

Hindu, 1 September 2008

Jammu agitation ends

SRINAGAR: The two-month long agitation in Jammu over the Amarnath land issue ended on Sunday following an agreement between the government and the Shri Amarnath Yatra Sangarsh Samiti (SAYSS), which spearheaded the stir. The compromise formula, clinched in the early hours of Sunday, was evolved after hectic deliberations between Governor N.N. Vohra's four-member panel and the Samiti members. Both sides had held three rounds of talks and the fourth one that started late on Saturday evening and continued till 4 a.m. on Sunday morning, proved to be decisive.

Hindu, 1 September 2008

Move to disrespect sentiments in Kashmir: PDP

SRINAGAR: People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti has said the 'unilateral decision' on land use for Amarnath Yatra is a move to disrespect the popular sentiments in Kashmir. She felt a decision on this sensitive matter should have been taken only with consensus and after consultation with the Kashmir Coordination Committee and civil society here. National Conference patron Farooq Abdullah termed it a welcome development. He said that there should not be apprehensions about this. The Kashmir Coordination Committee rejected the pact. 'We do not accept it,' said its spokesman Massarat Alam

Hindu, 1 September 2008

Singur has a solution, says Governor

Kolkata: West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi has urged all parties to the Singur issue to consider the social costs of their positions. In a letter dated August 29 to Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, he suggested that a mediator with no political or industrial affiliations be invited to go into her demand for return of acquired land and give its findings. He urged Ms. Banerjee to suggest some names for this and assured her that he would request the government to respond positively. The letter, which was released on Sunday, said 'the grace of accommodation is not unavailable in the most obdurate of situations and its value becomes inestimable when it comes before rather than after the situations have deepened into an irremediable crises, in which the weak and the voiceless suffer the most.'

Hindu, 1 September 2008

More prayer houses attacked in Orissa

BHUBANESWAR: Violence was reported from more areas in Koraput district in southern Orissa on Sunday, even as the situation was limping back to normality in the riot-hit Kandhamal district. Eight prayer houses were damaged in Kundra area of Koraput during the day, police said. Violence erupted in the district following a clash between two groups in Jeypore town on Saturday and five churches were damaged. Curfew was clamped and it is still in force

Hindu, 1 September 2008

Opinion: The wider lessons from J&K (K. Shankar Bajpai)

The J&K crisis illustrates both the extreme care that our nationhood calls for and the

extraordinary weaknesses that are actually at work. The arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra have worked satisfactorily for decades. Doubtless there is room for improvement - most things in India need it even more - but the notion of achieving it by letting the land for more facilities to be managed by the temple trust was not only unnecessary but so fraught with communal explosiveness that anyone with the slightest appreciation of the sensitivities involved would have recognised the dangers. That, in our secular state, a Governor could become the head of a religious body is bad enough; that the temporary land transfer was processed under the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Government as well as the latest Congress-led one only underlines the level of thinking in all parties, and how shoddy political one-upmanship buries the national interest: each imagined gaining votes among Jammu Hindus, oblivious to the repercussions in the Valley

Asian Age, 1 September 2008

Vohra talks to separatists

Aug. 31: Jammu and Kashmir governor N.N. Vohra is reported to have held talks with senior separatist leaders lodged at tourism cottages at Chachmashahi on the Zabarwan foothills and in other makeshift detention centres here after their arrest last week. He has also met or talked on the telephone with others left unscathed, as well as with mainstream politicians in an effort to defuse the situation. Senior government and intelligence officials have also met some of these leaders separately over the past week

Asian Age, 1 September 2008

ISI threat more after Musharraf exit: NSA

Aug. 31: National security adviser M.K. Narayanan has said that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence had become "hyperactive" in recent months, and he feared it would become a bigger menace with President Pervez Musharraf's departure as the civilian leadership might not be able to keep it under a tight leash. Mr Narayanan said in an interview to Karan Thapar on India Tonight that the India-Pakistan relationship and issues pertaining to Kashmir "are not easiest of the things." He added: "We have seen a fair degree of progress during Musharraf's regime and several half-cooked and three-quarter-cooked ideas are in the pipeline... But to take them forward, we need great statesmanship and courage."

Hindu, 2 September 2008

Violence unabated in Orissa

BHUBANESWAR: Even as the Orissa government on Monday claimed that the situation in Kandhamal was under control, incidents of communal violence were reported from the district during the day. Those protesting against the killing of VHP leader Swami Lakshmanananda blocked the roads between Tikabali and Chakapada, and Tikabali and Baburia and burnt down at least 20 houses belonging to Christian families in two villages

Hindu, 2 September 2008

Supreme Court upholds MCOCA provisions

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday upheld certain provisions of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes Act (MCOCA) empowering the State to intercept telephones and using them as evidence in organised crimes, including terrorist acts. A

three-judge Bench comprising Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, Justice R.V. Raveendran and Justice Mukundakam Sharma set aside a judgment of the Bombay High Court quashing these provisions in film financier Bharat Shah's case

Hindu, 3 September 2008

e-mail authors identified, claim Rajasthan police

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan police on Tuesday claimed that the terror e-mail sent by the Indian Mujahideen to media houses a day after the May 13 serial blasts in Jaipur was authored by Abu Bashir and Tauqeer alias Abdul Subhan - allegedly involved in the Ahmedabad blasts as well - and was sent under the supervision of the prime suspect, Shahbaz Hussain. While Abu Bashir, a madrasa teacher, was arrested by the Gujarat police at his native village in Azamgarh district of Uttar Pradesh, Tauqeer - a Mumbai-based computer professional - is reportedly absconding. Shahbaz Hussain, arrested from Lucknow on August 23, is in the custody of the Rajasthan police

Indian Express, 4 September 2008

Why is Mamata so inflexible towards Tata project?

