

Asian Age, 3 November 2008

Opinion: Enough evidence to go for terror's jugular in Bangla By Anil Bhat

Seventy-seven was the latest of figures of those killed and over 300 were injured after as many as 13 bomb went off with clockwork co-ordination in crowded areas of four districts, including the capital of Assam, on October 30, 2008. Apart from being the worst series of terrorist attacks over the two decades by United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) or any other group in Assam, they are also part of a well-planned agenda - of making India's Dussehra to Diwali period as deadly as possible. Of course, Ulfa categorically denied its hand in these and ironically that could be the truth, but with a terrible twist. In my article A season of surrenders in Assam: How long, how far? (July 29) in The Asian Age, I wrote that Ulfa's top leadership in Dhaka had been working hard at recruiting Bangladeshis to make up for heavy casualties suffered in operations by the Army and police since late 2006 and its loss of public support. Thereby it had no takers amidst the Assamese youth

Dawn, 3 November 2008

Trilateral mechanism soon on IPI project

NEW DELHI, Nov 2: Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Hossein Nozari met in Tehran on Sunday and decided to set up a trilateral mechanism at petroleum ministers' level to resolve various issues relating to the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. Speaking at a meeting of the India-Iran Joint Commission, Mr Mukherjee said: 'We have reiterated to the Iranian government at all levels that India remains committed to the IPI project. We are working with Pakistan to resolve outstanding issues pertaining to transit and transportation tariff. With the cooperation of all three sides, it should be possible to finalise the project.'

Hindu, 3 November 2008

Buddhadeb, Paswan escape IED blast

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Union Steel Minister Ram Vilas Pawan had a narrow escape when a powerful improvised explosive device went off moments after their convoys passed through Kalaichandi in Paschim Medinipur district on Sunday. The blast damaged a pilot vehicle

Hindu, 3 November 2008

Lalu urges all MPs, MLAs in Bihar to quit after November 15

Patna: Railway Minister Lalu Prasad on Sunday urged all MPs and lawmakers belonging to all parties from Bihar to resign after November 15 to protest against attacks on north Indians, particularly Biharis, in Maharashtra. 'It will be a total resignation by MPs and legislators from all parties and independents,' the Rashtriya Janata Dal chief said at a press meet here

Hindu, 3 November 2008

Nuclear deal not at the cost of pipeline: Pranab

Tehran: India said on Sunday that the India-U.S. civil nuclear deal was not at the cost of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. 'Nuclear power is one source of energy. The other important source is the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline. One is not exclusive to the other,' External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said at a joint press conference with Iranian Economic Minister Shamseddin Hossein. They were interacting with reporters at the conclusion of the two-day Joint Commission Meeting of the two countries

Hindu, 3 November 2008

Hindutva's terror link

The revelation that a militant section of the Hindutva network was behind the September 29 bomb blasts in Muslim-dominated Malegaon in Maharashtra and Modasa in Gujarat has shattered the myth propagated by the Hindutva campaign that only Islamist fundamentalism breeds terrorism. Indeed the Sangh Parivar's loaded argument has been that while all Muslims are not terrorists, all terrorists are Muslim. Saffron rabble-rousers have had no compunction in lobbing this charge at the Muslim community as a whole. While it has become almost an article of faith with the parivar to link Islamist fundamentalists with terrorism, today, with the arrests of radical Hindu activist Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur and four others, among them a retired Major, the Sangh and its affiliates find themselves warding off the same accusations. Prima facie, the case against the Sadhvi and her accomplices is serious. The Anti-Terrorism Squad of Maharashtra, which has been on the trail of Hindutva terror since 2006, has charged them under the Indian Penal Code for murder as well as under sections of the Indian Explosives Act, 1884, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967

Hindu, 4 November 2008

Opinion: Can Mayawati do a Barack Obama? By K.V. Prasad

By late evening today, the world will know who the next President of the United States is and whether Senator Barack Obama's two-year tapasya catapults him to Oval Office. Everyone awaits with bated breath the arrival of a charismatic African-American to one of the most powerful political offices of the world. In about six months, the Indian electorate will be asked to give its verdict on who the next Prime Minister should be. The larger question is: are Indian voters prepared to consider the Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati's quest for the top post? The similarity between her and Mr. Obama, if any, is the race factor that has a bearing on the U.S. elections and could be equated with the issue of caste that invariably determines the outcome in the Indian elections. But can Ms. Mayawati emulate the Obama strategy? Is she prepared to draw lessons from the Obama campaign?

