



TERROR TRACKER

Newsletter by Counter Terrorism Centre



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
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PRAHAAR: India Unveils Its National Counter-Terror Strategy

On 23 February 2026, The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) unveiled India's first comprehensive counter-terrorism policy titled **PRAHAAR**. The strategy outlines a proactive, zero-tolerance approach to terrorism, addressing both **cross-border terror** and emerging **cyber threats** from criminal hackers and hostile nation states.

It highlights India's preparedness to tackle threats across water, land, air, and digital domains while safeguarding **critical sectors** such as **power, railways, aviation, ports, defence, space, and atomic energy**. The policy acknowledges long-standing cross-border sponsored terrorism, including activities by global outfits such as **Al-Qaeda** and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (**ISIS**).

It notes the growing use of **sleeper cells, drones** in border States like **Punjab** and **Jammu & Kashmir**, encrypted messaging, dark web platforms, and **crypto wallets** to execute and finance attacks. The

document also flags risks related to **CBRNED materials** (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive, Digital) and the misuse of robotics and emerging technologies for terror purposes.

PRAHAAR emphasises a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The policy calls for legal experts to be involved from the FIR stage to prosecution to ensure stronger convictions. It also introduces graded police responses to **counter radicalisation**, community engagement through moderate religious leaders and NGOs, prison monitoring, and structured **de-radicalisation programmes** to prevent extremist recruitment among youth.

The policy reiterates that India does not associate terrorism with any religion or ethnicity while maintaining a firm zero-tolerance stance. It seeks to criminalise all terrorist acts, choke funding channels, and deny safe havens to perpetrators. – [News on Air](#), [The Hindu](#)

ISIS Targets Shia Mosque in Pakistan

A powerful **suicide bombing** struck the **Khadija al-Kubra mosque** in Islamabad during **Friday prayers**, killing at least 31 people and injuring 169 others.

The mosque, belonging to the minority **Shia community**, was crowded when the explosion ripped through the prayer hall. Witnesses described scenes of devastation, with bodies scattered across the floor and worshippers screaming for help amid blood and debris.

The attack was claimed by ISIS, highlighting the **sectarian nature** of the assault. The group has repeatedly targeted **Shia Muslims** in Pakistan, framing such attacks as part of its extremist ideology.

Reports suggested there may have been multiple attackers who opened fire before detonating explosives, intensifying the scale of casualties.

Pakistan's top leadership, including President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif, strongly condemned the bombing, calling it a **crime against humanity** and ordering a **full investigation**.

A senior Shia leader termed the attack a major **security failure** in the federal capital. Hospitals appealed for **urgent blood donations** as many victims remained in critical condition.

The attack also drew criticism of mainstream media for initially underreporting the incident as graphic images circulated online.

In the aftermath, Pakistan's military announced the arrest of four **facilitators** and identified an alleged **Afghan-based ISIS mastermind**, pointing to possible **cross-border terror links**. The bombing comes amid a broader **surge in militant violence**, reinforcing concerns about **sectarian extremism** in the country.

[*The Guardian, Al Jazeera*](#)

Delhi Police Bust Cross-Border Terror Module

A **Special Cell** of the Delhi Police has arrested **eight persons** with alleged links to **Pakistan- and Bangladesh-based terror organisations**, days after a security alert warned of a possible explosion near the Red Fort.

Security was tightened across **heritage and religious sites** in the national capital following the alert. Among those arrested, one is from **West Bengal**, while the remaining are **Bangladesh nationals**, police said.

The arrests stem from an incident on **7 February**, when **objectionable posters** were pasted at multiple **Delhi Metro stations**. The case was transferred to the Special Cell, which tracked the suspects to **Kolkata**.

Two key accused — **Umar Farukh** from **Malda** and **Robiul Islam**, a **Bangladesh** national — were arrested.

Police investigations revealed the accused were acting on the instructions of **Shabbir Ahmad**

Lone, a former terror handler now based in Bangladesh with links to **Lashkar-e-Taiba**.

Lone, arrested in 2007 and released in 2019, allegedly resumed **terror activities** and re-established contact with Lashkar operatives.

Farukh is said to have travelled to Bangladesh to meet him and recruited six other Bangladesh nationals working in **Tamil Nadu garment factories** to assist in coordinated poster campaigns and **dry runs** across cities.

Authorities recovered **dozens of mobile phones, 16 SIM cards**, and suspect the group used **forged Aadhaar cards** for identification.

The accused were reportedly operating from a **hide-out in Kolkata** and were planning to mobilise recruits for further **terror-linked activities**, signalling concerns about cross-border coordination and sleeper networks operating within India. [NDTV](#), [The Hindu](#)

Dozens Dead as Pakistan Bombards Afghan Sites

Pakistan said it carried out multiple overnight air strikes inside neighbouring Afghanistan on 22 February 2026, targeting what it described as militant hideouts belonging to the Pakistani Taliban and the regional affiliate of the Islamic State group. Islamabad said the “intelligence-based selective operations” hit seven sites along the border in response to recent suicide bombings in Pakistan, including a deadly attack on a Shiite mosque in Islamabad. The strikes mark the most extensive cross-border action since October clashes that left over 70 people dead on both sides.

Afghanistan’s defence ministry said the bombardment struck a madrasa and residential homes in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces, killing and wounding dozens of civilians, including women and children. Kabul condemned the attacks and vowed a “calculated response,” denying Pakistan’s accusations that it harbours militants. Fresh border clashes soon followed near Torkham, with both sides blaming each other for initiating the violence, underscoring escalating tensions between the two countries since the Taliban’s return to power in 2021. –

[*France24, Al Jazeera*](#)

Neo-JMB Expands Terror Network South

Indian security agencies have raised terrorism concerns over the Neo-JMB, a splinter faction of the Bangladesh-based Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, which intelligence reports indicate is expanding its footprint from West Bengal into South India. The outfit, reportedly aligned with the Islamic State Bengal Province, is believed to be operating under a handler moving between regions and engaging with Bangla-speaking migrant communities in states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Agencies warn that Neo-JMB’s shift southwards reflects a strategic directive to broaden its operational reach and potentially exploit social and linguistic networks for recruitment or support, especially amid large migrant populations. – [*IANS Live*](#)

Top Jaish Terrorist Neutralised in Kishtwar

A top Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorist, Saifullah, was among three militants killed by security forces during an encounter in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir. Saifullah had been evading capture for the past two years, surviving at least 20 previous attempts. The operation was launched following precise intelligence about the terrorists' movements, and the encounter began when the militants opened fire as forces approached their hideout, a mud house on a hillside. Two assault rifles and supplies were recovered from the site.

The operation was part of Operation Trashi-I, initiated in January to target militants hiding in the forested and mountainous terrain of Kishtwar, including areas like Chatroo, Sonnar, Dolgam, and Dichhar. The assault involved coordination between the state police, CRPF, and Special Forces. The region has witnessed multiple encounters in recent weeks, including the killing of another key JeM operative, Adil, reflecting ongoing security efforts to dismantle terrorist networks in the area. - [*NDTV*](#)