naxal links like Delhi, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Gujarat. As many as 39 Left-wing extremist groups are currently operating in the country with a combined membership of more than a lakh

Tribune, 4 July 2008

Jammu continues to burn

Defying curfew for the second day today, violent protesters went on a rampage, halting trains, setting ablaze police vehicles and fighting pitched battles with the police in fresh violence over the Amarnath land row in the region. Companies of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) were also pressed into service to maintain calm in the winter capital, while the Army staged a flag march in Kathua district

Hindu, 5 July 2008

Inflation up again

NEW DELHI: The rate of inflation crept up to touch another new 13-year high at 11.63 per cent for the week ended June 21 from 11.42 per cent the previous week. This was mainly due to the higher prices of cereals, fruits and vegetables and manufactured items such as edible oils, cement and steel. Although the wholesale price index-based inflation at this level was way above the 4.32 per cent pegged for the same week a year ago, the country's bourses factored in the price spiral to close with substantial gains as nervous investors in the market were earlier anticipating an inflationary spurt to well over 12 per cent

Hindu, 5 July 2008

Jammu peaceful, but curfew stays

Jammu: A day after a joint appeal for by prominent citizens of Jammu, the region was by and large peaceful on Friday though curfew remained in several areas for the fourth consecutive day. The bandh, called by the BJP, the Shiv Sena, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal to protest cancellation of Baltal land allotment to Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board has already been extended till July 6

Times of India, 5 July 2008

Naxalite killed, CRPF officer injured in encounter in Jharkhand

RANCHI: A Naxalite was killed and three persons, including a CRPF inspector, were injured in an encounter between security personnel and activists of the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) in Jharkhand's Khunti district on Saturday. Following a tip-off that the PLFI, previously known as Jharkhand Liberation Tigers, had converged at the village, a team of police and CRPF went to the area, Deputy Inspector General of Police, R K Mullick said

Asian Age, 7 July 2008

Left must realise that the Cold War is over (Arun Nehru)

I have never had any doubt that the Indo-US nuclear deal negotiations would go on. I am surprised that the Left thought otherwise. The Congress and the Left have been firing "nuclear blanks" at each other for some time now but both the sides want to avoid an early Lok Sabha election. They have been waiting for the right time to break their alliance. Even if they part ways in July, we will still have a February 2009 election. This is because Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav and his MPs will, if it suits them, provide the necessary assistance to the Centre to avoid elections in November 2008. Everyone in the UPA - all allies, including the DMK, the RJD, the NCP, the LJP and the JMM - who is keen to avoid an early election will be happy

Times of India, 10 July 2008

Maoists gun down JD(U) MLA in Jharkhand

BUNDU (RANCHI): Within a fortnight of Maoists killing a DSP and four police constables in Bundu, a sub-divisional town of Ranchi, the red rebels struck again and shot dead Janata Dal (United) Legislature Party leader in Jharkhand assembly, Ramesh Singh Munda, his two bodyguards and a teenaged boy. The Maoists, numbering around 12, first killed one of the three security guards, Shiv Nath Minj, provided to the 53-year-old legislator from Tamar, outside the hall where the ceremony was on. They then barged in while the MLA was distributing prizes to students at S S College. Once inside, they sprayed bullets killing Munda and his other bodyguard Khurshid Alam. A student was caught in the firing and died the instant he was hit by a bullet

Times of India, 10 July 2008

Delhi beats Mumbai to become busiest airport

NEW DELHI: The crude oil crisis has made Delhi the country's busiest airport in terms of number of daily flight movements, beating Mumbai for the first time ever. Before jet fuel price started its upward trend, Mumbai used to handle 750 to 760 flights daily. But now with airlines reducing flights to cut losses, Mumbai - the hub of most domestic carriers - has witnessed the maximum cancellations and now this figure is down to an average of 650

Hindu, 16 July 2008

India's charge against ISI may figure in talks

ISLAMABAD: India's charge of ISI involvement in the Kabul embassy attack is likely to come up when the Indian and Pakistan Foreign Secretaries meet next week in New Delhi to open the fifth round of the composite dialogue process. Earlier this week, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan said India had 'pretty good evidence' to link the ISI to

the Kabul bombing in which four Indians were among 60 killed

Hindu, 16 July 2008

Human Rights Watch: 'End Govt. support for Salwa Judum'

