

The India Express, 1 February 2008

'India not soft on Myanmar'

NEW DELHI: Ibrahim Gambari, a Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, has said that India was not going soft on Myanmar and was fully engaged with the UN in a common objective. After meeting Union External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday, he said the right messages were being conveyed to the neighbouring country and the world was looking to Myanmar becoming a democracy at the earliest. He said the UN was not happy with Myanmar pace of reforms in the direction of democracy but was certain India would use its influence with the country for positive results.

Indian Express, 1 February 2008

India ranks 11th, China 48th on Global Integrity's index

New Delhi : India anti-corruption laws score a thumping 100 on 100, but its citizens can not bring themselves to trust the system. And there is a good reason for the pervasive pessimism about corruption. India is ranked 11th among 55 countries for governance and anti-corruption standards in the recent report released by the independent watchdog organisation Global Integrity.

The Hindu, 2 February 2008

Illegal rally: Malaysian court to try 66 ethnic Indians

Kuala Lumpur : A total of 66 ethnic Indians will be tried by a Malaysian court on charges of participating in an illegal rally organised by a Hindu rights group against the alleged marginalisation of the community and causing mischief. All the accused claimed trial after the charges were read to them. All the 66 are on 500 ringgit (Rs 6000) bail and have to report to the nearest police station once a month.

The Hindu, 2 February 2008

UN applauds India unfailing support to Nepalese people

Washington : Applauding India unfailing support to the people of Nepal, the UN has clarified it had never suggested that New Delhi had influence over groups in the Himalayan country that were limiting the steady flow of essentials to the Terai region.

The Asian Age, 2 February 2008

Iran to build India road

New Delhi: In a reversal of roles, Iran has stepped in to build a road network in India even as New Delhi faces the wrath of terrorists in building a major highway in Afghanistan that will shorten the distance between Kabul and the Iranian port of Chahbahar by at least 800 km.

The Hindu, 3 February 2008

U.K. team to discuss immigration with India

LONDON: Britain Immigration Minister Liam Byrne will travel to India next week to discuss with the government proposed changes to Britain immigration rules, including plans to increase the visa fee and the controversial new eligibility criteria for the Highly-Skilled Migrant Programme. Mr. Byrne, who will be accompanied by a six-member

delegation of British Indian representatives, will also have talks with multinational Indian companies and families of Indians settled in Britain.

The Hindu, 3 February 2008

LTTE issue: DMK Govt comes under attack

Chennai (PTI): The LTTE issue has caused a chink in the armour of Tamil Nadu ruling DMK, with the Government coming under attack by other parties, including its key ally, Congress, in the state Assembly this week over its alleged failure to take action against supporters of the outfit. The open expression of displeasure by Congress MLAs, who staged a noisy walkout during the just-concluded session, came as a major embarrassment for the DMK, which is already troubled by the constant pin-pricks from another ally, PMK.

The Times of India, 3 February 2008

Progress in resolving Sino-Indian border dispute

KHONSA (ARUNACHAL PRADESH): There has been progress in the talks for resolving the Sino-Indian border dispute, particularly in the Arunachal sector, newly appointed Arunachal Pradesh Governor, General (retd) J J Singh has said. We have a broad framework for a peaceful dialogue with the Chinese government following an agreement signed at the highest level between heads of the two governments during the recent Beijing trip of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and earlier in 2003, Singh said. The governor said, would help maintain peace and tranquillity along the international border while a high level dialogue was on to resolve the dispute.

The Hindu, 4 February 2008

FICCI survey: not much loss due to the underwater cable damage

NEW DELHI: Last week underwater cable damage in the Mediterranean sea connecting India, its neighbours and some Gulf countries with Europe and the U.S. had no major impact on the Indian information technology and IT-enabled services industry, according to a survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. However, companies are now planning to invest in multi-layered redundancy structures so that in case of any adverse development in the future, the functioning of their processes is not affected.