Asian Age, 4 November 2008

MNS must bear the burden of a backlash By Joginder Singh

Under the Indian Constitution, every citizen has the fundamental right to live anywhere in the country and carry on his profession or trade. One cannot call a 61-year-old democracy, like ours, a young one where people have to learn traditions, customs and the rule of law. The Supreme Court of India has laid down that how ever high you may be, the law is above you. It is a laudable ruling, but vote-bank politics has given it a new interpretation: if what you do is going to benefit the party in power, then your action or inaction will be winked at and a Nelson's Eye turned to it. To start a political party or to become a politician, no qualification is required, except that you should be able to rouse rabble, indulge in hooliganism, cause damage to public property. In short, do anything which can attract public and media attention

Hindu, 5 November 2008

India's assistance is a goodwill gesture, says Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama on Tuesday refuted media speculation on a secret deal with India, and asserted that there was a clear understanding between New Delhi and Colombo on its efforts to defeat terrorism and restore democracy in the north. In response to a question by Joseph Michael Perera (UNP) in Parliament on the recent visit to New Delhi of Basil Rajapaksa, MP, Senior Advisor to the President, Mr. Bogollagama gave details of the understanding between

the two governments on various issues related to the humanitarian crisis triggered by the fighting between the forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the north

Hindu, 5 November 2008

Court: political will needed to check MNS violence

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the agitation spearheaded by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray could be controlled 'if there is a political will.' Making this observation, a Bench posted to November 10 hearing on a writ petition seeking a direction to the Centre and the Maharashtra government to protect the life and property of all citizens, including north Indians. The Bench, consisting of Justices B.N. Agrawal and G.S. Singhvi, directed counsel Sugreev Dubey to suitably amend the petition filed by Salek Chand Jain. When counsel argued that public property was being destroyed in Bihar and Jalandhar in Punjab following the violence in Maharashtra, Justice Agrawal said: 'Can it [agitation] be stopped by court orders? These are political questions which the political parties should consider. If there is political will, it can be controlled in no time.'

Asian Age, 5 November 2008

Ulfa hand likely in Assam blasts

Nov. 5: The investigation into the nine serial bomb blasts that rocked Assam on Thursday has reached a crucial stage and security agencies have got lead on involvement of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) in it. Disclosing this on Wednesday to this newspaper, highly-placed security sources, however, claimed that conspiracy might have been hatched in Dhaka but it was assembled and planted by the Ulfa rebels in Assam. Contrary to what Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi has been pointing finger towards the external forces, security sources probing the serial blasts in the state said that they have got certain conclusive evidence indicating involvement of outlawed Ulfa rebels in the devastating bomb blasts

Hindu, 6 November 2008

Chandrayaan takes pictures of moon

CHENNAI: The Terrain Mapping Camera (TMC) on board Chandrayaan-1 has started taking pictures of the moon. On Tuesday evening, when the spacecraft was in the lunar transfer orbit, it photographed the crescent moon from a distance of some 2.5 lakh km. The TMC took pictures of the earth when it was made operational on October 29. The pictures showed the northern and southern coasts of Australia

Hindu, 8 November 2008

Maoists attack bridge construction site

Sheohar: Over 100 armed Maoists attacked a bridge construction site in Bihar's Sheohar district and destroyed machinery worth over Rs. 10 lakh, police said on Friday. The Maoists on Thursday night blasted a storeroom at Mallipokharbhinda, where the bridge was being constructed over the Bagmati river, and destroyed machinery. The police did not rule out the possibility of the contractor's refusal to pay extortion money as the reason behind the attack

Times of India, 8 November 2008

Naxalites kill two BJP leaders in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR: In yet another major pre-poll violence in poll-bound Chhattisgarh, two ruling BJP leaders were shot dead by Naxalites on Sunday when they were attending an election meeting at Badre Gudra village in Dantewada district, some 400 kilometers from here. Dantewada BJP district Vice-President Ramesh Rathore and

BJP Kuakunda Block Divisional President Surya Prakash at the meeting when the Naxalites shot them dead, officials stationed at Dantewada police control room said.

