

The Times of India, 1 April 2006

N-deal: Saran warns US lawmakers not to upset 'balance'

Emphasising that its nuclear deal with the US was the result of "complex" negotiations, India has cautioned those pushing for so-called changes, including American lawmakers, not to upset this "very, very delicate balance" and that there will be a "loss in terms of expectations" if the pact was not approved. "What has emerged out of these negotiations is a very very delicate balance. We have been through extraordinary complex and difficult negotiations. Therefore, I would very strong hope that that balance is not disturbed," visiting Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told reporters here on Friday at the Indian embassy while wrapping up his three-day visit to the US. "If you start making revisions and changes, that balance is likely to be upset," Saran said. He maintained that although everything else in the bilateral relationship would not fall by the wayside if the nuclear deal was not approved, "there will be a loss in terms of the built up expectations and enthusiasm".

The Indian Express, 3 April 2006

Ignore NPT for India: Russia

Recognising India's energy needs, a senior Russian official has called for making an exception for the country in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to give it access to civilian nuclear technology. We cannot ignore India's energy requirements. It is a rapidly developing country with a good non-proliferation record. We should probably make an exception in this case without adopting new norms that may erode the non-proliferation regime, director of the Foreign Ministry's Security and Disarmament Department, Anatoly Antonov told Pro-Kremlin Vremya Novostei daily. On the non-proliferation aspects of the G-8 policy, Antonov said the NPT is an invaluable element of international security and stability, which the follow-up conference has proved, even though it failed to formulate practical recommendations for strengthening the NPT. However, it has reaffirmed the main point, that the NPT can and must be used to deal with new challenges and threats to the non-proliferation regime, Antonov observed.

The Indian Express, 4 April 2006

US industry says failure will be disappointing

The American industry, which is lobbying hard in Congress for the civilian nuclear agreement with India, has said it will be deeply disappointed if the deal does not go through. Represented by the US Chamber of Commerce, which has over 30 lakh small and big businesses as its members, the American industry has launched a grassroots campaign in large number of Congressional districts to present its views before their elected representatives. The US India Business Council (USIBC), which represents top US companies like Boeing and General Electricals, for the first time has hired a professional lobbying firm Patton Boggs to articulate the industry's voice in support of the civilian nuclear deal. With like minded parties, eminent Americans and associations, it has build up a Coalition for Partnership with India to drum up the support. The coalition has supported submission of a letter co-signed by 25 experts involved in national security who endorse the US-India civilian nuclear cooperation initiative. Former Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Defence, and National Security Advisers have been solicited by the Coalition to submit a supportive letter to the Congress.

The Hindu, 4 April 2006

U.S. Congress not consulted on nuclear deal: report

The India-U.S. civilian nuclear agreement is turning out to be a "controversial deal" and a "hard sell" on Capitol Hill primarily because the Congress was not consulted, according to the Washington Post. The agreement is in trouble because there was little consultation with the Congress or within the foreign-affairs bureaucracy before it was announced, it said. The Post report came just two days before Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice is to defend the deal in her testimony before Congress. The Post said that beyond the invasion of Iraq, "few of Bush's decisions have as much potential to shake the international order than his deal with India." Now, nuclear experts from across the political spectrum have urged Congress to modify the accord, which the administration and Indian officials say would tantamount to killing it. The Post also said the deal also went against two national objectives ? the desire to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and the desire to counter the rise of China, in this case by accelerating New Delhi's ascent as a global power.

The Time of India, 5 April 2006

Indo-US nuke deal in Rice cooker

There is no loss of nerve in the Bush administration over resistance to the US-India nuclear agreement from some American law-makers and there remains a commitment at the highest levels of the government to take the deal forward, a senior US administration official said on Monday. Asking that opposition to the deal from Senators and

Congressmen be seen in perspective in a system where complex forces are at work, the official, who spoke on background, suggested it was premature to pronounce the demise of the deal considering the President's commitment to the building closer ties with India. The official's comments came ahead of back-to-back hearings on Wednesday on the subject by the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) at which Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will testify. Rice, who will be the sole witness before SFRC, is expected to be grilled by the leadership of the 18-member committee which has ten Republicans and eight Democrats.