NEW DELHI: The Centre and the Chhattisgarh government should hold the security forces and state-backed vigilantes responsible for having attacked, displaced and killed people in armed operations against Maoist rebels since mid-2005, Human Rights Watch has said. In a report released on Tuesday, it called for an end to all government support for unlawful activities by Salwa Judum vigilantes, and urged the State government to take immediate measures to protect the tens of thousands of persons displaced. It also called upon the Maoist rebels to end attacks on civilians and other abuses

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Times of India, 17 July 2008

'Security lapse to blame for Naxal attack'

NEW DELHI: Even as the Centre is waiting for the final report from Orissa on the Maoist attack in Malkangiri to find out what went wrong at the place which lies on the operational map for strong anti-naxal action, the preliminary findings hint at a number of lapses - ranging from overloading of Mine Proof Vehicle (MPV) to choosing routinely used track for movement. Besides, the initial findings - shared with central security agencies on Thursday - also indicate the use of nearly 100 kg of explosives (possibly gelatin sticks or very diluted mixture of TNT) in the landmine which could have specifically been laid to "trap" cops

Times of India, 17 July 2008

'Policemen may have missed danger spot'

KORAPUT/BHUBANESWAR: At least 17 cops were killed in a Maoist-triggered landmine blast in Orissa. The policemen were returning from a village which the Maoists had attacked. Eyewitnesses said the blast was so powerful that the anti-landmine vehicle, in which the security personnel were travelling, was thrown about 50m in the air before it crashed to the ground. The rebels reportedly planted explosives under a culvert. Soon after the blast, the extremists opened fire leading to a gunbattle with the security forces, police said

Hindu, 17 July 2008

Maoists kill 20 policemen

BHUBANESWAR: Left-wing extremists struck again in Orissa's Malkangiri district on

Wednesday evening killing at least 20 policemen. They triggered a powerful landmine blast. Unofficial reports put the death toll at 24. 'Nearly 20 policemen have been killed in the attack,' Director-General of Police Gopal Chandra Nanda told The Hindu over the phone. This was the second major Maoist strike in the district in less than 20 days. As many as 38 people were killed when a boat carrying Greyhound personnel from Andhra Pradesh was ambushed in the Chittrakonda reservoir on June 29

Hindu, 17 July 2008

6 jungle warfare training schools to be set up soon

NEW DELHI: The Union government on Wednesday decided to set up six jungle warfare and counter-insurgency training schools to raise and train special forces for tackling naxal violence. Announcing the multi-pronged strategy to counter naxal violence in nearly a dozen States, Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta said the major challenge was to focus on development projects and at the same time provide a conducive security environment

Asian Age, 18 July 2008

Bodo threat to pull out of ceasefire

July 17: The outlawed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) has threatened to pull out of a three-year-old ceasefire agreement and to relaunch their armed struggle for separate Bodoland in Assam. Charging New Delhi of dragging the peace process, general secretary of the outfit Gobinda Basumatary said, "The Central government appears reluctant to expedite the peace process and if it continues we will be forced to take arms once again." The NDFB, a frontline rebel group fighting for an independent homeland for the Bodo tribe, had entered into a ceasefire with New Delhi on May 24, 2005. The defiant rebel leaders said that they have already submitted their charter of demands to the Prime Minister but they are yet to receive any response from New Delhi

Dawn, 18 July 2008

Most Pakistanis, Indians flexible on Kashmir: Opinion poll in subcontinent

NEW DELHI, July 17: People in India and Pakistan show a readiness to let the disputed region of Kashmir decide its own fate, and many will tolerate independence if that ended the long-running dispute, a rare poll on the crisis shows. A survey by the WorldPublicOpinion.org asked Indian and Pakistanis to consider a range of possible outcomes for the Kashmir question and to say whether they found them desirable, acceptable, tolerable, or unacceptable. A majority of those surveyed would find independence at least tolerable if Kashmiris wanted it

