

Hindustan Times, 5 August 2006

Five ULFA militants shot dead in Assam (Press Trust of India)

Guwahati: At least five hardcore ULFA militants were shot dead by security forces in Assam during the past 24 hours. According to police, two ULFA militants were shot dead by the army at Dhaniagug village in Nalbari district late on Monday night. The two are the part of the group of about five ULFA ultras who were traced in Arora village of whom two others were shot dead by a joint team of police and CRPF personnel yesterday. An AK-46 rifle and some live ammunition were recovered from them. In another incident, one ULFA militant in upper Assam's North Lakhimpur district was killed by police late on Monday night.

Hindustan Times, 7 August 2006

16 injured in Assam militant attack (Indo-Asian News Service)

Guwahati: At least 16 people were wounded in a powerful grenade explosion in Assam, said an official on Sunday. According to the police, militants suspected to be from the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) late Saturday lobbed a grenade on a police patrol at Jonai town, Huri, about 520 km east of Guwahati. "The target missed the convoy and exploded in a pavement near a market wounding 16 evening shoppers of which five of them were critical," said police spokesman I Hazarika... There was another grenade explosion in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh district late on Saturday though no casualties were reported... On Friday, ULFA militants triggered a grenade explosion on an army convoy killing one soldier and wounding two more in the eastern Tinsukia district. The three explosions are seen as attempts by rebels to step up violence ahead of the Aug 15 Independence Day celebrations. "This is nothing but attempts at creating panic by militants ahead of Independence Day and we have intelligence inputs about such plans," said Assam police chief Dipak Narayan Dutt.

Assam Tribune, 8 August 2006

1 killed, 14 hurt in Digboi blast

Dibrugarh, Aug 7: An 11-year-old boy, Vinay Gupta, was killed and 14 other people were injured when two bicycle-borne suspected ULFA militants hurled a grenade at a CRPF patrol party near the main namghar at Digboi tiniali around 7-20 pm today. Of the injured, four were CRPF personnel. Meanwhile, at least four persons were injured when unidentified militants lobbed a grenade at a busy market place at Mahur, 45 km from Haflong, in NC Hills at around 3-45 pm today, police sources said here. The injured have been shifted to Haflong civil hospital...

Assam Tribune, 10 August 2006

Govt blames NDFB for delay in peace talks

Guwahati: More than a year has passed since the signing of a formal ceasefire agreement between the Government of India and the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB), but the formal talks on the political issues are yet to start and the Government is blaming the outfit for the delay. Highly placed official sources told The Assam Tribune today that the NDFB is to be blamed for the delay in starting of political talks with the outfit as till date the Government of India is not aware of the demands of the outfit. Sources pointed out that for starting the political dialogue, the NDFB would have to

submit its charter of demands. The Government would have to examine the charter of demands and take policy decisions before starting political dialogue with the outfit. But despite repeated requests, the NDFB failed to submit its charter of demands, which delayed the whole process of talks... Sources said that the NSCN (I-M) also submitted a detailed charter of demands before the formal talks started and the outfit amended the charter on several occasions as the talks went on for years. Meanwhile, the political dialogues with the Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) and the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) are also not making any headway...

Assam Tribune, 11 August 2006

5 NE ultra outfits call for I-Day boycott

5 NE ultra outfits call for I-Day boycott Guwahati: Five militant groups of the North East, including the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) today made a joint call to boycott the ensuing Independence Day celebrations on August 15. They have also declared a general strike on that day. The outfits have also made clear their intention of preventing the celebrations. The ULFA, it may be noted, had already issued a boycott call some days ago. But ULFA's central publicity member, Rubi Bhuyan, issued a fresh boycott call through e-mail today on behalf of the outfit as well as the Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF), National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the Tripura People's Democratic Front (TPDF)...