The Times of India, 6 April 2006

Rice defends deal to share nuke technology with India

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Wednesday urged Congress to approve an unprecedented US plan to share nuclear technology with India, saying past nonproliferation policies on India did not work. At a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Rice also addressed critics, who say the plan President George W. Bush agreed upon last month with India could dramatically increase India's nuclear arsenal. "Civil nuclear cooperation with India will not lead to an arms race in South Asia," she said. India has never signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and, Rice said, is unlikely to ever do so. "We are simply seeking to address an untenable situation," she said. "This agreement does bring India into the non-proliferation framework, and does strengthen the regime." Rice said the "path-breaking" deal "obviously deserves the support of the U.S. Senate," though she welcomed the Senate's "through review."

The Hindustan Times, 6 April 2006

Russia wants to join Iran pipeline project

Russia is interested in becoming an active partner in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline that would help India to meet its energy needs to a great extent. The Russian proposal to be a partner in the proposed pipeline project was conveyed by Prime Minister Mikhail Fradikov during his visit here. Russia has recently supplied 60 tonnes of low enriched uranium for the first and second reactor of the Tarapur nuclear plant. The Ambassador said there was a great potential of cooperation in nuclear and energy sectors and the excellent ties between the two countries could help further consolidate cooperation in the nuclear field.

The Times of India, 7 April 2006

Nuke deal gets thumbs up in Senate hearing

The U.S.-India nuclear deal got a big boost on Thursday when two top Democratic Senators joined their Republican colleagues in cautiously welcoming the agreement and promising qualified support. At a crucial hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the first hurdle in a long legislative process to give life to the deal, Senator Joseph Biden, the top Democrat on the Committee, and former Presidential candidate John Kerry, supported the Bush administration's initiative despite some reservations. Their backing came in contrast to withering criticism of the deal from two other Democrats in the 18-member committee, which has ten Republicans and eight Democrats. With no outright opposition from the half dozen Republicans who spoke, means the deal could easily clear the Senate Committee. However that is only the first step in a long process. It also has to be cleared by a House committee before it goes up to the full Senate and House. But the Senate hearing could set the tone for the legislative debate.

The Times of India, 8 April 2006

India snubs US demand to define credible N-deterrent

India on Saturday rejected the US suggestion that it define its credible minimum nuclear deterrent, asserting that it has "no responsibility" to "declare" it. In an interview to a TV channel, a day after US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher made the suggestion, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said "what our credible minimum deterrent would be is really for India to decide." He said India had, on various occasions pointed out this to the US. "Certainly there is no responsibility on part of India to declare what its minimum deterrent is," Saran said. Boucher on Friday had said India should "further define" its 'minimum credible deterrent' in the nuclear field, contending that it was "absolutely necessary" for decreasing tensions in Asia. Saran, who met Boucher on Friday, said the US official had not raised this issue with him. "We have a strategic dialogue with the US where we have agreed to exchange views on our respective nuclear doctrines as well as issues like missile defence," he said.

The Times of India, 9 April 2006

Failed nuclear deal will hit ties with US: India

A decision by the US Congress to block a landmark nuclear deal between the two countries would hit warming India-US relations, India's foreign secretary said on Saturday. "Given the kind of expectations which have been built up, if this deal does not for any reason go through, there will be some disappointed expectations," Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told NDTV news in New Delhi. "There will be a sense of lowered expectations which will have an impact on India-US relations." President George W. Bush's agreed a civil nuclear cooperation deal with India during a visit to the country last month. It needs approval by the US Congress to be enacted. Under the deal, energy-hungry India will receive U.S. nuclear technology -- including reactors and nuclear fuel-- and in return separate its military and civilian facilities, and open up some of its atomic plants to international inspections. This week, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged Congress to approve the deal, saying it would reduce India's dependence on Iranian oil and create thousands of American jobs.

The Times of India, 10 April 2006

'Nuclear deal will be ratified by Congress'

Republican Senator Chuck Hagel on Monday said there was a "positive" mood in the US Congress about the prospects of the India-US civil nuclear deal and hoped the deal will be ratified by it before the end of the year. Hagel, who is a member of influential Congressional panels including the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and briefed him on the "general positive mood and optimism" on Capitol Hill about the nuclear deal getting approval before the end of this year. "I hope that this agreement will be ratified before the end of this year. The general mood is very positive. This is a big and important issue," Hagel told reporters.