Kolkata, September 3: Why is Mamata Banerjee so inflexible in her opposition to the Tata project? If one answer lies in her playing opposition politics, another has to do with the 21 groups which have jumped onto her stage. Called the People's Secular Democratic Front, this alliance, The Indian Express has found, is a group of parties with little presence in the state, NGOs and Naxalite groups with agendas that couldn't have been more dissimilar

Indian Express, 4 September 2008

Bengal in reverse gear, no Nano launch

Kolkata, September 2 It's official now. West Bengal will miss its date with the first Nano - the World's cheapest car that was to roll out of the Tata Motors Singur plant this October-November. Citing the indefinite blockade - by Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress - and the 'hostile situation,' Tata Motors today declared suspension of work and announced it was 'evaluating alternate options' for manufacturing its Rs 1-lakh Nano car at 'other company facilities.' And in what rattled the state Government, it added: 'A detailed plan to relocate the plant and machinery to an alternate site is under preparation.'

Indian Express, 4 September 2008

Terror: Gujarat ad 'alerts' people

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Government released a full-page advertisement in local dailies on Tuesday listing giveaway 'signs' that could alert people to potential Terrorists, and warning them against what to watch out for. Bhagyesh Jha, Director, Information Department, which issued the advertisement, and P P Pandey, Additional Director General of Police (Intelligence), said all the suggestions were based on 'intelligence inputs'

Hindu, 5 September 2008

Yatra won't be permitted: Orissa

New Delhi: The Orissa government on Thursday assured the Supreme Court that it would

not allow VHP leader Praveen Togadia's yatra on Friday or any other day carrying the ashes of Swami Lakshmanananda Saraswati, who was killed in his ashram in Kandhamal district on August 23. A Bench consisting of Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justices P. Sathasivam and J.M. Panchal recorded the assurance and asked the government to maintain law and order and ensure that no untoward incident took place in the riot-hit district. The court asked the State to file a report and posted the matter for September 11

Hindu, 5 September 2008

Tape exposes Mirwaiz-Geelani tension; Tehreek approached Hizb

SRINAGAR: Strains among secessionist leaders in Jammu and Kashmir have reached the breaking point in the wake of a wiretap operation which shows that hardline Islamists have been lobbying terrorists for help to intimidate their more moderate counterparts. Tehreek-i-Hurriyat leader Masrat Alam Bhat, the August 21 police wiretap shows, complained to the Hizb ul-Mujahideen's Pakistan-based chief that efforts to accelerate the pace of anti-India mass mobilisation were being sabotaged by a group of spoilers seeking dialogue with the Union government

Hindu, 7 September 2008

Some signs of breakthrough on Singur

KOLKATA: There were some signs - though rather nebulous - of a possible breakthrough, after the second round of talks between the West Bengal government and the Trinamool Congress here on Saturday, over the Singur car project land issue. 'Both panels had an opportunity to probe into greater details of proposals for a land-based rehabilitation scheme in and around the Singur project site,' Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi, who chaired the talks, said later

Daily Excelsior, 7 September 2008

Lashkar 'Div Commdr' killed: Youth killed in police firing amid shutdown in Valley

SRINAGAR, Sept 6: One civilian got killed and three injured when a mob clashed with Police and CRPF in the Mirwaiz stronghold of Nowhatta in this capital city even as Kashmir valley observed yet another shutdown on a call given by Hurriyat Coordination Committee. Army has, meanwhile, killed a top wanted "Divisional Commander" of Lashkar-e-Toiba in an encounter in Sopore area of North Kashmir. Most of the Government and private offices, shops, business establishments, banks and educational institutions in the Valley today remained closed on the separatist Hurriyat Coordination Committee's call. Commercial transport was off the road and attendance was thin in few offices which had opened at different district headquarters. HCC had called for a shutdown and asked the Kashmiris to register their mass protest against alleged atrocities, detention of a number of separatist activists besides revocation of extra-ordinary powers enjoyed by armed forces in the State

Indian Express, 8 September 2008

End of Singur issue faces problem with Mamata's objections

Kolkata, September 7:: A solution to the Singur issue ran into rough weather when Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee raised certain objections after a consensus

was understood to have been reached between her party and West Bengal Government, a senior minister said

Times of India, 8 September 2008

Opinion: Secession Is No Solution (Sumit Ganguly)

Though the situation in Kashmir remains fraught, the immediate crisis has subsided. Amidst calls from otherwise thoughtful and responsible commentators about granting Kashmir the right of self-determination one needs to carefully examine the meaning and the case for self-determination. To begin with, international law does not equate self-determination with secession. The requirements of self-determination may be met through the broad provisions of democracy and federalism. More specifically, ethnic groups may be granted varying degrees of linguistic and cultural rights and programmes of positive discrimination. Their demands may also be satisfied through particular mechanisms for political autonomy and devolution

