

The Hindu, 1 April 2008

**CPI(M) for talks between China and the Dalai Lama**

COIMBATORE: Agreeing with the India stand, which recognises Tibet as part of China as an autonomous region, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Monday favoured dialogue between China and representatives of the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for sorting out their differences on the issue. While discussing the draft political resolution during the day, the Tibet issue was referred to by several speakers. They pointed out that the issue was being used for anti-China propaganda and efforts were on to spoil relations between India and China.

The Hindu, 1 April 2008

**New U.K. immigration norms from today**

NEW DELHI: From Tuesday, all potential Indian immigrants to the U.K. must pass through the Points Based System (PBS), Tier 1. This replaces the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme. Under the PBS, applicants will need sufficient points to qualify. And in case they qualify, the initial visa will be issued for three years instead of two. Points would be awarded for criteria such as qualifications, previous earnings, age and U.K. experience. The new norms are being introduced tier by tier, and Tier 1 is being rolled out in India first. The rollout to the rest of the world will take place in the coming months.

The Hindu, 2 April 2008

**India asks Dalai Lama to refrain from political activities**

New Delhi: India has asked the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, not to engage in political activities that could hurt the country ties with China, media reports said on Tuesday. Dalai Lama is a religious leader. India will render all the hospitality to him as he is a respectable guest, he will have full freedom to preach religion in India but he can not conduct any political activity in this country that harms India-China ties, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said in remarks broadcast on TV channels.

The Asian Age, 2 April 2008

**Burma general arrives**

New Delhi, April 1: India and Burma are expected to sign an agreement on the Kaladan multi-modal project during the five-day visit of Vice-Senior General Maung Aye.

Hindustan Times, 3 April 2008

**China appreciates India stand on Tibet**

Beijing: China has appreciated India for urging the Dalai Lama not to engage in political activities that could hurt its ties with Beijing, as it briefed New Delhi on the Tibet situation for the second time in less than a week and sought its continued support on the issue. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi spoke to his Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee over phone and discussed the Tibet issue, bilateral relations and the Olympic Torch relay in New Delhi, Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told PTI here. China had earlier expressed its concerns to India over a smooth passage of the relay amidst fears that Tibetans might attempt to disrupt it. India had assured a trouble-free event.

The Hindu, 3 April 2008

### **Dhaka-Kolkata train from April 14**

DHAKA: Removing the last obstacle to starting the long-awaited India-Bangladesh direct passenger train service, the two countries have decided to begin the Dhaka-Kolkata train on the first day of the Bengali New Year, Pahela Baishakh, on April 14. The launching of the train on the Bengali New Year day became uncertain after the West Bengal government requested the Centre last week to defer the date to the last week of May. The plea was that the programme might violate the code of conduct for the panchayat elections scheduled for that month. A train each will leave Dhaka and Kolkata on Saturdays and start the return journey on Sundays. The fares will be between \$8 (Indian Rupee 319) and \$20 (Rs. 797) depending on classes for the 538-km journey-418 km in Bangladesh and 120 km in India. India has already set up infrastructure such as customs and immigration facilities, passengers waiting halls and other related facilities at the Gede station.

The Asian Age, 4 April 2008

### **China appreciates India steps**

New Delhi, April 3: China appreciates the steps taken by India to ensure security of Chinese missions in India and is confident the passage of the Olympic torch through India would be smooth, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi told minister of external affairs Pranab Mukherjee in a telephonic conversation on Wednesday. The spokesman said it had been a consistent stand of India and noted that China's state councillor Dai Bingguo had a very good telephonic conversation with national security adviser M.K. Narayanan.

The Asian Age, 4 April 2008

### **Tibet to reopen to tourists on May 1**

Beijing, April 3: China announced on Thursday that foreign tourists would be allowed to travel into Tibet again from May 1, after the Himalayan region was sealed-off following violent unrest there last month. Independent travellers as well as those on group tours would be welcomed back, the official Xinhua news agency said, citing Tibet tourism bureau.

Indian Express, 5 April 2008

### **India, Turkmenistan to sign historic pact on natural fuel today**

Ashgabat, (Turkmenistan), April 4: New Delhi and Ashgabat will on Saturday sign a historic pact that would give India a footing equal to the Chinese in Turkmenistan. The MoU would open avenues for bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the upstream and downstream hydro-carbon activities. Though Turkmenistan has offered off-shore exploration blocks to India, only China has been given a discovered field for development which would supply 30 billion cubic metres of natural gas to China over 30 years.

The Hindu, 5 April 2008

### **Lord Paul to lead UK Parliamentary delegation to West Bengal**

London (PTI): A high-level British Parliamentary delegation led by Lord Swraj Paul will embark on a week-long visit to West Bengal on Sunday to explore possibilities of

enhancing two-way investment and trade. For me it is like going home. We plan to discuss investment from Britain to West Bengal and from West Bengal to Britain, Paul, leading NRI industrialist, told PTI shortly before embarking for Kolkata. During their stay in West Bengal, the delegation will meet members of the FICCI, visit Shantiniketan where Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore founded Viswa Bharati, Mother Teresa's mission and the Belur Mutt, made famous by Swami Vivekanand.