The Times of India, 11 April 2006

Tehran has enriched uranium: Rafsanjani

Former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Tuesday that Iran has enriched uranium using 164 centrifuges, a major development in nuclear fuel cycle technology, news agencies reported. Rafsanjani made the comment to the Kuwait News Agency during an interview in Tehran. "Iran has put into operation the first unit of 164 centrifuges, has injected (uranium) gas and has reached industrial production," the Kuwait News Agency quoted Rafsanjani as saying. "We should expand the work of these machines to achieve a full industrial line. We need dozens of these units (sets of 164 centrifuges) to achieve a uranium enrichment facility," he said. It was the first announcement that Iran had successfully enriched uranium since February when it began research at its enrichment facility in the town of Natanz. Enriching uranium to a low level produces fuel for nuclear reactors. To a higher level, it produces the material for a nuclear bomb. Iran would thousands of operating centrifuges to produce sufficient uranium for either purpose.

The Indian Express, 12 April 2006

Uranium enriched, says Iran

Iran has successfully enriched uranium for the first time, using 164 centrifuges, a major development in its nuclear programme, former Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Tuesday according to a news agency. Interviewed by the Kuwait News Agency in Tehran, Rafsanjani said: Iran has put into operation the first unit of 164 centrifuges, has injected (uranium) gas and has reached industrial production. It was the first announcement that Iran had successfully enriched uranium since February when it began research at its enrichment facility in the town of Natanz. Enriching uranium to a low level produces fuel for nuclear reactors. To a higher level, it produces the material for a nuclear bomb. Iran would require thousands of operating centrifuges to produce sufficient uranium for either purpose. Rafsanjani did not disclose the amount of uranium that Iran had enriched through the 164 centrifuges, but he said it would put the country in a good position for the visit later this week of Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency. When ElBaradei arrives in Iran, he will face new circumstances, Rafsanjani said, according to KUNA.

The Times of India, 13 April 2006

North Korea threatens to boost military deterrent

North Korea, on Thursday, threatened to use the delay in six-party nuclear talks to bolster its military "deterrent force." "It's not bad that the resumption of nuclear talks are delayed. During that period, we will make more deterrent force," said North's top nuclear envoy Kim Kye Gwan, speaking at a news conference in Tokyo. Kim added however, that North Korea is willing to return to international nuclear talks, aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, if the US lifts a freeze on disputed North Korean assets in a Macau bank. North Korea has refused to restart the talks unless the financial restrictions -- imposed on a Macau bank and North Korean

companies -- are lifted, but Washington has maintained the sanctions are unrelated to the nuclear talks and will stay in place.

The Times of India, 14 April 2006, 14 April 2006

Iran rejects uranium enrichment suspension

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Friday again rejected a demand by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to suspend its uranium enrichment process. "This is a legitimate and irrevocable right of the Iranian nation which we will decisively pursue regardless of threats and pressures," Ahmadinejad said on state television on the last day of his visit to the northeastern Khorassan province. While terming uranium enrichment as a red line over which Iran would not compromise with anyone, the president proclaimed on Thursday that Iran had already joined the world's nuclear states "and there would be no way back". Despite defying international demands to suspend uranium enrichment, Iran on Friday still hoped that the final report by the head of the to the UN Security Council would be "fair". "Iranian officials hope that (Mohamed) ElBaradei's report would be fair, logical and satisfactory for both sides," said Mohammed Saedi, deputy of Iran's Atomic Energy Agency.

The Times of India, 16 April 2006

'India wanted to end Tarapur pact with US in 80s'

In stark contrast to the current Indo-US nuke deal, which is now awaiting the approval of the US Congress, India's nuclear policy in the early 1980s was to terminate its bilateral agreement with US, especially with regard to its supplying fuel to the Tarapur Atomic Power Station (Taps). These units became operational in November 1969. This is revealed in a secret CIA document, which was made public on April 13. Called the "US Intelligence and the Indian Bomb", the document dated July 23, 1982, was approved for release in March 2000. But it took six years to get public. An official of the Indian department of atomic energy when contacted by TOI on Sunday said he was aware of the document, but declined to comment because of the critical phase of Indo-US ties at the moment. The CIA document says: "India's longer term objective is to terminate its bilateral agreement with the US and thereby, US control and leverage over the Indian nuclear programme. India would then preserve its option to develop peaceful nuclear explosions and escape US pressure to submit all of its nuclear facilities to international safeguards.