The Hindu, 12 August 2006

5 policemen killed in Assam

Guwahati: Five police personnel were killed in a bomb attack by the United Liberation Front of Asom in upper Assam on Friday. Inspector General of Police, Special Branch, Khagen Sharma told The Hindu that an improvised explosive device, planted by the ULFA, went off at Ratanipathar under Pengeri police station in Tinsukia district around 5.15 p.m. just after the vehicle of Tinsukia SP Debajit Hazarika had crossed the area. The blast ripped apart the vehicle of Sub-Divisional Police Officer of Margherita, which was closely following the SP's vehicle.

The Hindu, 13 August 2006

Seven injured in grenade blast (Sushanta Talukdar)

Guwahati: Seven persons were injured in a grenade explosion suspected to have been triggered by the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) at Bamunimaidan locality here on Saturday night. Additional Superintendent of Police Rajen Singh said that the blast occurred around 7.20 p.m. in the Bamunimaidan railway colony area. The blast occurred amidst heightened security measures in the city with police and para-military forces intensifying patrolling and checking to thwart sabotage attempts by ULFA militants who have called for a boycott of the Independence Day celebrations. A security blanket was thrown over all the vulnerable places in the city.

The Hindu, 14 August 2006

ULFA re-establishes camps in Bhutan (PTI)

New Delhi : The outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom has re-established its presence in Bhutan by setting up at least three camps, over two years after its cadres were

driven out of the kingdom, official sources said. Hira Sarania, a top leader of ULFA's military wing who is believed to be close to 'commander-in-chief' Paresh Barua, is heading the cadres operating from the camps, the sources told PTI. The camps are believed to be located in Bhutan's Samdrup Jhongkar district "not far away" from the Indian border, an area where ULFA had numerous bases. It was flushed out by the Royal Bhutan Army in December 2003.

Hindustan Times, 14 August 2006

Mediators to meet officials on direct talks with ULFA (Press Trust of India)

New Delhi (Aug 13): Close on the heels of a spurt of violence in Assam, two mediators between the ULFA and the Centre will meet top officials here next week to discuss "modalities" for the proposed direct talks between the banned group and the government. Assamese writer Indira Goswami and Rebati Phukan, a childhood friend of ULFA "commander-in-chief" Paresh Baruah, will meet National Security Advisor MK Narayanan and Home Secretary VK Duggal next week and are expected to apprise them about ULFA's views on the holding of direct talks. "We will meet them, maybe on Wednesday. We will see how to go about framing modalities for the proposed direct talks between the two sides," Goswami said...

Assam Tribune, 14 August 2006

Delhi asks Army to 'suspend' operations

Guwahati (Aug 13): The Army has received an instruction from Delhi to suspend operations in the State and official sources said that the process of calling back the Army men to the barracks has started. Meanwhile, the People's Consultative Group (PCG) today called upon both the Government and the ULFA to maintain restraint in the interest of restoration of lasting peace in the state. Highly-placed State Government sources admitted that the suspension of Army operations just before the Independence Day has created confusion. Sources said that the State Government had no information about any decision taken by the Central Government to suspend Army operations in the State and "we came to know about the suspension of operations only from the GOC of the 4 Corps of the Army."...

The Hindu, 15 August 2006

ULFA attack kills 3 (PTI)

Guwahati: ULFA militants hurled a grenade killing three persons and injuring five at Duliajan in Assam's Dibrugarh district on Monday.

The Hindu, 15 August 2006

Militants lay down arms (UNI)

Guwahati: The Bengali Tiger Force on Monday laid down arms at a ceremony in the city, in the presence of Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi.

The Hindu, 17 August 2006

Grenade attack on ISKCON temple complex (PTI)

Imphal: At least five persons were killed and 50, including five American and three French nationals, injured when suspected militants lobbed a grenade in the complex of

the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) here on Wednesday evening. The shrine was teeming with devotees on Janmashtami day. The toll might mount as the condition of some of those who suffered injuries was critical, sources in the Regional Institute of Medical Science and Hospital said... Hospital sources said the foreign nationals were among those who sustained splinter injuries in the blast at around 7 p.m. Several others, including ISKCON chief priest Damodar Das, were among those hit by splinters...

