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## Government recounts steps after 26/11

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On the eve of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, the Union government said on Wednesday that the challenge faced by India today was from terrorist organisations that were not only equipped with the latest technologies and have immense access to funds, but were having active backing of various external agencies.

“The focus of terrorists has also changed. Their targets are spatially spreading beyond the Kashmir Valley to the hinterland with the dual purpose of disturbing the communal harmony and destabilising the economic prosperity of our country,” the Home Ministry said in a statement.

Stressing that the country was totally committed to a comprehensive approach to tackle terrorism and put in sustained intensive efforts to end this menace, it outlined a number of measures taken in the post 26/11 scenario to deal with various facets of terrorism.

The Ministry said that taking cognizance of the fact that “actionable intelligence” was the key to foil terror attacks, Mr. Chidambaram took the first step soon after taking over after 26/11 by strengthening the Intelligence Bureau (IB). He also galvanized and reorganised the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) in the IB to enable it to function on 24X7 basis.

The MAC was also obliged to share intelligence with all other agencies, including agencies of the State governments and Union Territories. An online, dedicated and secured connectivity between all the designated members of the MAC, between the MAC and the Subsidiary Multi-Agency

Centres (SMACs) in 30 key locations across the country was also being established.

The National Security Guards (NSG), whose commandos battled the terrorists in Mumbai last November, now have four NSG hubs – each with an operational strength of around 250 personnel – in Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. The government had decided to set up two regional centres of the NSG in Hyderabad and Kolkata, to enable quick response to terror attacks.

As many as 20 temporary Counter–Insurgency and Anti–Terrorism Schools were being set up during the 11th Plan period. Four such schools each would be set up in Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa so as to provide training to police personnel of these States to tackle the naxal menace, the statement said.

Following 26/11, coastal security was also reviewed at various levels. Under the ongoing Coastal Security Scheme, 64 out of 73 coastal police stations were operationalised. Coastal States and Union Territories were also given 47 interceptor boats so far. It would go up to 126 by March 2010.

As many as 79 new battalions of the Central Para–Military Forces were sanctioned since 2004–05 and a proposal for raising 38 additional battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force, including two battalions of women personnel, was recently approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security. Out of these, 38 battalions, three would be raised in 2009–10.

The ceiling with regard to the strength of the Central Industrial Security Force, which guards airports and public sector units, was enhanced to 1,45,000 from 93,521 in 2005.

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was amended and notified on December 31 last year to reinforce the legal and punitive provisions of law to combat terrorism with greater focus and for strengthening of provisions relating to financing of terrorism, bail, power to call for information.

A Model Police Act, drafted by an expert committee in 2006, which provided for well defined duties and responsiveness and sensitivity of the police towards public and accountability to rule of law was sent to the States for consideration. Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttarakhand either framed New Police Acts or amended the existing ones.

The National Police Mission was also set up with the aim of equipping the police to think creatively and help it transform itself from a reactive to a

proactive organisation.

Noting that the number of incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir had gone down considerably, the Home Ministry said that a large number of infiltration attempts by terrorists from across the border were foiled by security forces and 212 terrorists killed this year till October.