The Hindu, 4 February 2008

Afghanistan seeks Bandhan expertise

Kolkata : Bandhan, a micro-finance organisation based here, has been approached by the Afghanistan government and also the World Bank for launching a micro-credit service in the strife-torn country. Bandhan founder Chandra Sekhar Ghosh said similar offers had been received from other countries. The outfit, which has 450 branches now with nine lakh beneficiaries, has been ranked second, in a study conducted by Forbes magazine to rank the world's top 20 micro-finance organisations.

Hindustan Times, 6 February 2008

Bharti to set up undersea cable connecting India, France

New Delhi : Telecom major Bharti Airtel on Wednesday said it will set up another high-

capacity undersea cable, which will connect India to France through the Middle East, in association with eight global telecom players by the end of next year. A formal construction and maintenance agreement to build a high-capacity fibre-optic submarine cable that would stretch from India to France through the Middle East was signed today in Rome by all the firms.

The Times of India, 7 February 2008

Govt approves India-S Africa MoU for agricultural cooperation

NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Africa on agricultural cooperation. A meeting of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, gave its nod for the MoU which is expected to promote further bilateral cooperation through joint activities and exchanges in the areas of agriculture. The MoU will cover various areas of agriculture, including animals, fisheries, poultry, agricultural extension, land and water management and its conservation, promotion of agricultural trade and investment, Information and Broadcasting Minister P R Dasmunsi told reporters in New Delhi. He also said the MoU will be valid for a period of five years.

The Hindu, 7 February 2008

India should put pressure on LTTE: TULF chief

Colombo : The international community, especially India, should put pressure on the LTTE to refrain from killing innocent civilians in Sri Lanka, a senior Tamil politician has said. The time has now come for India to step in and tell the LTTE to keep hands off civilians, Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) president V Anandasangaree said.

The Hindu, 8 February 2008

Amit Kumar expected to be handed over to India soon: MEA

New Delhi : Amit Kumar, the doctor accused of running the country biggest kidney racket, is expected to be handed over by Nepal to Indian authorities at the earliest, government said here on Friday. The CBI has taken up the matter of Kumar handing over with Nepalese government through the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said.

The Asian Age, 8 February 2008

Agri MoU with S. Africa and Zambia is approved

New Delhi: The government on Thursday approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between India and South Africa on agricultural cooperation. A meeting of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, gave its nod for the MoU which is expected to promote further bilateral cooperation through joint activities and exchanges in the areas of agriculture.

Hindustan Times, 9 February 2008

China protests PM visit to Arunachal

New Delhi: China has taken exception to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh assertion that Arunachal Pradesh belongs to India and lodged a protest over it. China has been laying claim over large parts of the state and the two countries are holding talks to resolve the

issue. The Special Representatives of the two countries are working out a solution as per the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles.

The Hindu, 10 February 2008

India, U.S. come together to streamline energy efficiency

NEW DELHI: In a collaborative effort to streamline energy building codes, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Union Power Ministry Bureau of Energy Efficiency have decided to provide energy conservation building code Tip Sheets and Technology Atlas to those associated with construction sector. These Tip Sheets and Technology Atlas would be distributed to architects, developers, engineers and building energy efficiency professionals to help them improve energy efficiency and to meet India energy conservation goals.

The Hindu, 10 February 2008

Defence analyst favours India preponderance over Asia

New Delhi : India should establish its preponderance over Asia by initiating steps like signing the Indo-US nuclear deal and positioning troops in Bhutan and Afghanistan to achieve its strategic goals as it has fundamentalist or authoritarian regimes as neighbours, a leading defence analyst has said. Bharat Verma, Editor of Indian Defence Review, has said, to be a great power, India must also learn to shoulder its share of global responsibility.