Assam Tribune, 17 August 2006

CM appeals to ULFA for direct talks

Guwahati (Aug 16): Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi yesterday renewed his appeal to the banned United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) to come forward for talks and help create a peaceful atmosphere in the State. He said the unilateral decision to suspend the Army operations proved the Central and State Governments' resolve to solve the ULFA problem through dialogue... Chief Minister Gogoi, though, said in his 30-minute speech that there has been "unprecedented" improvement in the law and order situation in the state due to the initiatives taken by his government. He said misguided youth have returned to the mainstream and people are moving around day and night without fear. Tourist inflow has also increased as a result, he said. Gogoi said the State Government is continuously striving to establish permanent peace in the state through negotiations. He mentioned the ongoing ceasefire pacts with the NDFB, UPDS, DHD, Advasi Cobra Militant Force and the Birsa Commando Force...

Assam Tribune, 17 August 2006

NLFT kills two tribal brothers in Tripura

(Aug 17): Two tribal villagers were killed by NLFT militants at Tuichama under Ganganagar police station in Dhalai district on Tuesday morning, police said. On Tuesday at around 3 am, a group of heavily armed NLFT rebels proceeding around the hill-top village had stormed the residence of Lamonjoy Reang and Profullajoy Reang and shot them dead from point blank range. They warned family members not to inform police and security forces about the incident. Sources said that Lamonjoy Reang was a surrendered NLFT rebel while his younger brother Profullajoy Reang was an over ground collaborator of NLFT, who had fallen foul of the group sometime back. Both of them died on the spot...

The Hindu, 18 August 2006

Meitei outfit's hand suspected in blast (PTI)

New Delhi: Outlawed militant group Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) is suspected to be behind Wednesday's blast at the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) complex in Imphal, a senior Union Home Ministry official said here on Thursday. Though none has claimed responsibility for the grenade blast, which claimed four lives and left 66 injured, the hand of this outfit is suspected, he said. The Meitei militant group, KYKL, which was formed over a decade ago, has been indulging in extortions. It is said to have demanded a hefty amount from the ISKCON's chief priest. Refusal to pay led to the lobbing of "Chinese-make hand grenades" when the shrine was teeming with Janmasthami devotees, the official said...

The Hindu, 19 August 2006

ULFA reciprocates Centre's offer (Sushanta Talukdar)

Guwahati: The United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on Friday reciprocated the Union Government's offer to hold fire, by formally declaring that it would try to respect the offer in response to the people's desire for peace. In a statement through the People's Consultative Group (PCG), ULFA chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, however, cautioned against any sabotage activities in the name of the outfit to scuttle the peace initiative. On holding direct talks with the Centre, Mr. Rajkhowa said they had been awaiting fulfilment of New Delhi's assurances at the third round of discussions with the PCG. Both ULFA and the PCG have been maintaining that the Centre had agreed to release five arrested ULFA leaders to facilitate direct talks. The ULFA chairman expressed the hope that the Centre would take positive steps for the release of the arrested leaders. There should not be any confusion on ULFA's stand on holding direct talks. On August 13, the Centre declared a unilateral ceasefire that was conditional and limited to a few days. Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal said the Centre had advised the Army and the security forces in Assam to suspend their operations against ULFA...

The Hindu, 21 August 2006

ULFA response "positive", says Jaiswal (PTI)

New Delhi: The Centre on Sunday said the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) had given a "positive response" to its peace initiatives and it was "optimistic" about the on-going peace process with the militant outfit. The Government also said it was hopeful of direct talks with the banned outfit in finding a solution to the three decade-old insurgency problem of Assam. "I am very optimistic about the peace process. I hope a solution to the problem will be found very soon," Union Minister of State for Home Sri Prakash Jaiswal told PTI here. Asked whether the outfit had reciprocated properly to the Centre's initiative, he said: "The [peace] process is going on as they are showing positive response to our efforts."