Daily Excelsior, 8 September 2008

Pak ultras asked to stay despite completing tenure

JAMMU, Sept 7: Pakistan based leadership of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Hizbul Mujahideen have directed their cadre including the commanders, who have completed their tenure in the State, to stay put in their areas unless they get green signal from across the border. An intercept revealed that foreign mercenaries of LeT, HM and JeM, mostly hailing from Pakistan and PoK had been sending messages across the border seeking their commanders' permission to return after completing the tenure, ranging between one and a half year to two years, assigned to them at the time of sending them to the State for intensifying militancy

Hindu, 9 September 2008

Impeach Calcutta High Court judge, says CJI

New Delhi: Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan has recommended to the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that Justice Soumitra Sen of the Calcutta High Court be removed for misappropriating temporarily Rs. 33 lakh deposited in the court by one of the parties to a dispute. Responding to the Chief Justice's letter, which was forwarded to the Law Ministry, Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj said on Monday that the government decided to approach Parliament for impeachment of Justice Sen

Hindu, 9 September 2008

EC holds talks on J&K Assembly election

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India on Monday convened a meeting of national parties and State recognised parties of Jammu and Kashmir to discuss issues relating to the forthcoming Assembly election and obtained their views separately. The State is under Governor's rule and the election is to be held before January 9, 2009

Daily Excelsior, 9 September 2008

100 injured on 3rd day of clashes in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Sept 8: Ten persons sustained gunshot wounds in three separate incidents of Police/CRPF firing on the third consecutive day of clashes in this capital city today.

Ninety others, including 48 Police and CRPF personnel, sustained injuries in other ding-dong clashes even as Kashmir valley observed yet another shutdown on a call issued by the Hurriyat Coordination Committee (HCC). Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has, meanwhile, contradicted the National Security Advisor's statement on the killing of the separatist leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz and threatened to launch a movement of voluntary arrests if the Government failed to stop its crackdown on the people who had participated in recent rallies and demonstrations

Daily Excelsior, 9 September 2008

Life returns to normal in Valley

SRINAGAR : Life in Kashmir valley returned to normal today with opening of shops and business establishments which remained closed for three days following a strike call given by separatists coordination committee. Government offices, educational institutions, banks, courts and markets opened in Srinagar and all other towns of the valley this morning, official sources said. However, these establishments remained closed in Anantnag district and parts of downtown Srinagar in protest against the alleged highhandedness of security forces, they said

Hindu, 10 September 2008

Editorial: Respite in Singur

The withdrawal of the siege by activists of the Trinamool Congress of the Tata Motors factory in Singur marks a tentative first step towards a satisfactory resolution of the issues relating to land acquisition and compensation that have plagued the Nano car project right from the start. That the agitators who had been protesting for two weeks in front of the factory complex, threatening to derail the car project of the Tatas, have agreed to suspend their sit-in is in itself a welcome development. But the limited agreement reached between West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee in the presence of West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi will need to be built upon if normal work on the car project is to resume. After repeatedly upping the ante, Ms Banerjee mellowed only after the Tata Group chairman, Ratan Tata, threatened to pull out of Singur, and the factory employees continued to stay away from work

Hindu, 10 September 2008

Opinion: An Islamist's resurrection in Kashmir (Praveen Swami)

Tehreek-i-Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has emerged as the principal secessionist voice in Jammu and Kashmir. What does it portend? Syed Ali Shah Geelani woke up shortly after four in the morning and turned on the radio - the sole news source in the beautiful but sparse mountain cottage which briefly served as his prison last month. Half an hour later, an attendant who brought tea heard Kashmir's Islamist patriarch sobbing quietly. News was coming in about an encounter near Jammu, which had claimed the lives of three terrorists, three soldiers and five civilians. 'So many people have given their lives for the movement I lead,' Mr. Geelani said, 'I will have no answers to give them in the hereafter should I falter now.'

Indian Express, 10 September 2008

Editorial: Judges and justice

Under any circumstance, a Supreme Court chief justice's recommendation that a senior judge be removed from 'service' is an arresting development. But Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan's formal letter in this regard to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh comes at a particularly piquant juncture. The case of impropriety in the conduct of Soumitra Sen, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, has been revealed amidst a few incidents regarding other senior judges that, left sufficiently unaddressed, could imperil the judiciary's credibility. The extreme step of kickstarting the possibly long-drawn impeachment process also highlights the judiciary's lack of options to deal with such cases

Daily Excelsior, 10 September 2008

EC keen for early elections in J&K: To meet CEO, CS, DGP today

NEW DELHI, Sept 9: The Election Commission will hold a crucial meeting here tomorrow afternoon with top bureaucrats and Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Jammu and Kashmir to take their assessment and preparedness for Assembly elections in the State amidst indications that poll process in J&K could be completed in four phases by the end of November this year. Authoritative sources told the Excelsior that full Election Commission will meet CEO J&K B R Sharma, Chief Secretary S S Kapur and Director General of Police (DGP) Kuldeep Khoda at 3 pm tomorrow to know their assessment of the situation and preparations for holding Assembly elections in the State