The Hindu, 6 April 2008

### **China to develop Bhubaneswar, Bangalore railway stations**

New Delhi (PTI): India will utilise Chinese expertise to reconstruct Bhubaneswar and Bangalore railway stations to world class level. Recently a railway team from China had visited India and had gone to these two stations to have a first-hand knowledge. The Chinese team will soon submit a report suggesting the ways to go about the proposal. Based on their suggestions, railways would decide the future course of action.

Hindustan Times, 6 April 2008

### **Tata takeover a turning point in car industry: UK experts**

Tata's takeover of Jaguar and Land Rover will be a key turning point in the car industry history, automobile experts say. Coventry-based Nick Seale of the Warwick Manufacturing Group believes that the takeover will also be of global and historic significance. Seale said: When the history of the motor industry is written, they will look back on this event as one of the key turning points. The Indian purchase of two of the strongest brands in the world car industry is really significant because the industry, 20 years from now will be very different, and if I was a betting man I will say India will be a major player.

The Hindu, 6 April 2008

### **India to open first tourism office in China**

New Delhi (PTI): In a bid to attract more Chinese tourists, India is set to launch an aggressive campaign in the neighbouring country to showcase its historical and cultural sites. An Indian tourism office will come up in Beijing on Monday. A cultural programme will be organised at Hotel Beijing in the evening. Roadshows and distribution of literature in Chinese language on the tourism potential in India will also be conducted. The office will be inaugurated by Tourism and Culture Minister Ambika Soni.

The Hindu, 7 April 2008

### **India strengthens its presence in African Indian Ocean Rim**

London (PTI): Spurred by Chinese expansion, India is massively strengthening its involvement in the African Indian Ocean Rim pursuing defence and commercial engagement with countries including Mauritius, Seychelles and Mozambique, a leading think tank here said on Monday. The first-ever India-Africa Summit opens in New Delhi tomorrow and marks a change in Indo-African ties across economic, political and social spheres.

The Hindu, 7 April 2008

### **Indo-German Naval exercises to commence tomorrow**

Kochi (PTI): The Indo-German bilateral Naval exercise which will see participation of three German warships including an Air Defence Ship (ADS) and two Indian naval vessels will commence off the Kerala coast on Tuesday. The ten-hour exercise is the third with the Indian navy and is being held in the context of the Indo-German Defence Cooperation Agreement signed in 2006, Commander of the 2nd Flotilla Rear Admiral Karl-Wilhelm Bollow and Captain Michael Budde told reporters on board the ADS--F-220 in the presence of German Ambassador to India, Bernd Motzelburg.

The Hindu, 9 April 2008

### **India doubles credit to Africa**

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday announced a duty-free tariff preference scheme for exports from 50 least developed countries (LDCs). Of these, 34 are in Africa. Declaring open the India-Africa Forum Summit here, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also said that credit assistance to Africa would be more than doubled for five years from the next fiscal. India planned to enhance the Foreign Office Aid to Africa budget to execute human skills improvement projects. Over the next 5-6 years, it proposed to undertake projects against grants in excess of over dollar 500 million.

Times of India, 9 April 2008

### **Shah Jahan dagger up for sale in London**

NEW DELHI: Sotheby has cancelled the auction of a set of armour that some Sikhs believe belonged to Guru Gobind Singh, but another item from Indian history will be up for sale in London on Thursday a personal dagger (khanjar) of Mughul emperor, Shah Jahan. According to Bonham catalogue, the 40.8cm long dagger (including scabbard) with a 20.5cm long blade has a curving, watered steel and tapering blade, swollen at the tip, double-edged with a central ridge, gold koftgiri decoration on either side below the forte consisting of a cartouche bearing two long narrow rectangular panels.

The Indian Express, 9 April 2008

### **India Pledges Aid to African Leaders**

NEW DELHI (AP) -- India pledged Tuesday to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in development projects in Africa in an attempt to bolster its presence on the continent, where economic rival China has already invested billions of dollars. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, speaking to the leaders of 14 African nations attending the first India-Africa summit, said India will provide more than dollars 500 million over the next five to six years in grants for development projects.

The Hindu, 9 April 2008

### **Highly skilled Indians score a win in U.K.**

London: Highly skilled Indian workers in the United Kingdom on Tuesday won a landmark judgment when the High Court ruled that it was not open to the government to alter the terms and conditions of an old scheme under which thousands of such employees came to Britain. Upholding the revision petition filed by the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme (HSMP) Forum against retrospective changes effected to the HSMP in November 2006, the judgment said: The old scheme constituted an integrated and entire programme.

