

Ultimatum to LTTE ends

Hindu, 1 February 2009

COLOMBO: With the expiry of the 48-hour ultimatum served on the LTTE by Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa for allowing safe passage of civilians out of the battle zone, the government on Saturday announced that it would continue to adhere to a 'zero civilian casualty policy' in its effort to eradicate terrorism. The Tigers ignored the ultimatum on the plea that they were not holding civilians forcibly in the territory under its control and would not facilitate 'exodus of reluctant civilians' into the military zone

It is for Pakistan to act: Chidambaram

Hindu, 1 February 2009

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram on Saturday said India had provided to Pakistan a comprehensive dossier on the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack and it was for Islamabad to act on it. "For the record, Pakistan has maintained that it will investigate and its Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) will probe," Mr. Chidambaram said, responding to a question at a press conference here. In reply to another query whether the Mumbai terror attack had come up for discussion during his meeting with Pakistan High Commissioner Shahid Malik, the Home Minister clarified that the High Commissioner had only paid a courtesy call on him after the Republic Day celebrations and it was normal for ambassadors and envoys to do so

FBI wants to question Ansari

Hindu, 2 February 2009

New Delhi: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has made a request to interrogate two militants arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police and questioned by the Mumbai police in connection with the 26/11 terror strikes. The FBI made the request through proper channels for questioning Fahim Arshad Ansari and Sabbauddin of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba, who were taken to Mumbai in December last as a follow-up to the probe into the 26/11 attacks, official sources said

Trade Imbalance with India; Govt works on trade boost plan

Daily Star, 3 February 2009

The new government is set to renew trade relations with India to bring down huge trade imbalance of \$2 billion between the two neighbouring countries. Government sources said a comprehensive study is underway to draw up a joint trade and investment agreement to allow businessmen from the two countries to invest in businesses on both sides of the border. The government is also working out a strategy on the issue of giving transit to India upholding country's interests. "We shall have to discuss the issue with India thoroughly before making any decision in this regard," a senior cabinet minister told The Daily Star wishing anonymity

Pranab contradicts NSA, says Pak yet to respond

Hindu, 3 February 2009

New Delhi: Contradicting National Security Adviser M K Narayanan's claim that Islamabad has reverted on Mumbai attacks dossier, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday asserted that India is yet to receive any official response from Pakistan. "That he (Narayanan) has said in his own way. The fact of the matter is that after they (Pakistan) received material from us, we have not received any official communication about the

progress of investigation conducted by them," Mukherjee told reporters here when referred to the NSA's comments

Cross-border nexus confirmed

Kuensel, 4 February 2009

Bhutan and India have agreed to further strengthen and enhance security arrangements. This comes after the Indian delegation for the recent Bhutan-India border meeting said that they had information on links between the Communist Party of Bhutan and Indian insurgent groups like ULFA and NDFB. The delegation has also said that there were links as well between the Gorkha Jan Mukti party of Darjeeling and the Communist Party of Bhutan. The Communist Party of Bhutan has claimed responsibility for the recent bombings and terrorist activities in Bhutan.

"During the process of discussion, the inspector general of police for north Bengal, Kundan Lal Tamta, personally cautioned us in regard to the linkages and the corroborations that the Communist Party of Bhutan are having with insurgent groups of India, especially ULFA, NDFB and others," said Karma T Namgyal, director of the bureau of law and order (home ministry) and leader of the Bhutanese delegation to the border meeting

Pranab, NSA sing different tunes on Pakistan probe

Hindu, 4 February 2009

New Delhi: Two days after National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan said Pakistan had "reverted to us and asked a number of questions" on the Mumbai terrorist attacks dossier, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee reiterated that India had received no "official communication" from Islamabad "about the progress of the investigations conducted by them" into the November 26-29 events. Asked on Tuesday about Mr. Narayanan's assertions to the contrary, the Minister said, "That he has stated in his own way." India had been informed by Pakistan about the receipt of the dossier, he said, but "thereafter" there had been no word

Give up hostilities, India to LTTE, SL Govt

Indian Express, 5 February 2009

New Delhi: Voicing concern over the loss of lives in embattled Sri Lanka, India on Wednesday asked the LTTE to lay down arms and come to the negotiating table while urging Colombo to suspend hostilities. "We are deeply anguished at the loss of lives. We are not happy that the Sri Lankan Government has resumed hostilities. It is for both sides to cease hostilities," Union Home Minister P Chidambaram said

Quotes taken out of context have given a distorted view: Narayanan

Hindu, 5 February 2009

New Delhi: In a case of one man's (sound) bite being worse than another's bark, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan has rushed to clarify that his remarks about the new American President "barking up the wrong tree" on Kashmir were really aimed at underlining the "high expectation India had from the Obama administration." And that "selective quotes taken out of context have tended to give a distorted idea of what was actually said" by him

Cooperate with India in probe, Ban tells Pakistan

Hindu, 5 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who arrived here on

Wednesday on a day's visit, called on Pakistan to cooperate "fully" with India in the investigation of the Mumbai attacks, and urged both countries to resolve the Kashmir issue and other differences through dialogue. Addressing a joint press conference with Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, the top U.N. official said he had "urged that the Pakistan government should have a full investigation into the [Mumbai attacks], and fully co-operate with the Indian government" in the matter

'72 trade accord was only renewed during Zia's rule
Daily Star, 7 February 2009

The BNP has said the bilateral trade deal with India during the rule of late president Ziaur Rahman was not a new treaty but renewal of the 1972 agreement. The main opposition in parliament has also expressed its support for multilateral regional transit facilities under the Saarc rather than a bilateral transit treaty with India. Dismissing the commerce minister's claim that the bilateral trade agreement was executed during Zia's rule, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said, "No new trade deal was executed during Zia's rule. It was only renewal of the 1972 agreement, article 5 of which was never implemented as it concerned the much-debated transit issue."