The Hindu, 11 February 2008

Zubkov for more tie-ups with India in oil and gas

MOSCOW: Russian Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov supports broader cooperation between his country and India in oil and gas. Mr. Zubkov said in an interview to The Hindu, We see no obstacles to Indian business joining new projects in this sphere. Pledging Moscow commitment to maintain close ties with New Delhi, he described India as Russia trusted friend. He also recalled a Russian saying An old friend is better than two new ones.

The Times of India, 11 February 2008

Look Beyond the LTTE

Sri Lanka is at the crossroads. The Mahinda Rajapakse administration has officially called off the ceasefire agreement with the LTTE and seems convinced that a peacefully negotiated settlement to the three-decade-old ethnic strife is impossible. Since the ceasefire was annulled a month ago, over 300 people have been killed in battle and in bomb attacks and blasts. The LTTE project exhausted its political viability long ago, and now, its military might is under serious threat. Since its inception in the 1980s, when the Sinhala-Tamil divide erupted in a civil war, the LTTE has pushed a form of ethnic nationalism as its state ideology.

The Hindu, 11 February 2008

Australian, Indian PMs may meet twice this year

Melbourne : The Prime Ministers of India and Australia are expected to meet twice this year, in bilateral visits that are likely to put the talks on uranium sales back on track.

Visiting Union Science and Technology Minister Kapil Sibal said that India was confident that its negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would be completed soon, resulting in an India-specific safeguards agreement that would allow nuclear trade with New Delhi.

Hindustan Times, 12 February 2008

India courts Russian investment in petro, chemical zones

India is planning to make a strong pitch to Russian industry to invest in the proposed petrochemical and petroleum investment regions (PCPIR) as both countries seek to widen bilateral economic engagement during Prime Minister Victor Zubkov visit to the subcontinent this week. The PCPIR policy was launched in May last year and the government is anticipating an overall investment of \$20 billion. .

The Hindu, 12 February 2008

India to help upgrade Sri Lanka education infrastructure

COLOMBO: India and Sri Lanka are to meet in Bangalore before June to chalk out an action plan to upgrade the technical and managerial education sector infrastructure in the island nation to meet a serious shortage of manpower and boost economic growth. This agreement was arrived at here on Monday at an interactive session between the Indian delegation led by Union Minister of State for Commerce Jairam Ramesh and his Sri Lanka counterpart, Sarath Amunugama.

The Hindu, 13 February 2008

3 Indian writers shortlisted for Commonwealth Writers Prize

London, (PTI): Three Indian authors are among the 12 candidates shortlisted for the 2008 Commonwealth Writers Prize, it was announced Tuesday. The three Indians shortlisted for the Best Book Award are David Davidar (The Solitude of Emperors), Usha K R (Girl and a River) and Indra Sinha (Animal People). Regional Chair, Professor Makarand Paranjape (India) said, For the best book category, we have an outstanding selection of works by some of the finest writers in the English language, drawn from India, Pakistan and England. Each regional winner will take home 1,000 pounds. The prize money for the overall Best Book category is 10,000 pounds, while it is 5,000 pounds for the author of the Overall Best First Book.

The Hindu, 13 February 2008

UK Indian wins racism case against Honda

London, (PTI): Car giant Honda has been ordered to pay 64,000 pounds to an Indian worker who was forced to quit after suffering racial abuse at work. Kalmesh Shah, 30, moved to the UK from Gujarat in April 2004, and joined Honda in October that year. Shah, who worked at the factory for nearly two years, was allegedly moved randomly between production line jobs without training, bullied and refused toilet breaks by his supervisor. The tribunal hearing, held in Bristol in June last year, gave its final ruling in October, but has only recently awarded the financial settlement.

The Hindu, 13 February 2008

Bahrain parliament to discuss Indian workers strike

Dubai (PTI): A spate of strikes by nearly 2,500 foreign workers, a majority of them Indians, over the minimum wages paid to them has forced the Bahraini parliament to take up the issue in its upcoming session. Bahrain Labour Minister Majeed Al Alawi has been summoned before the Shura Council to answer a question on what is being done to protect the rights of expat workers. The general-secretariat office accepted the question on Monday and has referred it to Al Alawi for a written response, before he attends an upcoming session to answer the question verbally. Embassy staff are only following instructions from the Indian government in seeking a better deal and proper protection for its workers overseas.