Indian Express, 22 August 2006

Aug 23: ULFA, govt to discuss norms for talks

New Delhi (Aug 21): The crucial round of talks between ULFA-nominated People's Consultative Group (PCG) and the government will be held on August 23, in which the modalities for the initiation of direct talks will be discussed. "Issues like the release of the five prisoners and extension of the current suspension of operations by the government will come up for discussion. We hope to have a positive outcome on Wednesday," said Assamese writer and mediator Indira Goswami. Besides Goswami, the People's Consultative Group will be represented by Rebati Phukan, while the government delegation will include National Security Adviser MK Narayanan and officials from the Home Ministry...

Hindustan Times, 22 August 2006

We are ready to release 5 ULFA leaders: Gogoi (Indo-Asian News Service)

Guwahati (August 21): Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi says his government is ready to release five jailed separatist leaders of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom

(ULFA) the moment it receives New Delhi's nod. "We are ready to release ULFA leaders from jail once we get the signal from the central government," the chief minister said. The main issue now blocking the start of formal face-to-face talks between the ULFA leadership and Indian government negotiators is the rebels' demand for release of five of their jailed leaders. The ULFA over the weekend announced halting its guerrilla campaign in the resource-rich state of Assam. It was the first time that ULFA, which is fighting for an independent Assamese homeland, has announced a truce since its formation in 1979. The declaration came after New Delhi announced suspending Army operations against the group for 10 days, beginning Aug 14... The five jailed ULFA leaders—Pradip Gogoi, Bhimkanta Buragohain, Pranati Deka, Mithingia Daimary and Ramu Mech—are currently lodged at the high-security central prison in Assam's main city of Guwahati. ULFA says the outfit was unable to chalk out strategies for formal talks without their five central committee leaders and was therefore seeking their release from jail. Home Minister Shivraj Patil during the last round of talks with the PCG on June 22 said New Delhi could consider their release from jail.

Assam Tribune, 24 August 2006

Army operations halted for 15 more days (Kalyan Barooah)

New Delhi (Aug 23): First the good news: the suspension of Army operation against ULFA has been extended for another 15 days. The unpleasant news is that the Centre has put three new pre-conditions, including a written commitment from the outfit expressing its intentions to come for direct negotiations. Preliminary deliberations in the ULFA peace process, is likely to be long-drawn, if the ongoing dialogue is any indication. The two sides concluded the deliberations today, on the note that they would meet again within a fortnight, by when ULFA was expected to respond. The discussion was chaired by National Security Adviser MK Narayanan and attended by Union Home Secretary VK Duggal and Director of Intelligence Bureau ESL Narasimhan, while the Peoples Consultative Group (PCG), was represented by Rebati Phukon and Dr Mamoni Raisom Goswami. The discussion, held at the South Block Office of the NSA lasted for little over an hour... The Centre wants the ULFA to specify a timeframe within which, it proposed to come for talks, name its negotiating team, which should include top leadership and a written communication that they were coming for direct talks...

Assam Tribune, 26 August 2006

Govt willing to act as facilitator: Gogoi

New Delhi (Aug 25): Declining to hazard a guess about ULFA's intentions, Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi today said that the State Government was willing to act as facilitator for the talks. The Chief Minister said that he does not even want to be part of the negotiation, as they have shown interest in talking to the Centre. "We are serious about the peace process, whether they are serious we don't know," he said. The Chief Minister is meeting Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil tomorrow to discuss about the peace process, besides other related issues like the tension along the Indo-Bangladesh border... The Chief Minister's comment comes after the temporary truce was extended by 15 days on Wednesday. Gogoi further added that releasing of the five leaders should not be a problem. "Government of Asom has no problem and it has been conveyed to the Centre," he said...