The Times of India, 10 April 2008

**India to help modernise Iranian rail network**

NEW DELHI: Even as the gas pipeline project with Iran hangs in balance, India is likely to help the country in modernisation and expansion of its rail network. Iran, facing UN sanctions, has sought India's expertise in upgrading its train operations, signaling system and electrical work besides training its personnel as part of its plans to modernise the railway system. Responding to a request from the Iran government, Railway Board Chairman K C Jena along with two senior officers will travel to Tehran on Friday to hold discussions with the Iranian railway officials.

The Hindu, 10 April 2008

**Bangladesh, India sign final draft for train service**

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh and India on Thursday signed the final agreement for launching Dhaka-Kolkata train services on April 14 coinciding with the Bengali new year Pahela Boishakh, officials said. The officials said Communications secretary Mahbubur Rahman and Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty penned the final agreement at the ministry to roll out the much-awaited trans-national train services.

Hindustan Times, 11 April 2008

**Shahjahan dagger to go under Bonham hammer**

The gold encrusted dagger that Mughal Emperor Shahjahan once carried, will be sold by the International fine art auction house, Bonham on April 10. The base bid price will be up to Pounds 500,000 (Rs 3.9 crore). The exquisitely beautiful dagger, dated 1629-1630, is from the collection of the late Jacques Desenfans, a Lyon-based Belgian textile magnate who had a passion for Islamic, Indian and Southeast Asian history and culture.

The Asian Age, 11 April 2008

**Chinese seek protest ban, Delhi says no**

New Delhi, April 10: India has sternly but politely told China that while it will ensure adequate security for the New Delhi leg of the Olympic torch relay, scheduled for April 17, it will not entertain the Chinese demand to completely sanitise the national capital by banning people from congregating near or along the route. India was a democracy, the government is learnt to have told the Chinese side, and a wholesale ban on protests and demonstrations was out of the question. According to sources, government representatives told a visiting Chinese security delegation that necessary steps will be taken to ensure the peaceful passage of the torch and the Tibetan community had been urged to refrain from holding demonstrations. The Olympic torch is set to arrive in India on April 17.

The Asian Age, 11 April 2008

**India wants N-powers to follow French line**

New Delhi, April 10: India welcomes President Nicolas Sarkozy decision to reduce France stockpile of nuclear warheads but it is time all the nuclear weapon states became engaged in multilateral negotiations for the early elimination of nuclear weapons, according to Mr Shyam Saran, the Prime Minister special envoy for the India-United

States nuclear deal and climate change. The time has come for all of us, all the nuclear weapon states, to engage in multilateral negotiations for the early elimination of nuclear weapons ... because there is a new dimension, which is the link between terrorism and the weapons of mass destruction and that kind of a link, unless we address that, we may find ourselves target of terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction, he said in an exclusive interview to this newspaper.

The Hindu, 11 April 2008

**India, Africa to work together on U.N. seat**

NEW DELHI: India and Africa have decided to work together in supporting each other for permanent representation in the United Nations Security Council. They also resolved to evolve a common stand on the issue of rising oil and food prices, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declaring on Wednesday that India will chart out its own path while engaging Africa.

Times of India, 12 April 2008

**Two Indian engineers killed in Afghanistan**

HERAT, AFGHANISTAN: A suicide bomber blew himself up near a convoy of Indian roadworkers in southwestern Afghanistan on Saturday, killing two Indian engineers and injuring several people, a governor said.

Hindustan Times, 12 April 2008

**Pratibha Patil leaves for Latin America**

Aiming to further strengthen ties with the Latin American countries, President Pratibha Patil on Saturday embarked on maiden visit to Brazil, Mexico and Chile during which she would address Parliaments, sign two agreements and interact with the business communities. The 13-day visit is in response to invitations from the Presidents of the three friendly countries.

The Times of India, 12 April 2008

**Kolkata-Dhaka train to be flagged off on Monday**

NEW DELHI: After 43 years, India and Bangladesh will resume train service to connect the peoples of the two countries. On Bengali new year's day, Poila Boishakh, on April 14, foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee will flag off the inaugural Maitree Express from Kolkata, bound for Dhaka.

Times of India, 12 April 2008

**Chinese cargo airline gets govt clearance**

NEW DELHI: India on Friday gave security clearance to Chinese cargo airline, Great Wall, to operate flights to the country but Jet Airways ❖?? which is yet to get permission to fly to Shanghai ❖?? is now likely to further delay its launch by a month. Despite initial security concerns, India had decided to let Great Wall fly to India and in return Jet was to get the clearance. This informal understanding was worked out during PM Manmohan Singh visit to China in January 2008.