Indian Express, 11 September 2008

Helipads to roads: 800 cr for Naxal war

New Delhi, September 10 A fortnight after raising a 10,000-strong special anti-Naxal force, Combat Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA), the Centre is ready with a Rs 800-crore package to provide security and mobility to local police to take the fight into the bastion of Left-wing extremists. This year alone, at least 470 people, including 160 security personnel have been killed in Naxalite violence. Last year, of the 650 dead, 218 were security personnel. A five-point agenda from the Home Ministry comes up for approval before the Cabinet tomorrow

Hindu, 12 September 2008

Chandrayaan-I passes endurance test

Bangalore: The lunar craft to be used in India's first unmanned mission to the moon, Chandrayaan-I, successfully passed a test for its endurance in harsh space environment, crossing a major milestone in preparation for the odyssey expected some time next month. The two-week vacuum test to evaluate the thermal design of the spacecraft and to verify its endurance in the harsh environment of space has just been completed at the ISRO Satellite Centre here, sources in the space agency said. 'The test was satisfactory,' an ISRO official told PTI on Thursday

Hindu, 13 September 2008

2 killed in police firing in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: At least two people were killed and nearly 100 others, including Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik, injured in a fresh outbreak of violence in the Valley on Friday. As part of a protest plan by the Hurriyat-

sponsored Coordination Committee, thousands of people took to the streets after Friday prayers in most parts of Kashmir. They raised pro-freedom and anti-India slogans, demanding 'right to self-determination.' But the protests took a violent turn in Shopian in South Kashmir and Baramulla in north Kashmir, besides in the Maisuma area here. The police bid to stop a procession in Shopian town by bursting teargas shells led to clashes and the protesters threw stones. When the police opened fire, Riyaz Ahmad Ganai was killed. Scores of other protesters were injured and many of them taken to hospitals here. The condition of at least three of them is stated to be critical

Hindu, 13 September 2008

Opinion: The hunt for the Indian Mujahideen's 'al-Arbi'(Praveen Swami)

A profile of the top bomb-maker Abdul Subhan Qureshi. Less than forty eight hours before over thirty bombs tore Ahmedabad apart in July, Abdul Subhan Usman Qureshi caught an overnight train to Mumbai - and disappeared. Police forces across India, backed by the Intelligence Bureau, have made the hunt for the short, thin built man who the Ahmedabad bombers knew by the code-name 'Kasim', their top priority. Based on the interrogation of Shahbaz Husain, a Lucknow businessman alleged to have led the cell responsible for a string of urban bombings carried out by a Students Islamic Movement of India front organisation calling itself the Indian Mujahideen, investigators are now certain that Qureshi trained the bomb-makers who fabricated the bombs used in the terror offensive

Asian Age, 14 September 2008

Terror Rising

Sept. 13: At least 30 people were killed and over 100 others injured after bombs went off in the space of 40 minutes in New Delhi on Saturday evening. The Indian Mujahideen, a front of the Students' Islamic Movement of India (Simi), claimed responsibility for the blasts. The Union home ministry has issued an advisory to all states and Union territories asking them to remain vigilant and step up security following the serial blasts in New Delhi. The authorities, however, confirmed only 18 deaths till the time of going to press. There were five explosions in all. The first took place at Gaffar Market in central Delhi's Karol Bagh area at 6.10 pm. The second blast took place outside the Barakhamba Road Metro station near Connaught Place. The third and fourth blasts took place in M-Block market of South Delhi's posh Greater Kailash Part-I area. The last blasts then took place in Central Park in New Delhi's commercial district of Connaught Place

Asian Age, 14 September 2008

Bashir Delhi stay info may be key

Sept. 13: This is not the first time Simi has tried to strike terror in the national capital. Earlier the strike being planned by the banned terror outfit were in Central Secretariat and Sena Bhavan in Delhi. Simi activists arrested by the Delhi police had confessed to their involvement in planting of IED in North Block and their role behind the twin blasts at a cycle stand in Sena Bhavan in South Block in 2001. The Gujarat police had claimed that the Indian Mujahideen "is another name of Simi". The fresh email sent by the Indian Mujahideen has reportedly come from Chembur in Mumbai

Hindu, 14 September 2008

20 killed as 5 bomb explosions rock Delhi

NEW DELHI: Twenty people were killed and about 100 injured in a series of five bomb explosions that rocked busy marketplaces in the Capital on Saturday. The first explosion took place at Karol Bagh at 6.10 p.m.; two bombs were triggered at Connaught Place; and two more in the bustling M-Block market of Greater Kailash. Initial investigations revealed that the improvised explosive devices were configured using ammonium nitrate. Timer devices were used for synchronising the explosions that occurred between 6.10 and 6.40 p.m. Eight persons were killed at Connaught Place and a live bomb was defused outside the Regal cinema in the heart of the Capital. Two more bombs were found at Central Park at Connaught Place and at India Gate. In an e-mail to the media, the terror outfit, Indian Mujahideen, claimed responsibility for the explosions