Assam Tribune, 28 August 2006

India, Bangla vow to fight terror

Dhaka (Aug 27): India and Bangladesh agreed to examine ways to institute mechanisms for joint fight against terrorism and organised crime as also to exercise “utmost restraint” along the border after four days of Home Secretary- level talks which concluded here today, reports PTI. “Both sides agreed to examine the possibility of quickly instituting a bilateral mechanism to combat terrorism and organised crime,” said a joint statement signed by Home Secretary VK Duggal and his Bangladeshi counterpart Safar Raj Hussain. The two countries noted that terrorism posed a common threat requiring “improved cooperation in tackling the menace”, the statement said. “Both sides agreed to exercise utmost restraint along the Bangladesh-India border to avoid any untoward incidents,” Duggal told reporters after the talks, in which they also decided to maintain status quo on enclaves and “areas under adverse possession.” The Indian side drew attention to the drafts of the extradition treaty, agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters as also bilateral agreement on combating international terrorism, organized crime and illicit drug trafficking, which had been handed over to Bangladesh and is awaiting acceptance.

The Indian Express, 30 August 2006

ULFA may utilise ceasefire to regroup, army tells MHA (Rajeev Bhattacharyya)

New Delhi (Aug 29): The ongoing suspension of operations against the outlawed ULFA is being used as an opportunity by the outfit to regroup and strengthen its links, the army has informed the Home ministry. In a meeting held yesterday evening, it is learnt that highly placed army officers told the Home ministry that it was not in favour of extending the suspension of operations if the ULFA did not respond with a formal communique indicating its willingness for direct talks. The Centre halted the ongoing operations for 10 days on August 13 which was extended by another 15 days after a meeting with the Peoples’ Consultative Group (PCG). The ULFA responded with similar gesture, but has so far refused to send a communique in response as asked by the government. Sources are of the view that if the holding of direct talks is delayed, the opportunity might also be utilised by the ULFA to recruit cadres and intensify extortion. The government told the PCG in a meeting on August 23 that it expected the outfit to reply before the current suspension of operations end on September 7.

Assam Tribune, 30 August 2006

Militancy declines in Tripura

Agartala (Aug 29): Barring sporadic militancy related incidents, insurgency has declined significantly in Tripura during the past three years. According to official figures altogether 384 persons were killed and 327 more were injured in extremists related incidents from 2003 to July this year. Militants of different outfits have kidnapped 356 civilians mostly non-tribals during the period while 26 abducted persons are yet to return from militant hideouts. In reply to a written question by Ratan Lal Nath, Leader of Opposition on Monday, Chief Minister Manik Sarkar informed the Assembly that 305 extremists related incidents were reported in the State during the 2003. Chief Minister said 115 militancy-related incidents have occurred in 2005 and only 56 such incidents

were reported this year till July. He said altogether 39 security personnel were killed by tribal guerrillas in 2003 while 47 soldiers fell prey to the militants' bullets in 2004. However, security forces have not suffered any major setback this year in terms of human casualty as only eight security personnel were killed in encounters or ambushes...

Assam Tribune, 31 August 2006

Centre waiting for ULFA's response

New Delhi (Aug 30): The Centre is not going to make its next move in a hurry and is planning to wait for ULFA to respond before the suspension of operation expires in the first week of next month. Talking to newsmen on the sidelines of the meeting of 'Coordination Centre on Naxalism' Union Home Secretary, VK Duggal said that he was expecting a response from ULFA by September 2-3. "They have time until September 5 and we expect a response before that," he added... "On this, we the members of the Peoples Consultative Group (PCG) are fully behind the Centre and want it to release the central committee members, as demanded by ULFA," Dr Goswami said. In the coming few days, the Centre has to take a hard political decision regarding the ULFA peace process, because all indication suggests that ULFA may not respond to the latest pre-conditions set by it. With the Army opposing the idea of suspending the operations further, on the ground that ULFA has been regrouping taking advantage of the current flux, the Ministry of Home Affairs may again toss the issue to National Security Adviser's office. The MHA sources said they also have reports of ULFA indulging in massive extortions...