Menon: Pakistan must come back with clear, unqualified response
Hindu, 7 February 2009

Paris: Pakistan must come back to India with a clear and unqualified response on the probe into the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, "even if it involves screwing up the courage to face facts and talk to us," Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon told The Hindu in an exclusive interview here on Thursday. Although India has still not received what could be described as a clear and forthright response, Mr. Menon said: "I think so far we have seen more from Pakistan in terms of response than we have seen ever before. It has created trouble within Pakistan — General Durrani lost his job for commenting on it in public — but they need to sort it out among themselves. This they have to sort out. They have to choose where they stand on this."

Sri Lanka told of India's concern, says Pranab
Hindu, 9 February 2009

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Sunday urged "friends" in Tamil Nadu to draw a distinction between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) and the Tamil civilians of the island nation. The Minister was elaborating on the government's policy vis-à-vis the Sri Lankan Tamil issue at the one-day national convention of Block Congress Committee (BCC) and District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents here

Kidnapped Indian in Afghanistan dead
Hindu, 10 February 2009

NEW DELHI: Simon Paranthaman (39), kidnapped in Afghanistan for ransom, is dead, according to official sources here. "We have lost him," they said. Paranthaman, who hails from a village near Kallakurichi in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu, was abducted along with two Afghans in October last from the Herat province in western Afghanistan. He is survived by wife Vasanthi, daughter Nirmala (10) and son Ajit (8).

26/11 partly planned in Pakistan: Malik
Hindu, 13 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday delivered a big part of its promise of cooperation with India on the Mumbai attacks by registering a case of terrorism against eight Pakistani suspects, and formally acknowledging that part of the planning for the attacks was done in this country. The move is unprecedented and marks an important milestone in India-Pakistan relations. Rehman Malik, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior, who also heads the crucial Ministry, told journalists that the case was registered under sections of the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act that enable the prosecution of Pakistanis for directing, abetting, conspiring or facilitating a terrorist act in another country

India: take action to logical conclusion
Hindu, 14 February 2009

NEW DELHI: While reiterating that the official Pakistan response to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks was a positive development, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told Parliament on Friday that "much depends on actions in the Mumbai case reaching their logical conclusion." Making suo motu and unscheduled statements in both Houses of Parliament, Mr. Mukherjee underlined that India had no quarrel with the people of Pakistan and wished them well. "We do not think that they should be held responsible or face the consequences of this situation. We have, therefore, consciously, and after due deliberation, not thought it necessary or fit to curtail people-to-people contacts, trains and road links," he observed

Pakistan must allay Indian fears: US spy chief
News, 14 February 2009

WASHINGTON: Pakistan holds the key to defusing tensions with nuclear rival India by executing a serious clampdown on Islamic militants, US Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair said on Thursday. Without such action from Islamabad, President Barack Obama's new chief of intelligence told Congress, New Delhi could feel compelled to ignite a wider conflict in a region already fraught with security risks. The best efforts of Indian and Pakistani leaders to improve relations "could unravel unless Islamabad takes sustained, concrete, meaningful steps to allay Indian concerns about Islamabad's support to anti-Indian militant groups."

Suspects not produced in Pakistan court
Hindu, 15 February 2009

ISLAMABAD: Contrary to expectation, Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency has failed to produce in court the suspects in the Mumbai attacks two days after the government announced the registering of a first information report against them and declared six of them to be in its custody. The case was registered on Thursday. It was widely anticipated that the six would be produced in an anti-terrorist court in Rawalpindi on Friday, in keeping with the rule that suspects must be produced 24 hours after their arrest. But that did not happen, and they were not produced on Saturday either

N-weapons could be brought through sea: Navy
Indian Express, 18 February 2009

New Delhi: In the backdrop of the Mumbai attacks having exposed the vulnerability of Indian coastline, Navy Chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta on Wednesday said cargo containers could be used to transport nuclear weapons. "Today, 70-75 global cargo is containerised. It is acknowledged that the container is the most likely means for terrorist organisations to illegally transport a nuclear weapon and, hence, there is a serious concern about container security," he said while inaugurating a seminar organised by the National Maritime

Foundation in New Delhi

Pranab upsets allies, says can't force sovereign Lanka
Indian Express, 18 February 2009

New Delhi: Government virtually turned down demands of two Tamil parties, including UPA constituent PMK, for India's intervention to stop military offensive in Sri Lanka, saying it cannot force a sovereign Government of another country to take a particular line. The assertion by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee came after PMK and MDMK members expressed unhappiness over his statement in Lok Sabha on the situation in Sri Lanka and demanded its withdrawal. Mukherjee expressed readiness to make "corrections" in his statement if there were any "discrepancies".