Asian Age, 14 September 2008

Editorial: Don't let terrorists break India's unity

In a few days we will probably have a better idea of the damage caused by Saturday evening's serial terror blasts in three important markets in the nation's capital. We should by then also be able to make some sense of who the perpetrators might be, looking at the nature of the materials used and by the modus operandi of the terrorists. Late night reports suggested that up to 20 people had lost their lives and more than 90 others were injured. Whether this is a coincidence or not, the Saturday blasts bear a striking resemblance to those which took place in New Delhi around Diwali three years ago. Those had occurred on the same day of the week and approximately at the same early evening hour. This might perhaps indicate that terrorists expect ordinary citizens to be out shopping in large numbers on weekend evenings. But whoever they may be, the executors of evil designs against innocent people must be warned that they will be exposed in the not too distant future. Already, several leading dramatis personae of previous terror attacks on prominent Indian cities are finding the going tough

Times of India, 14 September 2008

J&K may see fresh influx of bomb-makers

NEW DELHI: Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed and Bangl-adesh-based Harkat-ul-Jehad Islami (HuJI) are collaborating to raise groups of bombmakers to be pushed into J&K, in what should scale up the terror risk facing the country. Intelligence reports said that according to an agreement worked out between the two anti-India terror outfits recently, JeM is planning "mobilisation of militants in Kashmir to carry out sabotage activities to turn the attention of the rest of the world from Pakistan to India". JeM will bear all the costs of training jihadis in Bangladesh

Hindu, 14 September 2008

Terror mail threatens to 'stop India's heartbeat'

NEW DELHI: In the fifth in a series of manifestos issued by the Indian Mujahideen since it began a series of nationwide urban bombings in 2007, the terrorist group has said Saturday's serial bombings were intended to 'stop the heart of India from beating.' 'We the Indian Mujahideen, ask Allah, the Almighty, to accept from us these nine explosions which were planned to be executed in the holy month of Ramadan,' states a 13-page

manifesto and video slide-show e-mailed by the Indian Mujahideen to media in the midst of the bombings. Charging Indians with harbouring 'never ending hostile hatred in your hearts against Islam and its people,' the manifesto says that the bombings are intended to 'prove to you the ability and potential of [the] Indian Mujahideen to assault any city of India at any time.' It promises that more terror attacks will follow 'to punish you even before your earlier wounds have healed.'

Hindu, 15 September 2008

Vital clues gathered, say Delhi police

NEW DELHI: A day after a series of five blasts shook the Capital leaving behind a bloody trail, the Delhi police claimed to have gathered vital clues and said they were confident of solving the case soon. The police suspect that Saturday's blasts were masterminded by the same group that was behind the recent Ahmedabad blasts, but were carried out with local assistance. Many teams have been formed to pursue leads

Hindu, 15 September 2008

POTA if voted to power: Advani

BANGALORE: India can no longer ignore the fact that a new and disturbing phase in the terrorist war in this country had begun with a wider spread of 'local roots' even though terrorism's 'global network continues to be the mastermind of this war, the Bharatiya Janata Party's prime ministerial candidate L.K. Advani said here on Sunday. Speaking to party delegates on the third and closing day of the BJP national executive committee meeting here, Mr. Advani said 'firm anti-terror action' would be high on the priority list of his government's agenda, if voted to power. The repealed Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) would be brought back

Hindu, 15 September 2008

Wireless Internet comes in handy for terrorists

Mumbai: With the latest terror e-mail sent before the Delhi blasts on Saturday, the kitty of such e-mails is only expanding for the Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS). The senders of these mails are still unknown and at large. Terrorist outfit Indian Mujahideen, an offshoot of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), reportedly sent the e-mail to television channels from the address al_arbi_delhi@yahoo.com. It was traced to a firm in Chembur, Mumbai.

Hindu, 16 September 2008

Intelligence failure to blame: Lalu

NEW DELHI: Two days after serial blasts rocked the Capital, the Congress tried to put a brave face on the incident even as uneasy swipes were made at the functioning of the Home Ministry under Shivraj Patil. Several leaders held discussions with Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Monday. While Congress leaders Veerappa Moily and Margaret Alva met Ms. Gandhi and discussed the spate of attacks on churches and prayer halls in some districts of Karnataka, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Defence Minister A.K. Antony, party general secretary Digvijay Singh and political secretary to the Congress president Ahmed Patel met Ms. Gandhi separately

Hindu, 16 September 2008

Hunt on for 5 Indian Mujahideen cadre

NEW DELHI: The Delhi police have launched a hunt for five members of the core group of terror outfit Indian Mujahideen that was allegedly involved in the recent Ahmedabad blasts. The police are also trying to get the custody of Abul Bashar Qasmi, the alleged mastermind behind the blasts in Ahmedabad, for interrogation. Abul Bashar was arrested at his native place at Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh following the Ahmedabad serial blasts. Apart from him, 18 others have been arrested in that case so far. During interrogation, Abul Bashar had purportedly disclosed that he had stayed in New Delhi from July 24 to 26 and met some locals. Acting on the information, the Delhi police are trying to track down those who had given him shelter

Daily Excelsior, 16 September 2008

Pak supporting terror modules: Antony

NEW DELHI, Sept 15: Charging Pakistan with supporting terror modules operating in India, Defence Minister A K Antony today said it was a "serious" matter and the country will defeat the designs of the destabilising forces. "Militants are getting support from across the border and it is a fact. Already the Home Minister (Shivraj Patil) and others in the Government have expressed their opinion on this. It is a matter of serious concern," Antony told reporters here on the sidelines of a seminar by a Defence thinktank

