

**Weekly Country Report**  
**India**  
**25-31 August 2008**

**Terrorism**

As Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) remains politically and socially unstable, a recent report by the Ministry of Home Affairs, India claims that Pakistani agencies may be exploiting the climate of distrust and discontent in J&K against the Indian government and activating sleeper cells in the Kashmir valley.<sup>1</sup> This is of particular concern and it remains to be seen if militancy will make a comeback in J&K as a fallout of the current political impasse.

Interestingly, on 25 August 2008, days before the infiltration of militants in Jammu on 26-27 August 2008, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) spokesperson-Abdullah Ghaznavi had made clear the groups' intentions to strike in Jammu as a retaliatory measure against the ongoing crackdown on separatists in Srinagar and the attacks on Muslims in Jammu.<sup>2</sup>

***Jammu and Kashmir***

This week witnessed one of the most serious encounters since the ceasefire agreement between Indian and Pakistani armies in 2003, between militants and security officials in Chinore, Jammu on 26-27 August 2008.<sup>3</sup> The encounter started on 26 August when the militants took seven people (three women and four children) hostage in a residential building in Chinore. The two-day encounter resulted in the death of three civilians, two security officials and two militants. The hostage crisis is believed to have been conducted by the same militants who attacked an Indian Army camp in Mishriwala, Jammu, along the Jammu-Akhnoor-Poonch highway on 26 August 2008. The militants are believed to have infiltrated into India from Pakistan across the border.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "ISI-backed terror cells worry MHA", *Asian Age*, 30/08/2008,

[http://www.ipcs.org/Terrorism\\_news.jsp?action=showView&keyWords=GENERAL&portal=nuclear](http://www.ipcs.org/Terrorism_news.jsp?action=showView&keyWords=GENERAL&portal=nuclear)

<sup>2</sup> "Lashkar had warned of Jammu attack", *The Hindu*, 28/08/2008,

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/28/stories/2008082856011200.htm>

<sup>3</sup> "All 3 militants killed, Jammu encounter ends", *The Hindu*, 28/08/2008,

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/28/stories/2008082858390100.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

The handling of the hostage crisis has raised questions about the capability of the Indian security infrastructure. While the Indian Army is acquiring the latest conventional weaponry, it seems to be neglecting the new technology and weapons available that can help to deal with hostage or hijack situations.

### ***Maoist violence***

While attention was concentrated in Jammu and Kashmir for the past few weeks, the Maoist violence continued unabated as six Central Reserve Police Force personnel, were killed in a landmine blast triggered by Maoists in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh on 29 August 2008.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Northeastern India***

Although the region did not witness any militant activity this week, Assam saw the uprising of civil society, advocacy groups, political parties and student organizations carrying out large scale street protests against the illegal Bangladeshis living in Assam following a High Court verdict that Bangladeshis migrants would soon emerge as a powerful force in Assam.<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of all the protests, Assam's largest and most feared militant group- the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), which has repeatedly called for the deporting of all 'foreigners' from Assam (primarily Nepali and Hindi-speaking people), has remained completely silent on this issue which raises the question if ULFA leaders enjoy support and shelter in Bangladesh.

### **Political Developments**

The political impasse in Jammu and Kashmir continued this week as protests against the curfew in Srinagar erupted on 27 August 2008 leading to the death of civilians by Army fire.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Six CRPF personnel killed in Naxal attack", *The Hindu*, 30/08/2008, <http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/30/stories/2008083058510100.htm>

<sup>6</sup> "An Ignited Assam baffles ULFA", *The Seoul Times*, 01/09/2008, <http://theseoultimes.com/ST/?url=/ST/db/read.php?idx=7184>

<sup>7</sup> "Three killed in Army firing", *The Hindu*, 28/08/2008, <http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/28/stories/2008082860501200.htm>