Hindu, 9 November 2008

Assam terror bombing trail leads to NDFB

NEW DELHI: Evidence has emerged that a hit-team of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) executed the October 30 serial bombings in Assam - evidence which undermines earlier claims that the Bangladesh-based Harkat ul-Jihad-Islami (HuJI) was responsible for the murderous attacks. Seventy-seven people were killed in the bombings

Hindu, 9 November 2008

India's Moon mission a big success

CHENNAI: Chandrayaan-1 has kept its rendezvous with the Moon. In a meticulously planned operation, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday accomplished the most crucial and critical manoeuvre of safely inserting Chandrayaan-1 into the lunar orbit. This is the first time that an Indian-built spacecraft has broken away from the Earth's gravitational field and reached the Moon. The spacecraft is now circling the Moon over its polar regions with a periselene (nearest point from the moon's surface) of 504 km and an aposelene (farthest point) of 7,502 km

Hindu, 9 November 2008

Kashmir is a bilateral issue: Pranab

Kolkata: External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said that Kashmir was a bilateral issue and India was trying to resolve matters through series of discussions. Responding to media queries on tax breaks promised by U.S. President-elect Barack Obama or the stand likely to be taken by him on Kashmir, he said : 'While I cannot comment on the tax issues relating to Mr. Obama, as and where in respect of Kashmir, I can say that this is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and we are trying to resolve this under the Shimla Accord and the Lahore agreement, through a series of discussions.'

Hindu, 9 November 2008

Intelligence coordination group for the north-east

NEW DELHI: In a bid to spruce up intelligence network and achieve synergy in sharing intelligence inputs, particularly in the wake of the recent serial blasts in Tripura and Assam, the Centre has decided to set up an Intelligence Coordination Group for the north-eastern region. The new mechanism would help in smoother and better communication of information among the eight north-eastern States and with the Centre as well.

Hindu, 10 November 2008

Don't link terrorism with religion: Jamiat

Hyderabad: The 29th general session of the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind which concluded here on Sunday urged the government agencies to refrain from identifying terrorism with a particular religion or community. To ascribe the folly of an individual with the entire community disturbed the whole society and its negative effects created hatred against each other, it said. A resolution to this effect was adopted at a well attended public meeting held at the Nizam College grounds here comprising 6000 clerics from all over the country

Hindu, 10 November 2008

Electioneering a major challenge in Bastar

RAIPUR: If conducting elections in the militancy-ridden Jammu and Kashmir has been a challenge for the Indian democracy, ensuring free and safe polling in the naxal-affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh is no less a herculean task. With just days to go for voting in the first phase covering the whole Bastar area - the entire focus of the government, Election Commission and the State police is on providing security to the voters and people on election duty

Times of India, 10 November 2008

Muslims divided over fatwa on terror

NEW DELHI: With 6,000 Islamic clerics endorsing the fatwa against terror, which was issued by Islamic seminary Darul Uloom, Deoband, the Muslim community stands divided on the issue. Some believe this fatwa is a strong statement by the community against terrorism to the rest of the world while others says this fatwa is apologetic in nature and was not required as what it said is embodied in the very nature of the religion With series of bomb blasts in various parts of the country this year, some clerics feel that the fatwa was required, as the Muslim community was targeted. Clerics say that this fatwa is for non-Islamic communities

Hindu, 11 November 2008

Manmohan rules out fuel price cut

ON BOARD THE PMS AIRCRAFT: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has ruled out a cut in petrol and diesel prices until oil companies are able to sustain their operations. Even now the Indian oil companies have to bear a very heavy burden, he said. There were limits to government subsidies. We have been subsidising LPG, kerosene and diesel to a certain extent. If the prices keep going down, we will explore the possibility, he said to a question, on his way back home from Qatar late on Monday night