Hindu, 17 September 2008

Editorial: In search of an enemy

The attacks on Christian prayer halls in Karnataka, following close on the heels of attacks on churches and Christian institutions in Orissa, reveal the hand of organised groups operating with a sinister political agenda. While the violent incidents in Orissa were triggered by the murder of an anti-conversion Hindu activist, Swami Lakshmanananda, and in at least some cases passed off as spontaneous, the attacks in Karnataka have all the markings of a systematic, planned assault on the minority community. The coordinated violence, spread across several districts, could not have been the handiwork of stray elements working in isolation. Even in Orissa, organised Hindutva groups were quick to hijack the agitation protesting the killing of the swami; for days together, they terrorised the minority community in the communally sensitive district of Kandhamal. The circumstances of the swami's killing, as also the identity and motives of the killers, are far from clear even now: indeed preliminary investigations point to the hand of a Maoist fringe group, calling itself the People's Liberation Revolutionary Group. However, for the Hindutva elements in Orissa or in Karnataka, a little-known, mostly invisible fringe group is a worthless target. In keeping with their own communal politics, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal, which have a history of confrontation with Christian missionary groups in Orissa, have sought to blame Christian community leaders for the killing, and held up the subsequent violence as retribution

Indian Express, 17 September 2008

Set up federal agency to deal with terror: Mooly panel

New Delhi, September 16: The second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) on Tuesday recommended comprehensive anti-terror legislations and establishment of a

federal agency to investigate terrorist acts in the country. In its eighth report, the ARC has also said no person accused of an offence punishable under the National Security Act (NSA) should be released on bail

Asian Age, 17 September 2008

Opinion: Kosi's chilling history: No lessons ever learnt (Inder Malhotra)

Judging by what the luckless seven districts of the state have gone through since August 18, it seems that little has changed in 55 years. Or else there would not have been the plethora of complaints about the "tardiness" and "inadequacy" of the governmental and administrative response to a tragedy of huge magnitude. This despite the fact that between 1953 and the start of 2008 there have been several devastating floods caused by the same wayward river. According to several reliable reports, neither Patna nor New Delhi were fully aware of the flood's frightening dimensions. At the Centre, precious days were wasted in the mistaken belief that the recently-established Disaster Management Board would be able to deal with the problem. Only when the error became manifest was the Army called in and naval boats and divers mobilised. Even then, the relief effort was far from satisfactory. There was a constant lament about the shortage of boats. The other side of the same coin was that in several cases, families precariously perched on the roofs of their flooded huts, simply refused evacuation

Times of India, 17 September 2008

On terror, India a flailing state, say experts

NEW DELHI: In May 2008, Harvard economist Lant Pritchett used a phrase to describe India: "a flailing state". And though the American developmental economist was talking in a slightly different context, top political scientists in India feel that the description neatly fits in with the government's shoddy response to terrorism. According to dictionary.com, 'flailing' means to move vigorously or erratically or thrash about: such as arms flailing helplessly in the water. Political scientist Pratap Bhanu Mehta says the flailing description is accurate. "India has enormous reservoir of state capacity, but its arms and legs are going in different directions. The internal organization of the state, its relationship with its different parts and its ability to give them direction are weak," says Mehta, president, Centre for Policy Research, a thinktank

Daily Excelsior, 17 September 2008

SIMI cadre trained in Lashkar camps: Baseer, Nachen operate in-tandem with LeT comdrs

JAMMU, Sept 16: A number of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants, arrested in different parts of the State during last couple of years especially the Pakistanis and Pakistan trained local cadre, had already disclosed during their questioning in the past few months that top LeT brass, based in Pakistan, Middle East, PoK and Kashmir were having close links with SIMI and even training their cadre in triggering blasts. According to information available with Intelligence agencies, which was passed on to concerned agencies in New Delhi from time to time, suggested that Saqib Nachen and C M Baseer, two top SIMI operatives, were frequently shuttling between Middle East and Pakistan developing close links with LeT and Jamat-ul-Dawa's top brass and securing training for their cadre in the LeT camps

Daily Excelsior, 19 September 2008

Early cross-LoC trade unlikely

NEW DELHI, Sept 18: Early launch of cross-LoC trade appears unlikely as Pakistan is yet to confirm any dates for the visit of a business delegation here from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir for discussions on the issue. As per the understanding between India and Pakistan, the Chamber of Commerce of two parts of Jammu and Kashmir were to meet and discuss modalities for trade on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route so that the commerce could begin next month. For the purpose, it was agreed that a delegation of Muzaffarabad Chamber of Commerce would visit Jammu and Srinagar to hold discussions with their counterparts, sources said here today

Hindu, 20 September 2008

2 terrorists shot dead in Delhi

NEW DELHI: Two suspected terrorists, including a key Indian Mujahideen functionary who played a major role in the Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and the recent Delhi serial blasts, were gunned down in an encounter with the Special Cell of the Delhi police at Batla House in South Delhi on Friday. Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma, a highly decorated officer, who led the operation, was killed in the encounter. The Special Cell, which was in touch with its Gujarat and Rajasthan counterparts, received a tip-off that Mohammad Bashir, alias Atiq, of the Indian Mujahideen involved in the Ahmedabad blasts, had been living with some other suspected militants in a flat at L-18 Batla House

Hindu, 20 September 2008

End attacks on Christians: Centre

NEW DELHI: A day after issuing an advisory to the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled Karnataka, the Union government on Friday issued a strong advisory to the State government and Orissa, saying the violence against the minority Christian community was a breach of constitutional provisions and the law of the land. Though Home Secretary Madhukar Gupta's Friday advisory did not mention that it was invoking Article 355, sources in the government pointed out that the 'constitutional requirement' was available to the Centre under Article 355 that enshrined on it the 'duty to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.'