The Hindu, 14 February 2008

Zubkov positive to India plea on Sakhalin III

NEW DELHI: The visiting Russian Prime Minister, Victor Zubkov, is learnt to have given a sympathetic and positive response to India plea for a major stake in the Sakhalin III and other major oil and gas projects in far-east Russia. India is a partner in Sakhalin I and gets oil supplies from there. At a 20-minute meeting between Mr. Zubkov and Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Murli Deora on Wednesday, the latter also took up the Indian oil companies interest in investing in the Russian oil and gas fields.

Hindustan Times, 14 February 2008

3 Sri Lankan nationals arrested in Delhi

Three Sri Lankan nationals, suspected to have links with the LTTE, and a person from Chennai were arrested in the national Capital allegedly with forged travel documents. The Lankans - identified as Francis Jansan (29), TS Ranjit (28) and John Mary Agastan (22) - were nabbed from a hotel at Paharganj in central Delhi, a senior police officer said, adding that the fake travel papers were also seized from them.

The Hindu, 15 February 2008

Taslima visa extended

NEW DELHI: A day after civil society organisations rose to the defence of exiled Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasreen, the Government has decided to extend her visa for another six months. Her visa was to expire on February 17. New Delhi maintained that India has a tradition of offering hospitality to those who seek it. It has also afforded protection to those who have come as our guests. Ms. Taslima Nasreen is our guest and, in keeping with our traditions, we have offered her the same privileges, said a Foreign Office spokesperson.

The Indian Express, 16 February 2008

Malaysian police break up Hindraf rally

Kuala Lumpur, February 16: Defying a ban, at least 200 ethnic Indian supporters of a Hindu rights group held a rally near Malaysia Parliament demanding more rights for the minority community, prompting police to fire tear gas and chemical-laced water to disperse the demonstrators. Police had denied a permit to Hindraf to hold the rally outside Parliament and had set up barricades along main roads leading to the building.

The Times of India, 17 February 2008

Russia plays spoilsport in T-90S tank deal

NEW DELHI: As if the huge cost escalations and time overruns in several defence projects was not enough, Russia is now putting some roadblocks in India plan to indigenously manufacture 1,000 T-90S main-battle tanks. Russia is refusing transfer of technology (ToT) in a couple of critical areas - like the metallurgy for gun barrels, ordnance and armour plates - for the manufacture of T-90S tanks at the Heavy Vehicles Factory at Avadi. India, on its part, has taken up the matter with the Russian government.

The Hindu, 18 February 2008

Haneef probe cost Oz USD7.5 mn, police says no to compensation

Melbourne (PTI): Australian police spent a whopping USD 7.5 million probing Mohammed Haneef, who was wrongly accused of terror charges, the country police chief said today while claiming that the Indian doctor did not have a case for compensation. Mick Keelty told the Senate Estimates Committee that the Australian Federal Police (AFP) investigation of Haneef in connection with the failed UK terror bombings last year involved 470 police and customs officers. As at the end of December 2007, expenses for the investigation are in excess of USD7.5 million, he was quoted by .The Australian daily.

The Hindu, 19 February 2008

Kosovo: India weighing options

NEW DELHI: With battle lines drawn over Kosovo declaring full independence from Serbia, India is actively considering its stand and appears tilted towards the view taken by Russia, China and some European countries. The diplomat pointed out that India position on Kosovo would be eagerly awaited and could not be taken for granted. It had surprised its old allies after voting for a U.S.-promoted International Atomic Energy Agency resolution on Iran, breaking ranks with Malaysia and South Africa and differing with the stand taken by abstainers Russia and China.

