



Mumbai residents light candles during a street march to protest against the recent attacks on their city on Wednesday. New Delhi has blamed 'elements' in Pakistan for the attacks. AP

FIGHTING TERROR

India 'can ask China for help with Pakistan'

Experts say economic impact likely to be limited

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INDIA can approach China for help to intervene in the issue of Pakistani citizens implicated in the Mumbai terror attacks, suggested a terrorism expert.

"Just as India has approached the United States and the international community, India can also approach the Chinese to advise Pakistan to do something concrete," Professor S D Muni, a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), told TODAY.

New Delhi has blamed "elements" in Pakistan for last week's attacks in India's commercial hub.

"India can ask China to tell Pakistan to ban or demolish these (terror) organisations and to show that from now onwards, it will stop groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (from launching attacks)," he said.

"Beijing should be interested" to talk to Pakistan about the matter because the Chinese fear the role of Islamic extremism in India, Prof Muni told an ISAS seminar at the National University of Singapore here yesterday.

On the economic fallout, fellow speaker Dr Amitendu Palit, a visiting research fellow at ISAS, does not think that the Mumbai mayhem would have a long-term impact on India.

"One of the aims of the at-

tackers was to deal a blow to the financial centre, Mumbai cannot be detached from India's financial pulse. The terrorists attacked hotels that host many business travellers.

"Although Mumbai has suffered the worst terror attacks as well as natural disasters, the city has continued to attract investments. I believe that the economic impact of the latest attacks will be a short-termed one," he said.

Terrorism, said Dr Amitendu, is believed to have the worst impact on a country's tourism industry. "But in the case of India, where it has seen seven manifestations of terrorism this year, the impact of low tourist flow will not be felt. Tourism does not even contribute 1 per cent to the country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product)," he added.

Meanwhile, India's ruling Congress party, which must face the electorate by May next year, has emerged as the main political loser from the Mumbai attacks as public outrage mounts.

Analysts say the Congress coalition's inability to prevent the carnage, as well as a string of other militant assaults in the past year, has created an image of a weak government flailing in the face of security challenges.

Voters have been "badly shaken by the attacks and they hold the Congress responsible", said Sanjay Kumar, of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi, who tracks voting patterns. WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY AFP