

The Hindu, 1 June 2006

### **India asks Russia's Mig to send RFP for 126 fighters**

Moscow, May 31: India has asked Russia's Mig aircraft corporation to send a request for proposal (RFP) for the acquisition of 126 fighters, IAF chief S P Tyagi said here. Tyagi, who watched a demonstration flight of the Mig-35 (Mig-29ovt) fighter at a Russian air force base near the capital told reporters that the demonstration was "brilliant", but clarified that the IAF was looking for an aircraft "to win wars" and not for "impressive demonstrations". "Any aircraft is nothing but a 'khokha' (shell), but what matters is, what is inside it," the Air Chief Marshal underscored. He said that for the first time the factor of "life cycle cost or ownership cost" was being taken into account while acquiring a fighter. "How to calculate the ownership cost was the problem and that's why it has taken more time in taking a decision," Tyagi said and added that the tender would be invited "very soon". According to earlier reports, Russia's Mig-35 would be facing a tough challenge from the battle-proven US F-16 and F-18. The air chief said that any decision would be taken after studying the merits of a fighter offered to India "at great depth"...

The Hindu, 1 June 2006

### **CPC for enhanced exchanges with Indian political parties**

Beijing, May 31: China's ruling Communist Party is ready to increase exchanges with major Indian political parties to further the growth of Sino-Indian friendship, a senior party official has said. "This year is a year of friendship between China and India. The CPC is ready to enhance exchanges and cooperation with all Indian major political parties, including the Nationalist Congress Party, to push for the China-India friendship", head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Wang Jiarui said. Wang made the remark in a meeting with a delegation of the NCP led by the treasurer of the party, Y P Trivedi here yesterday. Both sides spoke highly of the sound development of China-India friendly and cooperative relations. Wang also briefed the guests on China's peaceful development and the building of harmonious society. Trivedi spoke highly of China's achievements in the development process, hoping that India and China would further enhance mutually-beneficial cooperation. The NCP delegation started their nine-day visit to China on May 24 at the invitation of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee.

The Indian Express , 1 June 2006

### **Maoists step up anti-India, US propaganda ahead of talks**

Kathmandu, May 31: Ahead of their first-ever public meeting in Kathmandu due on Friday, the Maoists seem to have revived their anti-India stance. A pamphlet circulated by the special central command of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists blames India and the US of conspiring to prevent a true democracy getting established in Nepal. "The imperialist US and the hegemonistic India are conspiring to prepare a master plan to retain ceremonial monarchy ... and stall advent of full-fledged democracy in the country," the pamphlet says. Many thought that India's involvement in bringing the Maoists and the seven-party alliance together on a 12-point understanding had softened the Maoists' attitude towards India, but the pamphlet proves otherwise. Friday's rally, to be addressed by senior Maoist leaders, is likely to demand unconditional election to the Constituent Assembly. In all possibility, the rally would also be the formal launch of the pro-republic agenda of the party...

The Hindustan Times, 1 June 2006

### **India, Singapore join hands in war against terror**

Singapore, May 31: Entering a new phase of cooperation, India and Singapore on Wednesday agreed to share key intelligence inputs to deal with terrorism, money laundering, organised crime and drug trade and provide assistance to each other in disaster management. "The two sides decided to cooperate and exchange intelligence and information in these key security-related areas and also extend assistance to each other in the field of disaster management," a senior official said. These decisions were taken during wide-ranging talks Home Minister Shivraj Patil, who is on a three-day visit to the city-state, had with Singapore's President SR Nathan, Prime Minister Lee Hsein Loong and Deputy Prime Minister S Jayakumar, who is the Coordinating Minister for National Security and Law. Stressing that intelligence sharing is a key element for combating terrorism, money laundering, transnational organised crime and narcotics drug trade, the official said the two sides will be sharing vital inputs in a bid to tackle them...

The Hindu, 2 June 2006

### **Delhi, Moscow to expand bilateral cooperation**

Moscow, June 1: The capital regions of India and Russia on Thursday agreed to closely cooperate in infrastructural development and advanced medical services and enhance the youth exchanges between them. "We have invited

Moscow to take part in our infrastructural development, modern surface transport like ecological clean trolley buses as well as water management and recycling," Delhi Chief Minister, Sheila Dixit, told reporters at the end of her "highly successful" four-day Russia visit. A business delegation of Moscow will visit Delhi later this year, to probe the concrete areas of cooperation. "We have also offered exchange of advanced medical services available in Moscow and top Delhi clinics at one-tenth of similar services in the US," said Dixit, who was leading a large team of government officials, business community and eminent artists for the 'Days of Delhi' festival in Moscow. The Delhi Chief Minister also said that there was ample scope in IT cooperation between the two capitals...