Hindustan Times, 19 February 2008

Indian doctor gets 5 years in jail in Canada

Toronto: An Indian-origin doctor has been sentenced to a five-year jail term by a Canadian court for trafficking in prescription pills. Ravi Devgan, 60, who is serving a three-year term for fraud, was convicted in November of medical malpractices. A jury found him guilty of ordering various prescription drugs, including Oxycontin and Hydromorphone, in his patients names and then selling them for personal gains.

Hindustan Times, 19 February 2008

At home, in India and Nepal

Benipur(Nepal): The Dalits in Benipur village rejoice if Mayawati wins and the Yadavs celebrate if Mulayam Singh Yadav does. Benipur, by the way, is not in Uttar Pradesh. Its in southern Nepal, close to the Indian state. If Mayawati and Mulayam extended their election battle beyond the border each would happily find many voters. And if votes cross the border, so do love and marriage. How does it matter, if education too crosses the border.

The Times of India, 20 February 2008

Uranium seized at Indo-Nepal border

PATNA: The police on Monday seized 4 kg of low-grade uranium and arrested six persons in Supaul district along the Indo-Nepal border. A police official said four kg of low-grade uranium was seized near Virpur bus stand in Supaul late Monday acting on an intelligence tip-off. The estimated value of the seized uranium is about Rs 50 million in the international market. The police said the operation was conducted with the assistance of SSB personnel. Six persons, including a school teacher and a SSB jawan posted in Assam, were arrested.

The Hindu, 20 February 2008

India-Germany academic ties up: Consul-General

CHENNAI: In addition to very good business and political ties, the avenues for academic cooperation are increasing for India and Germany, said Consul-General of the Federal Republic of Germany Roland Herrmann. He was speaking at the Indo-German Academic Summit 2008 organised by the German Academic Exchange Service in association with the Consulate-General of the Federal Republic of Germany here on Tuesday. He said visits of delegations from German Universities and the interaction their vice-chancellors had with universities here revealed that there is a tremendous amount of interest in strengthening academic ties.

The Times of India, 21 February 2008

Mauritius PM invites state workers

GAYA: Mauritius PM Navinchand Ramgoolam has favoured cultural and economic cooperation between Bihar and the island nation to further strengthen the strong ties between Mauritius and Bihar. The Mauritius PM said the island nation has been facing acute labour shortage and Bihar can help by facilitating the export of its labour force to his country. Moreover, there is scope for the export of agricultural products like rice from Bihar as Mauritius, on account of greater emphasis on industrialization, may face shortage of foodgrains and Bihar can avail the opportunity provided by the likely shortage of foodgrains.

The Hindu, 21 February 2008

STC to supply 20,000 tonnes of rice to Dhaka

New Delhi (PTI): The state-owned trading firm STC is planning to supply 20,000 tonnes of para-boiled rice worth Rs 30 crore to Bangladesh under its Humanitarian Assistance Programme. For this purpose the company has floated a tender, which would close on February 26, and the decision on the same would be taken by April 30.

The Hindu, 22 February 2008

Fujiaire sets up second unit in Indonesia

CHENNAI: The Malaysian-based Fujiaire (M) Sdn. Bhd. has launched its range of air-conditioning products in Chennai. Addressing presspersons here, Koh Siew Kiang, General Manager, said the company made products across segments and exported them to international markets. Fujiaire had already invested around RM 4 million in the first phase and a similar amount would be invested in the second phase. Necessary equipment

had already been installed and the plant would commence production by March.

Times of India, 23 February 2008

India, South Africa sign MoUs to enhance ties

PRETORIA: India and South Africa on Friday signed several MoUs covering agriculture, science and technology, tourism, co-operation on customs and excise and visa exemption for diplomatic passport holders to further enhance the strategic bilateral ties between the two countries.