Hindu, 19 July 2008

Seven killed, 23 injured in IED blast

SRINAGAR: At least seven army men were killed and 23 injured, some of them seriously, when militants exploded an improvised explosive device (IED) targeting an Army convoy on the Srinagar-Baramulla highway on Saturday. In other incidents, six militants were killed across Kashmir valley in the past 24 hours. Brigadier K. Muthana Commander of 10 Sector Rashtriya Rifles said the IED planted on the roadside at Narbal was triggered possibly by a remote control device. 'The Army convoy carrying transit

troopers was coming from Baramulla to Srinagar. The bus was carrying 30 Army personnel. Seven died on the spot. The rest were injured, some of them critically' said Brig. Muthana who rushed to the spot soon after blast. He said that it was not a security lapse and Army would investigate the matter. 'Violence as such is a never ending process and militants always try to do something when they see easy targets.'

Hindu, 20 July 2008

2 killed in grenade attack

SRINAGAR: Two people, including a tourist, were killed and five injured when militants hurled a grenade at a crowded market in famed tourist spot Gulmarg on Sunday.

Inspector-General of Police (Operations), North Kashmir, B. Sirinivas said the grenade was thrown near a hotel at 5 p.m. and Arun Kumar from Uttar Pradesh died on the spot. A 12-year-old ponywalla, brought here with multiple injuries, died later. The injured were admitted to a hospital in Tangmarg. Mr. Sirinivas, along with Deputy Commissioner of Baramulla Baseer Khan, rushed to Gulmarg to take stock of the situation

Hindu, 21 July 2008

Contest tightens, situation volatile

NEW DELHI: Less than 12 hours before the start of the crucial trust vote debate, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) found itself pinned against the wall, with a determined Opposition showing no sign of relenting in its declared objective of voting the Manmohan Singh government out. Unless the UPA managers succeed in their plans to secure abstentions and defections in the Opposition ranks, the government may find itself in for a photo-finish as both sides are now evenly matched. There is distinct unease in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the extraordinary

Tribune, 22 July 2008

Manmohan bats with confidence. Lifeline: Mamata decides to abstain. Ditto 10 others from NDA?

New Delhi, July 21 With a determined Opposition making a valiant attempt to dislodge the 50-month-old UPA regime, the scene of action shifted to Parliament today where Prime Minister Manmohan Singh sought a trust vote in the Lok Sabha following the withdrawal of support to his government by the Left parties over the Indo-US nuclear deal. Unfazed by the united Opposition challenge to unseat him, a combative Manmohan Singh and his external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee came out strongly in defence of the nuclear deal, while Leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani argued that the pact with Washington would make India subservient to the US

Hindu, 24 July 2008

Left, BSP, regional parties to launch joint campaign

NEW DELHI: Four Left parties, along with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and five regional parties, on Wednesday decided to launch a joint national level campaign against relentless price rise, agrarian distress, the India-United States nuclear deal, communal forces, and 'gross' misuse of government institutions like the CBI for political purposes. This was announced by Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Prakash

Karat after a two-and-half-hour meeting of the 10 parties at the New Delhi residence of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati. Besides the CPI(M) and the BSP, parties that attended the meeting were the CPI, the Forward Bloc, the RSP, the Telugu Desam Party, the Janata Dal (Secular), the Rashtriya Lok Dal, the Indian National Lok Dal and the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha.

Asian Age, 24 July 2008

IB eye on China, NE outfits 'link'

July 22: If there were reports of China creating certain tremors for the Indian government in Arunachal Pradesh, the country's intelligence agencies, particularly the Intelligence Bureau (IB), are looking at the possibility of Chinese intelligence's alleged nexus with some insurgents outfits in the northeast. The finger of suspicion points towards outfits like Ulfa, Bodo outfits like NDFB (National Democratic front of Bodoland) terrorist group of Assam, among others. Mr A.K. Doval, former director IB, expressing his concern said, "China's movements both covert and overt is a matter of security concern for India. Its implications need to be analysed and responses formulated." IB sleuths were working on information that arms are being procured by the insurgents from Kunming province in China bordering Burma