Hindustan Times, 12 April 2008

**MEA servers hacked, China hand suspected**

India relations with China are delicately poised with the Tibet issue gaining centre-stage internationally, but the alleged hacking predates the current crisis, the sources added. Officially, the MEA refused to either deny or confirm the reports. The hackers broke into MEA internal communications network, possibly accessing e-mails through which officials communicate policy and decisions across the ministry offices in India and in our foreign missions. The communication with foreign missions is supposedly encrypted and secure. But breaking into the system would enable a hacker to listen in on the internal confabulations of policy-making.

Indian Express, 13 April 2008

**Climate change, UN reforms on top of Patil agenda**

On Board Special Aircraft: Aware of the diplomatic significance- apart from bilateral relations- of her first overseas tour as President of India, Pratibha Patil has said south-south cooperation in major global issues like climate change, terrorism and Doha round of trade negotiations along with United Nations reforms are part of her agenda. The President was speaking to reporters on board her special aircraft on Saturday after embarking on a tour of Brazil, Mexico and Chile. On the stand-off on the Doha round of trade negotiations, Patil said experts were still working on it and added that a final view by the country would not pre-empt the negotiations, rather it would be taken after some progress is made at the talks. On terrorism, Patil said India shared a common view of zero tolerance towards it along with these countries.

The Hindu, 13 April 2008

**Sabeel to be deported**

London: Bangalore doctor Sabeel Ahmed was sentenced to 18 months in jail after he pleaded guilty to withholding information about his brother plot to blow up the Glasgow airport in a suicide attack, but he will be deported to India immediately because of the time he served on remand. Sabeel (26) was released on Friday night into the custody of immigration services and he will be voluntarily deported. Justice Calvert-Smith said he accepted the plea that there was no sign that Sabeel was an extremist or party to extremist views. But he should have shared with the authorities his knowledge of the terror activities of his brother Kafeel Ahmed. Sabeel, who worked at the Halton hospital in Runcom, admitted that he failed to inform the police of the terrorist attack.

Hindustan Times, 14 April 2008

**Kolkata-Dhaka Moitree Express flagged off**

The Kolkata-Dhaka Moitree Express was on Monday flagged off on Bengali New Year's Day by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, resuming passenger train services between the two neighbouring countries after 43 years. Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, Information and Broadcasting Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi and Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Liquat Ali Chowdhury were present at the Kolkata railway terminal in north Kolkata at the flag-off ceremony along with a host of dignitaries.

The Hindu, 14 April 2008

**HRW wants India to stop forced eviction of people**

New York (PTI): An international human rights watchdog has urged the Indian government to stop alleged forced eviction and relocation of tens of thousands of people from their forest settlements in Andhra Pradesh where, it claimed, they sought safety from the Naxal violence. The HRW said that its investigation in November and December last year showed that most villagers fled to Andhra Pradesh because of attacks by Salwa Judum and police.

Hindustan Times, 15 April 2008

**People bee-line to get clicked with Pratibha Patil in Brazil**

It was a photo opportunity for dozens of Indians in this commercial capital of Brazil as President Pratibha Patil began her first leg of three nation tour to Latin America. After her brief inaugural speech at the reception hosted in her honour, the organisers of the function, possibly surprised at an early end of the function, asked all those who had gathered to queue up for clicking themselves with the first woman president of India and within no time the entire hall at a five-star hotel saw people bee-lining for the opportunity, taking the security by surprise.

The Hindu, 15 April 2008

**Abdul Kalam to visit Canada**

Toronto (PTI): Former President Dr Abdul Kalam will embark on a three-day private visit to Canada from April 17 to present Global India Award and address a number of meetings with top scientists in various universities. During his visit Kalam will present the Global India award, instituted by Canada India Foundation, carrying a plaque and USD 50,000, to Sam Pitroda for his outstanding contributions in the field of telecommunications.

The Hindu, 16 April 2008

**India, Russia deadlock on Admiral Gorshkov persists: Antony**

New Delhi (PTI): India and Russia are still to break the deadlock on Moscow demand for hike in cost of the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov and have not come to terms on the new price for the warship. Defence Minister AK Antony told the Rajya Sabha that the Russian side had submitted a revised master schedule indicating a delay in the project and an increase in the price for repair and re-equipping of the carrier. Gorshkov, according to new schedule submitted by Moscow, would now only be ready for delivery earliest by 2011. Government faced a number of queries on the delays of supply of weapon systems not only from Russia, but from other countries too. The Defence Minister said that Defence Procurement policy of 2006 had provisions to streamline the procurement procedure and laid down a broad time frame for acquisitions.

The Asian Age, 16 April 2008

**Maoist chief: King to go in a month**

Kathmandu/New Delhi: Maoist leader Prachanda, whose party has scored a commanding lead in the recent polls in Nepal, has set a one-month deadline for the abolition of the 240-year-old monarchy in the Himalayan state. It has already been agreed at a meeting of

the seven political parties on the interim constitution, he said. All the parties have agreed. Therefore, I propose that we abolish the monarchy in the first meeting. Everything will be clear in a month. With the Maoists getting a commanding lead in the results of last week historic elections, the abolition of Nepal monarchy is now a matter of procedure and details. The Maoists have managed to win 114 seats out of the 208 which have been declared till Tuesday evening.