The Times of India, 24 February 2008

Indian killed in wall collapse

DUBAI: A 24-year-old Indian was killed when a concrete wall fell on him at a construction site in Dubai. Ten people were working on the site when the accident occurred. While nine of them were able to escape unhurt, one of the men was buried alive in the debris, said Captain Ahmad Bu Rqibah, Head of Dubai Police Land Rescue Section.

The Times of India, 24 February 2008

Maharashtra may seek Japanese financial aid for Mumbai Metro

MUMBAI: With work on the second and third line of the Mumbai Metro project expected to begin later this year, the Maharashtra government may turn to the Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) for financial assistance, officials said in Mumbai. The work on the multi-billion project, which aims to improve infrastructure in the metropolis and ease the burden on suburban rail network, began earlier this month.

The Hindu, 25 February 2008

Indo-Bangladesh border put on alert for Meghalaya polls

Shillong (PTI): The Border Security Force along the Indo-Bangla border in Meghalaya and Assam has been put on alert for the ensuing Assembly elections in Meghalaya. All the troops along the border have been instructed to be extra vigilant to thwart any attempt of infiltration into the country, BSF Inspector General of Police P K Mishra said on Monday. The BSF has also set up additional patrol bases along the border to enhance the vigil and requested civilians to co-operate with it.

The Hindu, 26 February 2008

India asks Turkey to continue search, rescue operation

Mumbai (PTI): India on Tuesday asked Turkey to continue with its search for 25 Indian sailors onboard a ship which went missing off Turkish coast, three days after it was stopped because no wreckage of the vessel was found. Accordingly, the Turkish Coast Guard have begun their search operation and no wreckage or floating debris of the ship, MV Rezzak, have been found till last report came in, according to a statement from Directorate General of Shipping. The report of accident of the ship still remains unconfirmed, Nautical Surveyor Deepak Kapoor said in the statement on Tuesday.

The Times of India, 27 February 2008

UK convicts Indian-origin terror recruiter

LONDON: An Indian-origin man, described as one of Britain leading recruiters for Islamist extremism, has been found guilty of running secret terrorist training camps in one of the most important counter-terrorism prosecutions since 9/11. On Tuesday, a court in south-east London found Hamid guilty of three counts of soliciting to murder and three counts of providing terrorism training. But the jury cleared him of the charge of providing weapons training at camps and two further counts of soliciting to murder relating to speeches, and a further charge of possessing terrorist articles.

The Times of India, 27 February 2008

China claims about 90,000 square km of Indian territory

NEW DELHI: China illegally claims approximately 90,000 square kilometres of Indian territory including Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Wednesday. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and the government has conveyed this fact to the Chinese side, Mukherjee told the Lok Sabha in a written reply.

Hindustan Times, 28 February 2008

NRI to get legal and medical assistance in embassies

Indians living abroad will soon get legal and medical services and financial advice from the local missions and embassies. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) has begun implementing a proposal to set up Overseas Indian Centres in Washington, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur to look after Indians staying and working in the region.

Times of India, 29 February 2008

Budget: UK India-watchers hail competence

LONDON: P Chidambaram populism, circa 2008, drew two-and-a-half-cheers from India-watchers here as London financial district saluted a competent budget overall and its profoundly poor-friendly overtone but questioned why the finance minister had left crucial social-engineering measures to his last year in government. Leading Indian businessmen, investors and stockbrokers here said P Chidambaram fifth budget continued India good news story and was unlikely to worry international audiences and strategic investment planning.

The Asian Age, 29 February 2008

India plans big for summit with Africa

New Delhi, Feb. 28: The Indo-Africa Forum Summit from April 4-9 will let India play a greater role and deepen its engagement with Africa. Though the country rapport with Africa dates back to the pre-Independence days, the contemporary context in which it shares the developmental and security concerns with India needs a sharper focus now. Minister of state for external affairs Anand Sharma said to correspondent, We have prepared a draft action-plan on which members of the African Union will give their views. A joint-declaration will follow then. We hope to crystallise a multi-sectoral agreement.