The Times of India, 17 April 2006

No N-test clause in pact with US: MEA

Maintaining its commitment to a unilateral moratorium on further nuclear testing, India has rejected a US proposal for a cap on its nuclear testing saying such a provision has no place in the proposed bilateral agreement. The MEA spokesperson said India had already told the US that this provision in the "123 Agreement" that was currently being negotiated was not acceptable. A draft agreement sent by the US stipulated several elements one of which said cooperation will be discontinued if India were to detonate a nuclear explosive device. "In preliminary discussions on these elements, India has already conveyed to US that such a provision has no place in the proposed bilateral agreement and that India is bound only by what is contained in the July 18 Joint Statement, that is, continuing its commitment to a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing," MEA spokesman Navtej Sarna said. "US had shared with India some weeks ago a preliminary draft agreement on Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation under Article 123 of US Atomic Energy Act," he said.

The Indian Express, 18 April 2006

Iran's new nuclear technology claim worries experts

The Indian Express, 18 April 2006 Iran's new nuclear technology claim worries experts Of all the claims that Iran made last week about its nuclear programme, a one-sentence assertion by its President has provoked such surprise and concern among international nuclear inspectors they are planning to confront Tehran about it this week. The assertion involves Iran's claim that even while it begins to enrich small amounts of uranium, it is pursuing a far more sophisticated way of making atomic fuel that American officials and inspectors say could speed Iran's path to developing a nuclear weapon. Iran has consistently maintained that it abandoned work on this advanced technology, called the P-2 centrifuge, three years ago. Western analysts long suspected that Iran had a second, secret programme based on the black market offerings of the renegade Pakistani nuclear engineer Abdul Qadeer Khan separate from the activity at its main nuclear facility at Natanz. But they had no proof. Then last Thursday, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that Tehran was presently conducting research on the P-2 centrifuge, boasting that it would quadruple Iran's enrichment powers.

The Times of India, 19 April 2006

Iran crisis: Nuclear strikes an option, says Bush

The United States on Tuesday failed to secure international support for targeted sanctions against Iran and President George W. Bush refused to rule out nuclear strikes if diplomacy failed to curb the Islamic Republic's atomic ambitions. Bush said he would discuss Iran's nuclear activities with China's President Hu Jintao, who has been cool toward sanctions, during his US visit this week. Asked if his options included planning for a nuclear strike, Bush said: "All options are on the table. We want to solve this issue diplomatically and we're working hard to do so." But a meeting of major powers in Moscow ended without consensus despite strong US pressure for international sanctions. Washington believes Iraq is trying to build bombs but Tehran says it is only developing nuclear energy.

The Indian Express, 20 April 2006

Russia calls for halt to Iran N-programme

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov today called on Iran to halt all uranium enrichment activities, saying the international community is demanding urgent and constructive steps from Tehran to ease concerns about its nuclear programme, the Itar-Tass news agency reported. Iran must heed the call to stop work linked to uranium enrichment, the agency quoted Lavrov as saying a day after a meeting in Moscow of diplomats from the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany. All participants in the meeting agreed that urgent and constructive steps are demanded of Iran in response to the decision of the board of the IAEA, which has called on Tehran to stop enrichment activity, Lavrov said.

Times of India, 20 April 2006

Russia to help Iran build nuke plant

Russia Thursday rejected US calls to halt the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant for Iran amid international efforts to contain Tehran's nuclear aspirations. "The construction of Bushehr does not breach regulations on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons," said Sergei Kiriyenko, head of the Russian state nuclear authority Rosatom, during a visit to the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek. He was responding to media reports that during multilateral talks on Iran in Moscow this week US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns had urged a complete halt to all nuclear cooperation with the Gulf state.

Times of India, 21 April 2006

Tehran, India on different planes: Blair

British prime minister Tony Blair has angrily rejected comparisons between nuclear-defiant Iran and non-Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty-compliant India, saying he supports the US-India agreement on civilian nuclear proposition. Blair told the British parliament that it was futile to make comparisons between Indian and Iranian nuclear aspirations because "India is a very, very different proposition from Iran". Questioned by British MPs about self-evident double standards in the West's approach to India, which has not even signed the NPT and Iran, which has signed it, Blair said there was no parallel between the two countries.

The Indian Express, 21 April 2006

Blair rules out invasion of Iran

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said today that no one is talking about invading Iran, but argued that the international community must send a strong, unified message in the dispute about Tehran's nuclear programme. Asked in the House of Commons whether he would rule out a military attack on Iran, Blair said: I've said constantly Iran is not Iraq. Nobody is talking about military invasion. But Blair said: I do not think it is time to send a message of weakness because Iran's President has called for Israel to be wiped off the map and there has been at least tacit acceptance by Tehran for young people signing up to be suicide bombers directed at US, UK and Israeli targets. Earlier, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said that while Iran was showing signs of responding to international pressure over its nuclear programme, he doubted Tehran would meet the UN Security Council's deadline for ceasing uranium enrichment.