The Asian Age, 16 April 2008

### **All parties wooing me: Kiran Bedi**

Toronto: Kiran Bedi, India first woman police officer, has said that several Indian political parties have approached her since she quit the service last year. Saying she was nonpartisan and that people issues were more important to her, Ms Bedi took a dig at Indian political parties with a cryptic comment: All of them are the same. Ms Bedi, who was the chief guest at an awards ceremony over the weekend organised by a Punjabi language newspaper here, did not identify the political parties that she said had contacted her. At the event, a leader of the Indo-Canadian community urged Ms Bedi to aspire to be Prime Minister of India. Speaking later, Mr Dosanjh said Ms Bedi stood out for her achievements and integrity. I wish every Indian police officer was like her.

The Hindu, 17 April 2008

### **India must ensure essential goods flow to Nepal: Prachanda**

Kathmandu (PTI): Maoist supremo Prachanda, whose party is set to lead a coalition government in Nepal, has said India must ensure a steady supply of essential goods to his land-locked country keeping in mind the sensitive political situation. If a proper atmosphere for cooperation can be created in this matter, it will certainly help in taking the bilateral relations to a new high, he told businessmen at the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries here on Wednesday evening. The Maoist chief said if any problem arises in the smooth supply of essential goods to Nepal from India at this sensitive political situation, it would have a long-term negative impact on bilateral relations.

Hindustan Times, 17 April 2008

### **Malaysian government shuts down newspaper for ethnic Indians**

Kuala Lumpur: The Malaysian government has shut down a newspaper catering to ethnic minority Indians, a move the daily news editor slammed on Thursday as punishment for its critical coverage of social and political issues. The Tamil-language Makkal Osai, or People Voice, received a letter from the Home Ministry on Wednesday saying its operating license would not be renewed, news editor B. R. Rajan said. The letter gave no reason, Rajan said. No edition of Makkal Osai was published on Thursday. Rajan said Makkal Osai, which employs more than 100 people, would appeal to the ministry to reconsider its decision. Being journalists, we did our job. We just reported what has happened, Rajan said, adding that the paper would be more careful if its operating license was renewed.

The Hindu, 18 April 2008

### **Indian peacekeepers save passengers of a crashed plane**

New Delhi (PTI): Moving in swiftly, Indian peacekeepers in Congo rescued several injured passengers after a plane crashed in the North Kivu province of the African nation on Tuesday. A rescue team of sixth battalion of the Sikh Light Infantry, led by Commanding Officer Col S A Sharma, rushed along with all available officers and troops of the unit to the location and rescued six persons and evacuated them to the military hospital, a Defence Ministry spokesman said.

The Hindu, 18 April 2008

### **Bangladeshi immigrants pose threat to internal security**

New Delhi (PTI): Illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, present in large numbers across the country, pose a grave threat to India internal security, a Parliamentary panel has noted. A large presence of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants poses a grave threat to the internal security and it should be viewed strongly, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs said in its latest report. The Committee, headed by Sushma Swaraj, also said in its 46-page report that counterfeit notes were in large circulation along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

Hindustan Times, 18 April 2008

### **11 Indians hurt in Malaysia mishap**

Two persons were killed and 11 Indian nationals injured, some of them seriously, when a scaffolding with several slabs of granite and construction materials plunged 15 metres to the ground in the Malaysian capital and hit the workers standing beneath. The Indians were all reported to be from Punjab who had come to Malaysia to work as construction site workers.

The Hindu, 18 April 2008

### **China has appreciated India role: Pranab**

NEW DELHI: China had called Indian ambassador to Beijing Nirupama Rao to express appreciation over the prompt action in apprehending some Tibetan refugees who had forcibly entered the Chinese embassy here on March 21, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply to a question on Thursday.

The Hindu, 18 April 2008

### **Vaiko meets PM on Sri Lanka Tamils issue**

New Delhi: Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam general secretary Vaiko on Thursday met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here and requested the government to mount diplomatic pressure on the Sri Lankan government to stop its military offensive and initiate peace talks for a workable solution to fulfil the aspirations of Sri Lankan Tamils. Mr. Vaiko told The Hindu that he had explained to Dr. Singh the outcome of an international conference on Peace and Reconciliation in South Asia held in Oslo on April 10 and 11 under the auspices of the International Association for Human Values.

The Times of India, 18 April 2008

### **Protocol jitters: President forgets to honour flag in Mexico**

MEXICO: President Pratibha Patil gave protocol jitters as she inadvertently passed the Mexican flag at the ceremonial reception without bowing but quickly went back after her

attention was drawn by the Mexican Guard Commander. Patil, who was inspecting a guard of honour by the Mexican Presidential Guards, walked past the flag without realising that her Mexican counterpart Felipe Calderon had stopped to pay respect to his country flag.