The Hindustan Times, 2 June 2006

### **Nepal PM Koirala to visit India next week**

Kathmandu, June 1:Nepal's new Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala will visit India next week to ink an agreement with New Delhi for a massive economic assistance project as well as discuss security issues. The trip to India comes a month after Koirala took up reins of the government and pledged to bring peace and economic development. The ailing octogenarian prime minister will proceed to Bangkok from New Delhi for medical treatment. The brief visit will see Koirala arriving in New Delhi on the evening of June 6 and departing for Bangkok on June 8. Though suffering from respiratory problems, the premier put the India visit before the medical trip so that New Delhi's new economic assistance package for Nepal, dubbed the 'Himalayan Marshall Plan' by the press, can be unveiled. Just as the American Marshall Plan assisted the economic recovery of 17 European nations following World War II, the Himalayan Marshall Plan is a massive assistance project combining loans, concessions and infrastructure development...

The Hindustan Times, 2 June 2006

### **Pranab concludes successful visit to China**

Beijing, June 1:Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Friday concluded his "highly successful" maiden visit to China, which he said gave the much-required boost to mutual trust between the militaries of the two Asian giants. Mukherjee, who spoke at a banquet hosted in his honour by the Political Commissar of Shanghai Garrison, Major General Dai Changyou in Shanghai on Thursday night, said his visit has given a further momentum to the process of building trust and understanding and diversifying Sino-Indian relations across a wide range of areas. He said the visit has also helped in translating the thoughts of the top political leadership who have prioritised the areas of cooperation between the two countries. "India-China partnership is an important determinant for regional and global peace and development," the defence minister said. Referring to the first-ever MoU on defence cooperation with China which he signed earlier in Beijing on May 29 along with his Chinese counterpart, General Cao Gangchuan, Mukherjee said it will provide the necessary framework for cooperation between the militaries of the two nations. Signing the defence MoU with China was befitting as the two nations were celebrating 2006 as 'India-China Friendship Year,' he said...

The Hindustan Times, 2 June 2006

### **India agrees to UN monitoring: Nepal Minister**

Kathmandu, June 1:India has accepted a proposal for the United Nations' presence in Nepal as a monitoring agency, Deputy Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli Sharma said on Thursday. India's reaction to the proposal for the UN monitoring was not negative, said Oli, also Nepal's Foreign Minister, on his return to the capital on Thursday after attending a ministerial meeting of the coordinating bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Putrajaya in Malaysia. Oli, who met Anand Sharma, India's minister of state for external affairs, in Malaysia, told reporters upon his arrival at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport that he had discussed Nepal's current situation with Sharma. "His reaction to UN monitoring was not negative," Oli said. However, the Nepali minister did not elaborate what the UN would be monitoring...

The Hindu, 3 June 2006

### **India will not export its democracy to Myanmar: Pranab**

Singapore, June 2: India, hailed as the world's biggest democracy, will not export its free society ideology to neighbouring military-ruled Myanmar, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said today. Mukherjee, addressing a two-day security conference, also said it will keep its hands off the peace process in Sri Lanka. "It is not only a question of Myanmar, but in many other countries, there are different types of governments. Our basic principle is to live in peaceful coexistence and we do not believe in exporting ideologies," Mukherjee said. "It is for the people of the countries to decide what type of government they would like," he said, in response to a question if India can help promote democracy in Myanmar where the military has been in power since 1962. The current junta came to

power in Myanmar in 1988. It held elections in 1990 but refused to hand over power when pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party won handsomely. Suu Kyi is currently under house arrest and has spent about 10 of the last 17 years in detention...