Hindu, 11 November 2008

Tribunal confirms ban on LTTE

New Delhi: The Tribunal constituted under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act upheld on Monday the ban imposed by the Centre on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on May 14 for a period of two years. The LTTE was initially banned in India following the assassination of the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, in May 1991. Since then it is being renewed every two years. Under the UAP Act, the Tribunal must confirm the ban within six months

Hindu, 11 November 2008

Tough fight ahead in Dantewada

DANTEWADA: A tough fight is in the offing in this Assembly segment in Chhattisgarh, where the election is being fought on the issue of naxalism like elsewhere in the Bastar division. Voters believe that the contest is essentially between the Congress and the Communist Party of India, but there seems to be support for the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Salwa Judum-affected rehabilitation camps

Hindu, 12 November 2008

Bastar villagers yearn for home

GEEDAM (BASTAR): Rama Ichcham still remembers the day when his elder brother was hacked to death by naxalite sympathisers in his village in Satva in Dantewada district. The victim had refused to accept the diktat of the naxalites and had been receiving threats for some time. But one day the worst fears of the family came true and he was killed brutally. This was followed by a series of threats to the three other

male members of the family, including Rama Ichcham. Left with no choice, the entire family shifted to a Salwa Judum rehabilitation camp set up by the government at Kasoli in Geedam, leaving behind land and property. While some members shifted to the Sitalanka camp in Dantewada, Rama stayed back here after he was made the special police officer and trained in use of arms. Within days all 100 families from Satva had left

Hindu, 13 November 2008

Centre seeks reports on communal violence

NEW DELHI: In what may be seen as the groundwork for imposing a ban on the Sangh Parivar outfits, including the Bajrang Dal, the Centre on Wednesday sought reports from all State governments on recent incidents of communal violence and the organisations suspected to be involved in them. In a two-page letter sent to the State governments and Union Territories, the Union Home Ministry has asked them to furnish reports on action they had taken against such organisations and individuals

Daily Excelsior, 13 November 2008

Vote without any fear: CEC

SRINAGAR, Nov 12: Urging voters to cast their votes without any fear, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, N Gopaldaswami today said nobody can prevent people against taking part in the democratic process. Talking to mediapersons after day-long meeting with officials and leaders of different political parties here this evening, Mr Gopaldaswami said, "we will provide secure and conducive atmosphere to voters so that he or she can vote fearlessly in the polls."

Hindu, 14 November 2008

India will be most populous by 2050: UN report

NEW DELHI: India is projected to be the most populous country by 2050, overtaking China, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) said in a report released on Wednesday. Its population, now 118.6 crore, is projected to be 165.8 crore in 2050 as against 140.8 crore projected for China. India's population growth rate is projected at 1.5 per cent during 2005-10 compared to 0.6 per cent for China

Asian Age, 14 November 2008

1st phase today amid Maoist threat

Raipur, Nov. 13: One of India's youngest states, Chhattisgarh, goes to the polls on Friday to elect 39 of the state's 90 legislators in the first of the two-phase elections amid threats from Maoist rebels. About 6.4 million of the state's 15.2 million voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in 8,883 balloting centres to decide the fortunes of 379 candidates, including 36 women, in the first phase. This is the state's second Assembly election after it came into existence in November 2000 after splitting from Madhya Pradesh

Hindu, 15 November 2008

INDIA LEAVES ITS FOOTPRINTS ON MOON

BANGALORE: 'Just as we had promised, we have given India the moon,' said G. Madhavan Nair, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, after the Moon Impact Probe (MIP) onboard Chandrayaan-1 successfully ejected and landed on the lunar surface on Friday night. With the tricolour painted on its sides the probe marked India's presence on the Moon and put India in the elite club of Russia, the U.S., Japan and the European Space Agency, which have impacted probes on the Moon

Hindu, 15 November 2008

IAF officer killed in naxalite attack on copter

RAIPUR: A non-commissioned officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF) was killed and a Squadron Leader injured when suspected naxalites attacked their helicopter as soon as it took off from Bijapur in South Bastar. The helicopter was airlifting electronic voting machines and polling staff when it was attacked