The Hindu, 19 April 2008

### **Nepal situation not misread**

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee claimed on Friday that India had not misread the situation in Nepal, where the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has emerged victorious in the recent elections to the Constituent Assembly. No question of misreading, Mr. Mukherjee said, pointing out that India had contributed to the Maoists giving up arms and joining the political mainstream.

The Hindu, 19 April 2008

### **Relief for skilled Indian migrants in U.K.**

London: In what may sound as music to the ears of highly-skilled Indian migrants, Britain has decided to allow such professionals to stay here as it works to implement a High Court ruling against immigration rule changes with retrospective effect. The Home Office will not appeal against the April 8 verdict, which said it was not open to the government to alter the terms and conditions of the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme (HSMP) under which thousands of employees, mostly Indians, came to Britain.

The Hindu, 20 April 2008

### **Menon in Beijing for G-5 talks, will meet officials**

Beijing (PTI): Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon arrived here on Sunday to attend a meeting of G-8 outreach countries, becoming the first top Indian diplomat to visit China since the outbreak of Tibet unrest. At the two-day meeting from tomorrow, the countries would discuss their approach at the upcoming annual summit of leaders of G-8 grouping in Japan in July.

The Hindu, 20 April 2008

### **Bangladesh to propose means to ease train service with India**

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh is to propose to India a series of measures to ease immigration and custom checks to reduce journey time for the just launched Dhaka-Kolkata train service, officials said here on Sunday. We will hold an inter-ministerial meeting in next one week to review ways to ease the formalities and cut journey time and then ask the Indian authorities through the foreign ministry for joint initiatives towards that end, Communication Ministry additional secretary ATM Ismail told PTI.

The Times of India, 20 April 2008

### **Indo-UK naval war games off Goa coast from Monday**

NEW DELHI: India and UK will kick off their third round of the annual Konkan naval wargames on the western seaboard off Goa from Monday, with the British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious occupying the pride of place in the combat manoeuvres. The main thrust areas of the exercise, to be held from April 21 to May 2, will include combined maritime operations, VBSS (visit, board, search and seizure) procedures and anti-submarine

warfare.

The Asian Age, 21 April 2008

### **Prachanda, envoy talk about govt**

Kathmandu: As Nepal former guerrillas stepped up consultations over government formation following their landslide victory in this month election, India ambassador to Nepal Shiv Shankar Mukherjee met Maoist supremo Prachanda to enquire about the process as well as the fate of embattled King Gyanendra. Alarmed by a recent statement by Mr Prachanda deputy Baburam Bhattarai that if King Gyanendra, who faced an overwhelming mandate for the abolition of his crown, did not leave the palace in four weeks, people would throw him out, India has been urging for an amicable settlement of the issue. Soon after that, the Maoists softened their tone, with both Mr Bhattarai and Mr Prachanda saying that the King, once revered as an incarnation of God and enjoying absolute power, would be treated with honour after the abolition of the 239-year-old monarchy. The Indian ambassador is also said to have discussed with Mr Prachanda the abolition of the monarchy and the fate of the royal family during his visit to Mr Prachanda house in the Nayabazar area of the capital.

Hindustan Times, 21 April 2008

### **Pranab hails expat Indians role in boosting Indo-Saudi ties**

Riyadh: The reputation of expatriate Indians as honest and disciplined workers has contributed significantly to the growing ties between India and Saudi Arabia, said visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. Numbering 1.56 million, Indians form the single largest expatriate community in this country. Around 85 percent of them are engaged as blue-collar workers, mostly in the booming construction industry across this oil-rich nation. Remittances by these Indian workers are estimated to be about \$3 billion annually and contribute significantly to India economy. Apart from giving more value for money as compared to Westerners, Indians are the preferred community in this nation, the largest in the Gulf, for the high quality of their technical expertise. Mukherjee said that one very important area of cooperation between the two countries was education. Earlier, the minister also laid the foundation stone for the Delhi Public School (DPS) Riyadh, the first DPS branch in this country.

The Hindu, 22 April 2008

### **Chile offers platform for India entry to Latin America**

Santiago (PTI): Encouraging India to expand its South-South cooperation, Chilean President on Tuesday asked New Delhi to use her country as a platform for entering the business markets of Latin America. India is the leader among all the developing nations and it would be fruitful for Chile to have more and more business coming from here, she said, while welcoming President Pratibha Patil on her three-day state visit to this Latin American country. She also favoured diversification of bilateral trade and investment basket to give a greater fillip to the trading between the two countries. Both the nations have signed a Preferential trade Agreement. In 2007, Indian participation in Chilean exports amounted to 34 per cent, six per cent higher than the previous fiscal. The two countries also inked four agreements on Air Services, Memorandums of Understanding on Antarctic Cooperation, Sports Cooperation and Science and Technology. Barring the

MoU on Sports, the other three agreements were signed by Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy Vilas Muttemwar and Chilean Foreign Minister Alejandro Foxley.