Daily Excelsior, 24 July 2008

Youth sacrifices life over land row; Another call for Jammu bandh today

JAMMU, July 23: A youth taking part in the chain hunger strike against cancellation of forest land to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) today sacrificed his life after consuming poison in protest against the remarks of National Conference chief, Omar Abdullah in Parliament yesterday that the land to Amarnath shrine Board will be returned only over dead bodies of the Kashmiris. Following death of the youth, the activists of Sangarsh Samiti and other organisations went on a rampage in the City pelting stones on moving vehicles and enforcing a bandh in some City areas. The mob also ransacked mortuary of Government Medical College, Jammu and twice lifted body of the martyr to shift it to the venue of dharna. The Samiti has given a call for Jammu bandh tomorrow. The Bar Association Jammu has also called for a bandh tomorrow

Hindu, 25 July 2008

Five of family killed in grenade blast in Srinagar

SRINAGAR: Five people of the same family, four of them children, were killed and 18 injured when unknown persons hurled a grenade at the crowded Batmaloo bus stand here on Thursday afternoon. Witnesses told The Hindu that the attack took place around 12.15 p.m. Three people were killed on the spot, while two died of injuries in hospital. One report said the victims belonged to a family of migrant labourers boarding a bus for Jammu for onward journey to their native places. Another said they were waiting for a bus. The deceased were 12-year-old Khushboo and her three brothers Adil (4), Qayoom (5), and Ajoob (8), all children of Mohammad Afroze of Bihar. The mother Rubina was also killed. Sources said Afroze fainted at the hospital on learning that his entire family had been killed. The injured have been hospitalised

Hindu, 26 July 2008

Serial blasts rattle Bangalore; woman killed

BANGALORE: A series of low intensity blasts on Friday rocked the southern and central parts of Bangalore, a city that has of late been on the radar of terror groups. One person was killed and seven were injured in the eight explosions that created panic among residents and threw traffic out of gear on a rainy working day. The explosions were reported within 45 minutes from 1.15 p.m. Though the police have not ruled out the involvement of terrorist groups, Bangalore Police Commissioner Shankar M. Bidari told journalists that 'miscreants' had triggered the blasts to 'disrupt the peace' in the city. Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, after an emergency Cabinet meeting, announced that no 'hard core terrorist group' was involved in the blasts which, he claimed, were carried out to 'malign' the government

Hindu, 26 July 2008

Blasts underline continuing threat

NEW DELHI: Last year, when police in Karnataka stumbled on an Islamist cell based in Bangalore, it became clear India's technology capital was one of the principal targets of jihadist terror. Friday's bombings have made it clear that the threat remains undiminished. Although it is far too early to arrive at any conclusions of who the perpetrators might have been, investigators will be focusing their energies on a group of Karnataka residents known to have trained at one of half-a-dozen training camps run by the Students Islamic Movement of India in 2006-2007

Hindu, 27 July 2008

17 Blasts rocks Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD: Forty people were killed and over 100 injured when serial blasts struck different parts of Ahmedabad, Gujarat's major commercial nerve centre, on Saturday evening. The State capital was plunged into chaos for hours after the terror attacks. As the number of the dead and injured kept rising, police could not confirm the final tally till late in the evening. Chief Minister Narendra Modi, after an emergency Cabinet meeting, said 29 people died and over 100 were injured. Both he and Urban Development Minister Nitin Patel, who visited some of the affected areas, did not rule out the possibility of the casualties going up.

Hindu, 27 July 2008

'Indian Mujahideen' claims responsibility

NEW DELHI: In a 14-page manifesto e-mailed to the media minutes before Saturday's serial bombings, an organisation calling itself the 'Indian Mujahideen' has claimed responsibility for the Ahmedabad attacks. Titled 'The Rise of Jihad', the manifesto says the bombings were carried out to avenge the 2002 anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat. 'In the light of the injustice and wrongs on the Muslims of Gujarat,' it says, 'we advance our jihad and call all our brethren under it to unite and answer these irresolute kafireen [infidels] of India.' It warns of future attacks, complaining that the police 'disturbed us by arresting, imprisoning, and torturing our brothers in the name of SIMI [Students Islamic Movement of India].'