The Hindu, 3 June 2006

### **China Visit "highly successful": Pranab**

New Delhi, June 2 :Describing his China visit as "highly successful", Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said it had given further momentum to the process of building trust and understanding and diversifying Sino-Indian relations "across a wide range of areas". Summing up his six-day visit at a banquet hosted in his honour by Political Commissar of Shanghai garrison Major General Dai Changyou on Thursday night, Mr Mukherjee said it had helped in translating the thoughts of the top political leadership, who have prioritised the areas of cooperation between the two countries. Minister Mukherjee further termed the India-China partnership as "an important determinant for regional and global peace and development", according to reports received here on Friday. The Shanghai banquet was Mr Mukherjee's last official engagement in China before his departure on Friday morning for Singapore to attend the 'Shangri-La dialogue' there. On Thursday evening, immediately after his arrival in Shanghai from Lanzhou, Mr Mukherjee drove down to the Shanghai Naval Base, where he was taken on a guided tour inside a missile frigate specially recalled from the high seas for the Indian Defence Minister. The frigate has a displacement capacity of 2,066 tonnes and a maximum speed of 27 nautical miles per hour. It is capable of air defence and anti-submarine warfare...

The Hindu, 5 June 2006

### **Encouraging response to defence diplomacy: Pranab**

Singapore, June 4: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said here on Sunday that India's ongoing exercise in "defence diplomacy" had evoked "quite encouraging" responses from major powers. Mr. Mukherjee, who met U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld here on the sidelines of an Asia Security Summit, had held talks with Chinese leaders in Beijing and his Japanese counterpart in Tokyo over the past 10 days. In Singapore, he met the defence ministers of eight other countries, including Indonesia and Australia, besides the City-State itself, before leaving for New Delhi. He told The Hindu that "defence cooperation" with other powers "should be an integral part of our diplomatic exercise." This should be possible because India's defence and foreign policies "are rooted in the same ideological basis - no territorial ambition, no ideological export." The objective of such diplomacy was to maintain peace and tranquillity along India's borders, to defuse tension and to engage in defence-related dialogue with other powers...

The Hindustan Times, 5 June 2006

### **India won't play active role in Lankan peace: Minister**

Singapore, June 4: India fully supports the peace process in Sri Lanka but will not play an active role because it may "complicate" the situation, Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Saturday. Mukherjee said during a question-and-answer session at a high-level security meeting in Singapore that "India is not actively participating in this process" because of ethnic reasons and its proximity to Sri Lanka. India believes a "pro-active and active participation will complicate the issue instead of resolving it, but we stand fully behind the peace process which has been initiated," the minister said. Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday launched talks with opposition parties to hammer out a plan to grant autonomy to separatist Tamil rebels. Violence has recently escalated in Sri Lanka, where more than 600 people have been killed since December despite a 2002 ceasefire between Tamil Tiger rebels and the Colombo government and its troops...

The Hindustan Times, 5 June 2006

### **India offers help to S'pore in Malacca Straits**

Singapore, June 4: India has offered to help secure the busy Malacca Straits against high-seas pirates, a report said on Sunday. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said New Delhi would be willing to help in any capacity that the littoral states deem necessary. "India has developed capabilities in various aspects of maritime security and would be most willing to share its expertise with the countries of the region," he said in his address at the 5th Shangri-La Dialogue on Saturday. The number of pirate attacks in the Malacca Straits has dropped sharply in recent months, but India, aware that 50 per cent of its trade passes through the waterway, remains wary. According to figures from the International Maritime bureau, there were no pirate attacks anywhere in the Malacca Strait between January and March this year and only one incident between July and December last year...

The Hindustan Times, 5 June 2006

### **Arjun Singh meets UAE counterpart**

Dubai, June 4: Boosting cooperation in the fields of education and technology transfer featured in the discussions Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh had with his UAE counterpart Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi. The meeting between Singh and Al Nahyan, the Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research, which took place on Sunday evening, was also attended by UAE Minister of Education Hanif Hassan, Indian officials said. Singh, who arrived in the UAE on Sunday, would also meet Indian expatriates in Abu Dhabi. The minister would visit BITS Pilani in Knowledge Village, the Indian High School, Dubai where he would chair a meeting of principals of UAE schools who are following the Central Board of Secondary Education syllabus, besides addressing a meeting organised by the Indian Business and Professional Council...

The Hindu, 6 June 2006

### **Koirala to seek India's goodwill to restore peace in Nepal**

Kathmandu, June 5: Undertaking his first-ever visit abroad after taking over as Nepal's Prime Minister, G P Koirala, flies to New Delhi today to seek India's cooperation in restoring peace and assistance for economic reconstruction of the insurgency-torn country. Koirala is undertaking a four-day visit to New Delhi at the invitation of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "Koirala will seek India's goodwill and cooperation to restore peace and consolidate democracy in Nepal," said a Nepali Congress central member, Shekhar Koirala. The talks between the two leaders will mainly focus on bringing the Maoists into the political mainstream, holding constituent Assembly election and seeking India's economic assistance in reconstruction and rehabilitation of the insurgency-torn country, official sources said. Finance Minister, Ram Sharan Mahat, said during the visit, he will seek economic assistance from India. The visit will focus only on economic agenda and contentious issues will not be raised, he said...