Hindu, 20 September 2008

Killed Indian Mujahideen men provided terror backbone

NEW DELHI: Investigators believe that the three terrorists shot in New Delhi's Jamia Nagar on Friday were key actors in an Uttar Pradesh-based network which constituted the logistical backbone of the Indian Mujahideen's nationwide operations. Police have identified the Indian Mujahideen operatives killed in the shootout as Azamgarh residents Mohammad Bashir and Mohammad Fakruddin. A third man who was injured has been identified as Saif Ahmad, also a resident of Azamgarh

Indian Express, 20 September 2008

Arrested militants confess role in Delhi blasts: Police

New Delhi, September 20: Claiming a major breakthrough in last week's serial blasts in the national capital, Delhi police on Saturday said two of those arrested after Friday's encounter have confessed to their involvement in the Terror act having planted explosives in two places. Acting on a tip off, police on Friday night arrested a suspected militant Zeeshan from the premises of a news channel where he had gone to give an interview. With his arrest, police had caught two militants allegedly involved in the blasts

Indian Express, 20 September 2008

Editorial: Internal insecurity

Friday's gun battle between security forces and terrorists in Delhi's Jamia Nagar must force a shift in general and political thinking on internal security. This statement is of course an admission of national failure - there has been enough evidence already demanding such a rethink, but our habits have proved to be regrettably resilient. Maybe the fact that the Jamia Nagar incident brings into sharp relief some truths national discussion has wanted to shy away from, will help break the status quo. The locality, almost exclusively Muslim-populated, is gentrified. Urban professionals are the typical residents

Asian Age, 20 September 2008

Opinion: Declare 'war on terror' and let the Army take charge by Arun Kumar Singh

I suggest the following measures be implemented till major anti-terror capabilities are made available to civilian agencies: The government formally declares that India is in a state of war against terrorists in India, and separatists in Kashmir. A military governor be appointed in Kashmir, with all police, paramilitary and intelligence agencies under the command and control of a single Army commander. Army "city commandants" be appointed to the 15-20 metros and cities which are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Here too, all law-keeping and intelligence agencies be put under army command and control. The 13 major seaports, and related local agencies like the police, intelligence, customs, narcotics and port authorities, be put under the command and control of the Indian Navy. Similarly, the 36 operational minor ports can be put under the Indian Coast Guard. The command and control of all civilian airports and concerned personnel be put under the Indian Air Force

Hindu, 21 September 2008

Hunt on for 9 more blast suspects

NEW DELHI: The serial blasts in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Uttar Pradesh were allegedly carried out jointly by the Indian Mujahideen and the Students Islamic Movement of India with active assistance from the Pakistan-based terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba. The Delhi police have launched a hunt for nine more Indian Mujahideen members, all belonging to Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh. Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Joint Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Karnal Singh said the LeT directed SIMI leaders to contact the Indian Mujahideen to carry out terror acts

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Hindu, 21 September 2008

Indian Mujahideen terror linked to organised crime

NEW DELHI: Mumbai investigators have found evidence that organised crime groups could have provided logistics infrastructure for the Indian Mujahideen terror offensive. Based on information provided by the Intelligence Bureau, the Mumbai police have arrested Afzal Usman - a mid-level organised crime figure the investigators believe arranged for the theft of four vehicles used as car bombs in the July 27 serial bombings in Gujarat

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Indian Express, 21 September 2008

Delhi: 3 militants, Batla House caretaker arrested

New Delhi, September 21: Three more suspected 'Indian Mujahideen' militants allegedly involved in the Delhi serial blasts and the caretaker of a house where some members of the Terror module were staying, have been arrested, police said. A day after Delhi Police claimed to have identified 14 members of the module and arrested two of them, sleuths nabbed three others identified as Zia-ur-Rehman, Shakir Nishar and Shakil, who were on the run since the September 13 blasts

Indian Express, 21 September 2008

LeT supported SIMI, IM in Delhi blasts: Police

New Delhi, September 20: Pakistan-based Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) was the 'vital link' of banned SIMI and Indian Mujahideen which Delhi police on Saturday claimed were behind the serial blasts in various parts of the country and said Terror mastermind Atif may have been influenced by al-Qaeda. Atif alias Bashar, who was killed in Friday's daylight encounter in South Delhi, was the 'main man' from Indian Mujahideen and seems to have been inspired by global terror organisation al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden, Joint Commissioner (Special Cell) of Delhi Police Karnal Singh said