The Indian Express, 22 April 2006

Moratorium basis of N-deal with India, says US

India's decision to have a moratorium on nuclear tests is the basis for Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement, a top Bush administration official said today. This would continue to be the key factor for any civilian nuclear co-operation with India in the future. In his first interaction with media from South-Central Asia, the Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Boucher, said: We all understand India has a moratorium on nuclear testing and it has made a public commitment itself, based on its own decision to continue that moratorium on nuclear testing.

Boucher said the voluntary moratorium announced by India is very important to us and others who look forward to cooperating with it in the area of civilian nuclear power.

The Times of India, 23 April 2006

Germany may support Indo-US nuke deal

Germany, an influential member of nuclear suppliers group (NSG), on Sunday indicated its support to the Indo-US civil nuclear deal. "We will be following discussions (on the deal) taking place in the US Congress. US Congress has to support it. I have listened to the Prime Minister. The discussions will follow in the NSG," German Chancellor Angela Merkel told a joint press conference after her talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here. "We are following the developments. We are on positive path," she said. Merkel said the Prime Minister had affirmed India's commitment to non-proliferation and this would make it easier for Germany. She said this commitment was important for Germany and if the process continues as it is in the US Congress, then Germany is willing to cooperate. "We have not reached the end of the process," she said. Merkel said that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director general Mohammed El Baradei had welcomed the Indo-US deal and this would be useful to Germany in making a decision.

The Times of India, 24 April 2006

Indo-Iran gas link deal in June

Pakistan, India and Iran are likely to sign their \$7 billion gas pipeline deal in June, in defiance of US pressure, Pakistan's and India's oil ministers said on Sunday. The oil ministers of Iran and Pakistan had said the three countries were very near final agreement on the project to pump Iranian gas through Pakistan to India. Iranian Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri had said he expected the signing to take place in Tehran in June, but Indian and Pakistan had not given a precise time scale. "Most probably it will be signed in June," Amanullah Khan Jadoon said on Sunday. Indian Oil Minister Murli Deora also said on Sunday a June signing was likely and that he was impatient for progress on the project first mooted more than a decade ago.

The Financial Express, 25 April 2006

US bans Indian nuclear blasts?

The United States will stick to its insistence that India adhere to a moratorium on testing atomic weapons as part of a deal that would give India access to U.S. and foreign nuclear technology for the first time in three decades, senior officials said on Monday. The testing issue has emerged as the latest wrinkle in the deal, which includes supplying nuclear fuel and reactors to meet India's civilian energy needs. U.S. Ambassador to India David Mulford expressed confidence the testing issue would be successfully resolved, but acknowledged that Congress may not vote on the deal until after the November election. The agreement "is being worked on and there will have to be some sort of wording arrangement (on testing), which has not been agreed. It's a matter to be discussed" with India, he told the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

Times of India, 26 April 2006

Indo-Pak talks on nuclear-CBMs makes progress

The Indo-Pak expert-level talks on nuclear and conventional confidence building measures (CBMs) made "considerable progress" on the first day on Tuesday on the Indian proposal to work out an agreement on reducing risk of nuclear accidents. "We have made considerable progress on the RRNA (Reducing Risk of Nuclear Accidents) and hope to finalise a framework agreement by tomorrow," an official attending the first round of the three-day talks between Additional Secretary of External Affairs Ministry KC Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Tariq Usman Haider said. RRNA is considered as an important CBM to prepare the establishments on both sides to deal with any situation arising out of nuclear accidents. In a brief comment after the talks, Singh said India is following a step-by-step approach to work out CBMs with Pakistan in nuclear and conventional areas. Both sides tried to move forward on the nuclear CBMs, he said.

The Indian Express, 26 April 2006, 26 April 2006

Ignoring US, Russia delivers nuclear fuel to India

Russia has delivered fresh nuclear fuel for two Indian reactors, ignoring a U.S. request for a delay until rules are formally changed to allow such transfers, American officials said in recent interviews. The delivery, which experts say violates international rules, comes as the U.S. Congress is considering whether to approve an agreement that would allow India to obtain nuclear fuel, reactors and technology from the United States and other countries for the first time in three decades. The Russian fuel for the two Tarapur power plants "has been delivered but it has

not yet been used. It's in a storage facility," a senior U.S. official told Reuters. "This kind of activity should not take place, in our view, until the NSG has acted. It's not good precedent," he said.