The Hindu, 6 June 2006

### **Seeing India and China through fresh eyes -Qiu Yonghui**

"The journalists in both China and India have been sick for a very long time." This is one of the several opinions I heard during the annual conference of the Chinese Association of South Asian Studies, which was held in Shanghai last month. A participant, a journalist by profession, reacted immediately by arguing her claims on being healthy and balanced in her own news reports concerning India. I myself, as a regular Chinese reader of Indian newspapers for a long time, started thinking about various news reports on China published in the Indian media. My working days always begin by clicking the website samachar.com and grasping the news stories as much as I am interested in. I can therefore easily add more examples of balanced reports concerning China from the Indian side...

The Indian Express, 6 June 2006

### **Nepal without strings- C Raja Mohan**

The Indian establishment's familiarity with the visiting prime minister of Nepal, Girija Prasad Koirala, should not obscure a simple new reality. The ageing Koirala today represents a Nepal that is very different from the one we have known all these decades. Steeled in the fire of a successful pro-democracy movement, the Himalayan Kingdom is now in the middle of a complex transition to a republic in all but name. While Koirala needs all the help he can get from India, the last thing he needs is a display of New Delhi's instinctive paternalism. New Delhi will have to demonstrably shed that attitude if it needs to construct a successful policy towards Nepal in the coming days. The old 'hegemon-protectorate' relationship is no longer sustainable between New Delhi and Kathmandu. Nepal has changed irrevocably in the 19 days of the pro-democracy agitation. That the Nepalese stood up bravely against the shoot-at-sight orders of King Gyanendra and refused to compromise with the monarchy despite the advice from India and the international community, has injected a new sense of self-confidence in Kathmandu...

The Hindu, 7 June 2006

### **Legal cooperation across the Himalayas - Pallavi Aiyar**

As the Sino-Indian friendship year enters the halfway stage, the latest example of cooperation across the Himalayas is in the legal field. A week after the Defence Ministries of the two countries signed their first ever MoU in the military sphere, a delegation of 12 lawyers from the Bar Association of India (BAI) is in Beijing to discuss bilateral cooperation between the legal communities of the two neighbours. The head of the delegation and BAI vice-president, K.K. Venugopal, explains: "Both China and India face common issues resulting from globalisation to do with international trade and arbitration. Unless our legal systems can rise to Western standards in these matters, we will be at a disadvantage. So India and China have a common cause to ensure that our laws develop harmoniously to meet these challenges." "India has quite a sophisticated legal system with many creative features and there is a lot

we can learn from your country," adds Yin Baohu, deputy director-general of the China Law Society, on whose invitation the BAI delegation is in Beijing. China is in fact currently embarking on a series of major legal reforms intended to promote the "rule of law" which is seen as a necessary corollary to the country's economic reforms and projection of itself as a modern, progressive nation. Multi-party democracy remains firmly off the agenda. In its stead is the idea that the country is to be ruled according to law, rather than bureaucratic fiat...

The Hindustan Times, 7 June 2006

### **Nepal Maoists urge PM to push India on jailed rebels**

Kathmandu, June 6: Nepal's Maoist rebels urged Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala to seek the release of about 150 comrades jailed in India during his visit to the country beginning Tuesday. It is Koirala's first trip abroad since he took power in April after weeks of street protests in the Himalayan nation forced King Gyanendra to restore parliament and end direct rule. The rebels and the new multi-party government have since agreed to hold elections for a special assembly to prepare a new Constitution that would decide the future of monarchy. "The prime minister should take the initiative with Indian leaders to get our party leaders freed from jails," Dev Gurung, a senior Maoist leader, said. Maoist rebels, who have been fighting for a communist state since 1996, often escape into India after crossing the porous border. Many have been arrested by Indian police. Koirala, 84, who arrives in New Delhi on Tuesday, will hold talks with Indian government leaders including counterpart Manmohan Singh during his four-day visit...