Indian Express, 21 September 2008

Linked to Lashkar, fan of Osama, Atif was part of 14 behind blasts: police

New Delhi, September 20 After interrogating Mohammad Saif and Zeeshan, the alleged militants who were arrested following the Jamia Nagar encounter, and scanning the laptop of Atif, who was killed in the operation, the Special Cell of the Delhi Police has reached the conclusion that the Indian Mujahideen (IM) and Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) are closely associated, and the link between them is the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba. 'Atif headed the IM, which was getting operational support from SIMI. Their operations were being supported by Lashkar. Tauqeer of SIMI was asked by Lashkar to contact Atif and provide him help,' Karnal Singh, Joint Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), said today. Tauqeer or Abdus Subhan Qureshi, alleged master bombmaker, is currently the most wanted man in the Terror probe

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Hindu, 22 September 2008

Three suspects behind Delhi blasts arrested

NEW DELHI: Three suspected terrorists involved in the Delhi serial blasts and part of the module that planned to set off 20 more bomb explosions in the city were arrested at Jamia Nagar in South Delhi on Sunday. Identified as Zia ur Rehman (22), Mohammad Shakeel (24) and Saqib Nissar (25), the three were detained late on Saturday night following a tip-off. They were arrested a few hours later after they reportedly confessed to their involvement in the serial blasts in Delhi. Zia ur Rehman's father Abdul Rehman, a stenographer with the Public Works Department in Uttar Pradesh, has also been arrested. He allegedly forged the signature of the house owner in the lease agreement for

the L-18 flat in Batla House, the scene of the encounter in which two suspected militants were killed this past Friday

Hindu, 22 September 2008

Attacks disrupt Sunday mass in Bangalore

Bangalore: For Christians in the city, Sunday morning brought shocking news of desecration of two places of worship in Hebbal and Rajarajeshwarinagar in Bangalore late on Saturday night. The St. James Church in Mariyannapalya off Nagawara Ring Road was ransacked, and cash from the offering box and two gold-plated crowns stolen. The glass casing around the Infant Jesus statue in the Holy Church In The Name Of Jesus in Rajajeshwarinagar was stoned, and the statue was damaged

Hindu, 23 September 2008

Patil wants stronger State police depts.

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil on Monday chaired a meeting of police chiefs of some States, including Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Kerala to discuss measures to strengthen the intelligence gathering machinery in their States. Mr. Patil stressed that special branches of all State police departments should be strengthened

Indian Express, 23 September 2008

K'taka safe haven for terrorists: Yeddyurappa

Hubli, September 23: Karnataka has become a 'safe haven for terrorists' and it has come to light that medical and engineering students are involved in terrorist activities, Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa said on Tuesday. "The state has become a safe haven for terrorists, especially Bangalore, Hubli, Dharwad and the coastal region," he told reporters in Hubli

Hindu, 24 September 2008

Raids in Azamgarh for terror suspects

LUCKNOW: Simultaneous raids were conducted by a 22-member Delhi police team in the Kotwali police station area and Sarjanpur village in Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh in the early hours of Tuesday to flush out Shadab Bhai and Asadullah, alleged to have been involved in the September 13 blasts in the Capital. The raids were conducted on the basis of evidence provided by an alleged terrorist, Saqib, who was held at Jamia Nagar in South Delhi on Sunday in connection with the Uttar Pradesh blasts. Additional Director-General (Law and Order and STF), Brij Lal, told newsmen here that the raids yielded nothing.

Asian Age, 26 September 2008

What! Pota again?

By Fali S. Nariman Is a harsh law really necessary to put an end to "terrorism"? Past experience shows that it is not. The Tada Acts of 1987, which lapsed in May 1995, were very stringent, but "terrorism" did not abate during the entire period of their operation. The powers exercisable under Tada Acts were made more horrendous by the official statistical revelation that not more than one per cent of those tried before the designated

courts were convicted - the rest were acquitted for "want of evidence". That is, in 99 per cent of the cases the accused (who was invariably denied bail before trial) was wrongly prosecuted under Tada. Various reports of police commissions, backed by past pronouncements of the NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) show that constant political interference with the police force has seriously impaired its ability to investigate crimes freely and independently. Besides, the absence of rigorous training in forensic skills (the real need of the hour) have prevented effective investigation by the police, even when there is no outside interference

Asian Age, 27 September 2008

Forces refuse to accept new pay

Sept. 26: The armed forces Friday refused to implement the new payscales in protest against the government's failure to rectify disparities in the salaries of military officers compared to those in the paramilitary and the bureaucracy. "The armed forces submitted monthly formalities regarding pay to the MoD on the basis of old payscales. By doing so, they made it clear they will not implement the new payscales till these disparities are removed," South Block sources said. If not resolved soon, this will be a "black Diwali" for the armed forces, as their salary hikes will not take effect before the festive season

Times of India, 27 September 2008

BSF foils another infiltration bid in J&K

JAMMU: Indian troops on Saturday foiled an infiltration bid by a group of armed militants, who tried to enter a border district in Jammu and Kashmir under the cover of firing by the Pakistani forces, a BSF spokesman said. Pakistani Rangers opened fire on Chak Fagwari Border Out Post (BOP) along the International Border in Pargwal sub-sector of Jammu frontier in the wee hours on Saturday, the spokesman said