Hindustan Times, 22 April 2008

### **Nepal Maoists want good ties with India**

New Delhi: Nepal Maoists, all set to take power in the Himalayan nation, favour good relations with India, an Indian writer who has close ties with the former guerrillas has said. Anand Swarup Verma, who writes extensively on the Maoists, also quoted their leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda as saying that Nepal needed India on its side to better the lot of its impoverished people. Prachanda is confident that relations between India and Nepal will be on the right path under Maoist rule, Verma quoted the leader of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist as telling him on telephone from Kathmandu. Prachanda, who is likely to become the first Maoist to rule Nepal, was also very happy with the conversation he had with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee last week, Verma told IANS. Prachanda said that his talks with Mukherjee were very positive.

Indian Express, 22 April 2008

### **We are OK with 8-9 pc growth in next fiscal: PC**

Singapore: The Finance Minister said that anything between 8 per cent and 9 per cent economic growth this fiscal year would be good and that further export bans could be considered as a way to drive down inflationary expectations. In an interview published by the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday, Palaniappan Chidambaram said it was too early to give a specific growth forecast for the year ending March 31, 2009. India most widely followed inflation gauge, the wholesale price index, rose 7.14 per cent in the year to April 5. The central bank had aimed for close to 5 per cent at the end of the 2007/08 fiscal year and its medium-term goal is around 3 per cent. The central bank raised bank reserve requirements in response to the latest data, which will soak up cash from the banking system that might otherwise fuel inflation. India has banned the export of some rice and Chidambaram said he would consider banning exports of other goods, even if that went against the principles of free trade.

The Indian Express, 23 April 2008

### **Iran leader to visit India to deepen energy ties**

New Delhi April 23:: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will make his first official visit to India next week in a sign of the two countries ambitions to deepen energy ties despite opposition from the United States. Ahmadinejad will spend only a few hours in India on April 29 in a stop-over after a visit to Sri Lanka. He is due to talk to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a trip that has already sparked diplomatic barbs between New Delhi and Washington. Energy issues will top the agenda during the visit, a government official said. Nuclear-armed India, hungry to tap new sources of energy to fuel its booming economy, is looking to Iran as a long-term energy partner.

The Asian Age, 23 April 2008

### **Indian kidnapped by militants in Afghan**

New Delhi/Bangalore, April 22: Armed gunmen on Monday abducted an Indian national

from Herat province of Afghanistan. Sarang Mohammad Naeem, who works for a private company, and another unidentified man were abducted as they were travelling in a taxi to the district of Adraskan, bordering Iran. Naeem abduction is the third incident this year of attacks involving Indians in Afghanistan. It comes less than a fortnight after suicide bombers blew themselves up in Nimroz province, killing two Indians, both Border Roads Organisation (BRO) personnel, and injuring five other Indians and two Afghans.

The Times of India, 25 April 2008

### **Prachanda wants friendship pact with India scrapped**

KATHMANDU: Even as India new ambassador to Nepal, Rakesh Sood, arrives here to open a new chapter in bilateral relations, the former Maoist guerrillas, winners of the recent constituent assembly elections, have called for scrapping the India-Nepal treaty of peace and friendship signed in 1950. They have also called for a review of a host of other pacts and agreements between the two countries.

The Hindu, 25 April 2008

### **India to help Iran build a crucial rail link**

NEW DELHI: India has agreed to help Iran in constructing a crucial rail link that is also a part of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) project. We will be cooperating with the Iranian authorities in developing the 600-km long Chabahar port and Fahraj rail line that will provide India a multi-modal transport corridor to Russia via Iran, said Railway Board Chairman K.C. Jena.

The Hindu, 25 April 2008

### **UK offers expertise in expansion of Indian Railways**

New Delhi (PTI): Impressed by the turnaround of Indian Railways, Britain on Friday evinced interest on expansion of Asia largest rail network and offered expertise for its signalling system and track electrification. It said it wanted to join hands in various ongoing projects given the similarities of challenges and capacity constraints faced by both rail networks.

The Hindu, 26 April 2008

### **UK offers expertise in expansion of Indian Railways**

New Delhi (PTI): Impressed by the turnaround of Indian Railways, Britain on Friday evinced interest on expansion of Asia largest rail network and offered expertise for its signalling system and track electrification. It said it wanted to join hands in various ongoing projects given the similarities of challenges and capacity constraints faced by both rail networks. Today, following the financial turnaround of India railways in recent years and the exceptional opportunities for growth, I hope that we can build on that collaboration so that the UK can continue to contribute to the development of one of your most vital national assets; the rail network, British Railways Minister Tom Harris told a seminar organised by the Indian Railways here.