The Hindu, 8 June 2006

### **Sakhalin energy and the Russian roulette- Sudha Mahalingam**

For India that has its largest overseas investment ever in Sakhalin 1, the growing clout of gas giant Gazprom within Russia may not yet be a cause for alarm but it could be a cause for concern. The world is witnessing a resurgence of resource nationalism. In May, President Evo Morales' sensational decision to nationalise Bolivia's oil and gas assets sent the already volatile oil markets into a tizzy. Now Hugo Chavez is reining in international oil companies (IOC) operating in Venezuela, forcing them to renegotiate their contracts and warning them that the country's tax regime may not remain stable as promised. Recently, Ecuador joined its Latin American neighbours when it seized an oil field controlled by Occidental, a United States-based international oil company. This resurgence in resource nationalism is not confined to Latin America, which in any case, is veering to the Left. In Angola, Nigeria, Sudan and elsewhere, local protests for a greater share in the nation's mineral wealth have disrupted production frequently. In virtually every oil-exporting country, national oil companies (NOC), which had reluctantly ceded ground to IOCs in the wake of globalisation, seem to be reclaiming lost ground. Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than in Russia, which unlike many other energy exporters, has a fairly diversified economy. Russia's emergence as a formidable petrostate has been the single most important development of the new millennium. Rapidly ramping up oil and gas production in the last few years, today it is a serious challenge to Saudi and indeed OPEC supremacy in global energy markets. Revenues from energy sales generate a quarter of Russia's GDP, a third of its government revenues and two-thirds of the country's export income...

The Hindustan Times, 8 June 2006

### **Kalam suggests PURA be replicated in Nepal**

New Delhi, June 7: President APJ Abdul Kalam on Wednesday suggested replicating his pet project PURA (Providing Urban Facilities in Rural Areas) in the hilly terrains of Nepal to help the Himalayan country overcome the problem of road connectivity to inaccessible areas. Kalam made the suggestion when visiting Nepalese Prime Minister GP Koirala called on him in New Delhi. Kalam has been passionately advocating PURA programme for the development of rural areas in the country. During a 30-minute meeting the two leaders had at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Kalam explained that Hill PURA was one of the components of his programme and India can help Nepal in making this possible, President's press secretary SM Khan said. The two leaders discussed infrastructure problems being faced by Nepal, particularly road connectivity. Koirala said certain areas in Nepal were totally inaccessible and that one has to walk for miles to reach those places...

The Hindustan Times, 9 June 2006

### **'India deserves better status in its access to N-technology'**

Bangalore, June 8: France said on Thursday that India deserved a "better status" in its access to nuclear technology for civilian use and backed a US proposal to change the rules of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to enable New Delhi achieve it. "India and the US have reached a (nuclear) agreement last year. There is an American proposal to change the rules of NSG to enable India to access nuclear technology. We support this effort. We are trying to promote this

effort," French Ambassador to India Dominique Girard told reporters. France, he said, had been a "pioneering partner" with India in supporting its access to nuclear technology for civilian use and had been backing it on the issue at NSG and International Atomic Energy Agency "before anybody else." Noting the "strong political bond" between India and France, he said his country was the first member of United Nations Security Council to support India's candidature for permanent membership of UNSC...

The Hindu, 12 June 2006

### **Canada hopes to sign agreement with India on free trade**

Toronto, June 11: Canada hopes to sign an investment promotion and protection agreement with India that would encourage free trade between the two countries later this year, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said. The proposed agreement would contribute to greater investment, trade and expand economic cooperation between the two countries. It would also open up new business opportunities for Canadians, he added. Mr. Harper honoured 11 members of the Indo-Canadian community for their outstanding contributions in various fields at a function organised by the Indo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) to commemorate its 29th anniversary. The Prime Minister said that the government has decided to create a new foreign credential agency to help ensure the overseas credentials of immigrants were recognised by Canadian employers and professional bodies. The agency would ensure that skills, training and credentials of new immigrants were recognized, and respected by employers and licensing authorities. It "will help new immigrants navigate the bureaucratic labyrinth of credentials," Mr. Harper said...