Indian Express, 27 July 2008

Terror hits Ahmedabad 16 times

Ahmedabad, July 26: A day after eight blasts hit Bangalore in an attack police downplayed given that only one person was killed, terror struck Ahmedabad this evening with an unprecedented frequency as many as 16 blasts in almost 90 minutes that left 29 dead and over 100 injured. The attacks were the first in the city after the Akshardham terror strike six years ago. The Gujarat government today called in the Army and deployed all available battalions of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) in the affected areas. Police and the RAF began combing and cordoning off of most off the affected areas by midnight. Fear and panic and the news that even hospitals hadn't been spared kept most people indoors leaving the city deserted tonight

Indian Express, 27 July 2008

As in Jaipur, 'provocative' e-mail alert pops up, this time cites Gujarat riots

New Delhi, July 26: The death toll over Friday and Saturday in the Bangalore and Ahmedabad attacks may be less than 50 but that's of little comfort to investigators still grappling to join the dots in almost every attack since the UPA Government took charge in 2004. What has added a whole new dimension this time is that two major cities have been hit on two consecutive days and the number of blasts adds up to as many as 24, eight in Bangalore and at least 16 in Ahmedabad. No city has witnessed so many blasts on a single day. And, of course, the grim fact that never before have hospitals been targeted as in Ahmedabad tonight

Hindu, 28 July 2008

Toll in Ahmedabad serial blasts rises to 46

AHMEDABAD: The Army staged flag marches in sensitive areas here on Sunday to restore a sense of security and confidence among the people, as the death toll in Saturday's terror attack went up to 46. In Gandhinagar, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi convened an emergency meeting of the Cabinet, the second in 12 hours, and decided to form a four-member special coordination committee. Headed by the Principal Secretary, Home, the committee will coordinate inputs with other States which had faced similar terror attacks

Hindu, 28 July 2008

Police working on three leads

AHMEDABAD: While Gujarat Minister of State for Home Amit Shah and Health Minister and Cabinet spokesman, Jaynarayan Vyas, refused to share any information with the media about the direction of the investigation into the serial blasts here, police sources indicated that they were working on three possible clues to lead to the perpetrators of the crime. While the e-mail sent minutes before the Saturday's blasts in the name of 'Indian Mujahideen' had been traced to an address in Navi Mumbai and the Mumbai police were investigating into it, the police here were making inquiries about two phone numbers, one landline and the other mobile, from where calls were made soon after the serials blasts last night

Hindu, 28 July 2008

Editorial: Metro terrorism

The serial bombings in Ahmedabad and Bangalore, which have taken a toll of over 50 lives and injured more than 150 people, form part of a sequence of attacks that have demonstrated just how dangerous the terrorist threat to India's major cities continues to be. Even by the macabre standards we have been compelled to become accustomed to, the character of the violence is horrifying: after all, it takes a special kind of savagery to bomb a hospital. Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil has promised a 'comprehensive plan' to deal with the challenge but did not spell out what action was contemplated nor why the Union Government has taken five years to decide it must have one. Sadly, pronouncements like this have followed each terrorist attack in recent years, as part of a ritualistic set of actions intended to reassure people that the government is working to make their lives more secure. Police deployment in public places is enhanced; random checks on traffic are stepped up; metal-detectors are installed in shopping complexes. But the truth is that not a single urban terrorist has been arrested in street checks; nor have searches at shopping complexes led to the detection of even one bomb. Measures like these cannot meet the terrorist threat. Cities, as any security professional knows, cannot be turned into fortresses

Indian Express, 28 July 2008

Blasts send Centre a rude, powerful reminder: need for local intelligence

NEW DELHI, JULY 27: The back-to-back serial blasts in Bangalore and Ahmedabad could not have come at a worse time for the Union Home Ministry since top officials were to announce shortly an enhancement of budget and manpower for state governments to plug precisely what the weekend mayhem has once again exposed lack of local intelligence to prevent acts of terror. Shortly after Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil held a high-level review meeting at his residence, Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta, speaking to The Indian Express, said an 'expeditious' announcement of the scheme was on the cards, and could come within the next two weeks