Hindustan Times, 26 April 2008

### **Kabul wants Indian help to upgrade choppers**

India is wary of a request made by Afghanistan to refurbish its Soviet-era MI-35 helicopters and the provision of tankers to refuel the country military and civilian aircraft at airports. During the recent visit of Afghanistan Defence Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak, a verbal request was made by Kabul for both refurbishment of the choppers and the supply of fuel tankers, official sources said. New Delhi, which is not keen on extending itself into the military sphere of cooperation with Afghanistan, is learnt to have asked Kabul to place a concrete proposal before it on these two specific issues.

The Hindu, 27 April 2008

### **India, US to make fresh efforts in Doha talks**

Dubai (PTI): In a renewed effort to achieve a global trade deal under Doha Round of multilateral talks, trade ministers of India and the US will meet next week to bridge differences on farm subsidies and opening markets for industrial and agricultural products. India and the US, are on opposite sides in the negotiations on Doha Round, which was to conclude by the end of 2004 but did not meet the target due to differences on key issues of agriculture subsidies and market access. While India along with Brazil, China and South Africa has championed the cause of developing nations, the US and the European Union have been trying to get the best deal for the rich nations.

The Hindu, 27 April 2008

### **Indian naval ships arrive in S Africa for joint exercises**

Durban (PTI): Indian Navy ships, INS Mumbai and INS Karmukh, have reached Durban harbour to participate in the 10-days long exercise with the navies of South Africa and Brazil off the Cape Town coast. A special reception was accorded to the officers and the crewmen of the ships which are scheduled to take part in naval exercises from May 5 to May 15. The relations between India and South Africa have taken a new momentum with the recent establishment of the Indo-African Forum in New Delhi, Indian High Commissioner to South Africa Rajiv Kumar Bhatia said while addressing the special reception ceremony here.

The Hindu, 28 April 2008

### **India, Nepal to gain from renegotiating 1950 treaty: Mishra**

New Delhi (PTI): Noting that renegotiating the Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty should not be difficult, former National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra has said the new agreement would also be based on reciprocity, with both sides gaining from it. Observing that both countries would gain from it, he said, I dont consider the abrogation or renegotiation of the treaty as a disaster for India. It not, Mishra said. To a question on whether the victory of the Maoists posed a threat to India, he did not think it was a cause of threat or concern, but added that the new situation would require a great deal of reappraisal between the relations of the two countries, he said.

The Hindu, 28 April 2008

### **10 ethnic Indian MPs take oath in Malaysia**

Kuala Lumpur (PTI): With a record number of ten ethnic Indian lawmakers and a woman as opposition leader for the first time in the country history, Malaysia 12th Parliament opened here Monday. Lawmakers took the oath of office to join a revamped parliament

after the March 8 general election which has also resulted in the opposition occupying more benches than ever before. For the second time in its history, the ruling Barisan Nasional will be without a two-thirds majority, after the coalition of premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi lost five of the 13 states to opposition, as also one third of parliamentary seats.

Asian Age, 28 April 2008

### **Entry fee for Saarc tourists lowered**

New Delhi, April 27: In a major move, Union tourism and culture minister Ambika has said the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has brought the entry fee in respect of citizens of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) and Bangladesh, India, Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC) countries at par with Indian citizens. The move is aimed at forging closer cooperation between the people of these regional groupings and to promote greater people-to-people contact.

The Indian Express, 29 April 2008

### **Ahmadinejad arriving today, pipeline tops agenda**

NEW DELHI, APRIL 28: After successfully resolving issues regarding the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline with Pakistan on Monday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad is now keen to get India nod to the deal during his for five-and-half hours visit to New Delhi on Tuesday. Petroleum minister Murli Deora had earlier said that India and Pakistan had almost worked out a general agreement on the transit fee and the visit of the Iranian President would be utilised to pave way for trilateral talks on the deal. Deora had been to Pakistan to iron out the issues with the new PPP-led Government.

Hindustan Times, 30 April 2008

### **Indian prisoners in Sri Lanka jails appeal for relief**

Forty-three Indians languishing in Sri Lankan jails have approached an Indian human rights body to help them return to the country, but the Government can do little in the absence of a prisoner exchange treaty with the neighbouring country. They have been convicted under Sri Lankan laws for offences related to drug trafficking and some have spent more than 16 years in jails. A large number of them are from Kerala and some are from Tamil Nadu. Several went to Sri Lanka for better employment and were arrested on drug trafficking charges, Agni Subramaniam, executive director of the Manitham Human Rights Organisation, told IANS.

Hindustan Times, 30 April 2008

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The Hindu, 30 April 2008

**IPI pipeline doable: India**

New Delhi (PTI): India on Tuesday said the gas pipeline with Iran and Pakistan is a doable project though a lot of work needs to be done to ensure that it is commercially viable, secure and there were assured supplies. We think it is doable, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon told reporters after three-hour talks between visiting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here. Officials of the three countries will be meeting soon to continue discussions on the 7.1 billion-dollar project.