The Times of India, 27 April 2006

Beyond no war: India, Pak to reduce nuclear accidents risk

India and Pakistan on Wednesday decided to carry forward deliberations on a draft treaty proposed by New Delhi to reduce risk of nuclear accidents after failing to carve out an agreement at the end of two days of talks on nuclear and conventional confidence building measures. The draft 'Reducing Risk of Nuclear Accidents' was discussed threadbare at the talks led by Additional Secretary of External Affairs Ministry KC Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Tariq Usman Haider during the fourth round of talks here on working out confidence building measures in the nuclear arena. There was "certain amount of concentration on the draft agreement to reducing risk of nuclear accidents. The proposal was mooted by India. We put in suggestions and Indian side added further suggestions. But some areas of difference remained", Haider said. Addressing a joint press conference with Singh after the second day of parleys, Haider said both sides had a good round of talks in a positive and good spirit.

The Indian Express, 27 April 2006

Iran to ignore UNSC demands

Iran will ignore any UN Security Council demands to halt its disputed nuclear programme, hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed today. If international institutions respect our legitimate rights, we will respect their decisions. However, we will not regard these decisions as valid if they are intended to deny us our rights, he was quoted as saying by the official news agency IRNA. We hope they will fulfil their duty lawfully so that the Islamic republic will not need to reconsider its relations with them, he added. He reiterated his view that Iran could reconsider its commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its cooperation with the IAEA if it felt it was not benefiting from abiding by international protocols.

The Times of India, 28 April 2006

Japan, India to hold disarmament talks

The Indo-US civilian nuclear pact would be among a host of issues to be discussed between India and Japan during their first senior working-level talks on disarmament and nonproliferation next week. The talks, to be held next Monday in New Delhi, are based on an agreement their nations reached during Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso's visit to India in January, the Foreign Ministry here said on Wednesday. Under the accord, talks of this kind will be held annually, it said. While the Indian delegation will be led by Hamid Ali Rao, joint secretary for disarmament and international security affairs of the Ministry of External Affairs, the Japanese delegation will be led by Takeshi Nakane, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Science Department. The two countries are expected to take up during their discussions the Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation, the state of India's missile development and measures on the reduction of biological and chemical weapons. Japan at the same time will call on India to step up its involvement in disarmament efforts.

The Indian Express, 28 April 2006

Bush admin draws flak for not being transparent on nuke deal

The Bush administration has come under fire from US senators who have accused it of not being transparent with them on the landmark Indo-US civil nuclear deal and for having reneged on a promise to share drafts of the agreement, but cautioned that the pact should not be tinkered with at this stage. The Bush administration paid little attention to our concerns as it negotiated with India the separation plan and that it submitted a legislative proposal to the Senate and a decision proposal to the Nuclear Suppliers Group that were so poorly drafted as to cast doubt on the administration's seriousness of purpose, ranking Democrat Joseph Biden said at a hearing on the deal on Wednesday. At the start of the hearing, the Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee Richard Lugar, Republican from Indiana, stressed that while his Committee is cognizant of how valuable a closer relationship with India could be for the administration, law makers must examine the implications and risks of initiating a cooperative nuclear relationship with India.

The Indian Express, 29 April 2006

IAEA report says Iran defies UN demands

The world's nuclear watchdog said in a report circulated today that Iran has ignored a UN Security Council call to suspend all nuclear fuel enrichment and has accelerated the programme. However, IAEA inspectors have found no hard proof that Iran has a military nuclear programme, but IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei has said he still cannot

say for sure that it is not conducting one in secret. The report was sent to the UNSC which could eventually impose sanctions on Iran. Tehran has said its enrichment policy is irreversible. It has vowed to withstand any consequences, whether financial penalties or military attack. However, hours before details of the IAEA report emerged, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran would pay no heed to any UN measure designed to rein in its nuclear programme. The IAEA report confirmed that Iran had flouted the UNSC's demands. The IAEA also said Iran had done little during a 30-day grace period to answer questions meant to determine whether its nuclear programme is purely civilian. The report said IAEA tests confirmed Iran's claim this month to have enriched uranium with a cascade of 164 centrifuges to the low level needed to fuel nuclear power plants. It must be purified to a much higher level for bomb-making.