Tribune, 28 July 2008

Now, Surat on terror radar

Surat/Ahmedabad, July 27 After Bangalore and Ahmedabad, the diamond city of Surat today came under the terrorists' scanner with two cars stuffed with explosives being found, a live bomb defused and a SIMI activist arrested in connection with the serial blasts in Ahmedabad, where the death toll has mounted to 49. A live bomb was defused near a hospital and two cars stuffed with explosives were found in and on the outskirts of the city today, sparking a high security alert. A car laden with explosives was seized from Punagam area on the outskirts of Surat city, police inspector M.R. Chavda said. The car, bearing the number plate GJ-6-CD 3569, was found stuffed with powder materials, gelatin sticks and shrapnels. Vadodara police commissioner Rakesh Asthana said the registration number of the car was also fake

Times of India, 29 July 2008

'Live bombs an attempt to distract attention from probe'

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat government believes that bombs found in Surat are an attempt to distract attention from investigations of serial blasts in the city. "This seems to be an attempt to distract attention from Ahmedabad serial blasts or they are planning to

strike somewhere else and are trying to distract the attention of country's authorities," a top state government functionary said

Hindu, 30 July 2008

Pachauri to head six-member experts committee

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has constituted a six-member experts committee headed by Rajendra K. Pachauri, director-general, Tata Energy Research Institute, to look at an alternative alignment, avoiding the Ramar Sethu stretch, for implementing the Sethusamudram Shipping Channel Project

Hindu, 30 July 2008

18 bombs defused in Surat

AHMEDABAD: In a day of 'battle with bombs,' the Surat police on Tuesday unearthed 18 live bombs and its bomb squad succeeded in defusing all of them, averting a major tragedy in the second largest commercial centre of Gujarat. It was the third consecutive day live bombs and explosives were found in Surat. As panic spread in the diamond and art silk city, all schools and colleges were closed and children sent back home. Shutters of cinema halls and shopping malls were also downed. These places will remain closed on Wednesday too.

Hindu, 30 July 2008

Pranab calls for global mechanism to fight terror

TEHRAN: India on Tuesday reiterated its plea for a global mechanism to fight terror following the attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul and the bomb explosions in Bangalore and Ahmedabad. Addressing the 15th meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM), External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee pointed out that the attack on the Indian embassy killed five embassy personnel, including two diplomats, and 60 Afghan civilians. He also pointed out that the strikes in Bangalore and Ahmedabad killed over 50 and injured over 200

Indian Express, 30 July 2008

Terror to top agenda at SAARC summit

NEW DELHI, JULY 29: In the shadow of the serial blasts in Ahmedabad and Bangalore, as well as the attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul, India is going to give a final push to seal a convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters at the SAARC summit in Colombo, setting the stage for terrorism to be the centerpiece of the agenda. The convention would provide a broad framework for SAARC member countries to 'mutually cooperate and assist in the investigation and prosecution of crime and the tracing, restraint and forfeiture of the proceeds and instruments of crime'. Under this proposed convention, the member states shall 'grant to each other the widest possible measure of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.'

Hindu, 31 July 2008

Two more live bombs found in Surat, defused

AHMEDABAD: For the fourth day on Wednesday, two more powerful live bombs were defused in Surat, even as Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi visited the diamond and

the art silk city and reviewed the security arrangements. The death toll in Saturday's bomb blasts in Ahmedabad meanwhile has gone up to 51 with five more deaths in the hospitals. Health Minister and Cabinet spokesman Jaynarayan Vyas said as many as 212 people were injured in the bomb blasts

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Bio, chem armour for India

July 30: India is gearing up to protect its armed forces and civilian population against nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) attack. The Union home ministry has prepared a standard operating procedure on this, while the Indian Army has ordered eight NBC-recce vehicles from the Defence Research and Development Organisation which cost Rs 10 crores each. Five lakh DRDO-designed NBC suits, manufactured by ordnance factories in India, have been distributed to the military. The National Disaster Management Authority is actively involved in framing protection measures in case of a NBC strike, defence sources said