Hindu, 15 November 2008

55% turnout of voters in Chhattisgarh

NEW DELHI: Nearly 55 per cent of the 63.97 lakh electors turned out on Friday to cast their votes in the first phase of polling in 39 constituencies spread over 10 districts in Chhattisgarh to elect a new Assembly in the State. Briefing reporters here, Deputy Election Commissioner Jayaprakash said there were 20 incidents of violence or disturbances in the polling in the State. Other incidents were reported from Bijapur and Durg districts

Times of India, 15 November 2008

Lt-Col Purohit gave RDX for Samjhauta blast: ATS to court

NASHIK: Serving Army officer Lt-Col P S Purohit procured 60 kg of RDX from Jammu and Kashmir in the year 2006, a part of which is suspected to have been used in Samjautha Express train explosion and Malegaon blasts, Maharashtra police told a court here on Saturday. Seeking extension of police custody of Purohit, special prosecutor for Maharashtra ATS Ajay Misar told the court that a witness in Malegaon blast told ATS that Purohit had claimed he had 60 kgs of RDX in his possession which he had got from Jammu and Kashmir

Asian Age, 15 November 2008

2 Maoist blasts mar C'garh Phase 1

Raipur, Nov. 14: India's crucial state elections began on Friday with tens of thousands of people defying Maoist threats to vote in the first phase of polling in Chhattisgarh amid widespread violence blamed on the rebels. Though only four policemen were injured, in two separate places when the Maoists exploded landmines, the government got a taste of the reach of the militants who had ordered people to boycott the elections. The Election Commission said up to 60 per cent of the 6.4 million people eligible to vote on Friday exercised their franchise to choose mainly between the two top contenders - the ruling BJP and the Congress

Daily Excelsior, 15 November 2008

No postponement of polls: EC

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, Nov 14: The Election Commission today rejected National Conference demand for postponement of Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir in view of snowfall, saying the first phase of the elections would be held as scheduled. "No decision has been taken by the Commission for postponement for first phase of polling in the State (due on November 17) and contingency plans are there for transporting poll personnel", Deputy Election Commissioner R Bhattacharya told reporters while replying a question on demand by NC to defer the polls in view of unseasonal heavy snowfall in Kashmir valley

Hindu, 16 November 2008

Purohit had 60 kg of RDX: ATS

Nashik: Lieutenant-Colonel Prasad Shrikant Purohit, a serving Army officer and a key suspect in the Malegaon blast of September 29, had 60 kg of RDX in his possession

while he was in the Army's Deolali camp in 2006, Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) special prosecutor Ajay Misar told the Nashik court here on Friday. He was seeking Purohit's remand extension. Calling Purohit a 'mastermind,' Mr. Misar argued that portions of the RDX were used in Malegaon and the Samjhauta Express blast of 2007

Hindu, 20 November 2008

Politics helped Hindutva terrorists

NEW DELHI: Authorities in Madhya Pradesh had evidence that members of Abhinav Bharat (not the charitable trust by the same name) - the Hindutva terror group responsible for a string of recent bombings targeting Muslims - were preparing for a nationwide bombing campaign as early as 2002. However, government sources told The Hindu, political pressures allowed members of the terror cell, including two suspects now being investigated by the Maharashtra Police's Anti-Terrorism Squad, to walk free. In December 2002, police in Madhya Pradesh discovered an improvised explosive device at Bhopal's railway station. A second IED was found exactly a year later in Bhopal's Lamba Khera neighbourhood. Both devices were made with commercial TNT cased in a four-inch tube-well pipe, linked to a detonator controlled both by a cell phone and a quartz alarm clock

Hindu, 20 November 2008

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Hindu, 20 November 2008

India could take lead in anti-piracy diplomacy

New Delhi: The dramatic sinking of a pirate 'mother ship' by the Indian Navy on the high seas some 300 nautical miles off the coast of Oman has underlined not just India's ability to protect the security of its own - and international - shipping in the region but also its willingness to step up to the crease while other navies with greater capabilities might be watching from a safe distance