The Hindu , 12 June 2006

### **Editorial: Helping a friend**

While there is nothing new in India providing financial and other forms of assistance to Nepal, the announcement of a Rs.1000 crore aid package during the recent visit of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala is significant. Apart from offering economic benefits to the people of the neighbouring country, the move signals strong support for the political transformation they have launched with a remarkable unity of purpose. Implicit in India's 'no-strings' offer is the promise that it will not try to influence the process of change. The Manmohan Singh Government would also do well to oppose all external intervention in Nepal's internal affairs. That Mr. Koirala chose India as the primary source of assistance is a tribute to an extremely close longstanding relationship. The aid package reflects a desire to help Nepal overcome its most pressing economic difficulties with a one-time grant of Rs.100 crore to infuse buoyancy into its budget. The Koirala Government faces a difficult fiscal situation as it tries to cope with the fallout of months, if not years, of political turmoil. A soft credit line of about Rs.500 crore has been offered for infrastructure projects; Kathmandu will be free to set the priorities of utilising this amount. The annual allocations for the 'Aid to Nepal' scheme will be enhanced from Rs.65 crore to Rs.150 crore; dues outstanding on defence purchases waived; 25,000 tonnes of fertilizer provided at subsidised prices; goods manufactured in Nepal exempted from the four per cent additional customs duty; and the release of all funds under the Duty Refund Procedure Scheme expedited. India has promised to speed up work on all infrastructure projects and the two governments are to identify further areas of cooperation...

The Indian Express, 14 June 2006

### **Pranab hopeful of China support**

New Delhi, June 13: India will look to garner China's support for the Indo-US nuclear deal once the deal is approved by the US Congress. The first step is getting the approval of the US Congress. Thereafter it will go to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) of which China is a member. China is aware of our needs and we will surely take it up after the matter is resolved in the US Congress, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said today. Fresh from his recent visit to China and Japan, Mukherjee said India and China had agreed to set up a Defence Cooperation Group to discuss cross-border terrorism and maritime security issues. We have signed an MoU with China providing institutional arrangements for defence cooperation, he said. He further said Japan had recognised the need of defence cooperation and a joint statement reflecting this had been issued during his visit. Responding to a query on China's support for Pakistan's weapons programme, Mukherjee said every country has its own programme in relation to its threat perception. Neither are we a threat to them nor they to us, he said adding that both the countries had realised over the years that we are neighbours and cannot change our neighbourhood and thus it is better to live in peace than in tension...

The Indian Express, 14 June 2006

### **Chidambaram charms Brussels**

Brussels, June 13: 'The India story' presented by Finance Minister P Chidambaram in Brussels has won over European Union officials, policy makers and members of the European business community. "Infrastructure is a deficit for India but an opportunity for investors," Chidambaram told European business leaders at an investment meet Monday evening. He also stressed that India was an exciting and interesting opportunity for investors owing to "reforms embedded in a democratic polity, equitable society and inclusiveness". Attractive incentives for foreign investment, the finance minister noted, were India's commercial laws, its best banking system, the finely tuned financial services sector and its free imports and exports. He underlined India's comparative advantage in the IT sector, announced plans to turn the country into a manufacturing hub and reassured the business community that the Indian rupee was virtually convertible for foreign investors...

The Hindu,, 15 June 2006

### **India-U.S. nuclear deal a step forward: El Baradei**

Washington : International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Mohammed El Baradei has said the U.S.-India civilian nuclear agreement that allows India access to sensitive technology in exchange for bringing its nuclear reactors under IAEA safeguards is a creative break with the past that, if handled properly, will be a step forward for both India and the international community. Writing in the Washington Post, Mr. El Baradei said India will get technology to help lift more than 500 million people from poverty, and will be part of the effort to combat nuclear terrorism and "rid our world of nuclear weapons". He said, "Strong support of India and the U.S. - as well as all other nuclear weapons states - is sorely needed to make this treaty a reality." India, he said, agreed to follow the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an organisation of States that regulates access to nuclear material and technology. It has also agreed to bring its civilian nuclear facilities under international safeguards

The Hindu, 15 June 2006

### **India, U.S. talks end on positive note**

NEW DELHI: India and the United States on Wednesday ended three-day talks here on the proposed civilian nuclear agreement on a positive note. "The talks ended on a positive and constructive note," said an official. Both sides refused to divulge details but indicated that they would report the contents on reaching a common position to their governments before making them public. "The goal is to finish the talks as soon as possible but the issues on the table are very complex. However, we are satisfied with the talks," said a source. Aimed at complying with Section 123 of the U.S. Atomic Energy Act, the next round of talks would be held "fairly soon," the official said. The '123 Agreement' will then set the stage for the civilian nuclear agreement, whose contours were agreed upon by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and U.S. President George W. Bush on July 18 last.

The Hindu, 15 June 2006

### **China visit a crucial test for Deora (Pallavi Aiyar)**

Beijing: Petroleum Minister Murli Deora on Wednesday arrived in Shanghai, where he will represent India at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit to be held on Thursday. The SCO is a six-member regional grouping of several major oil producing nations in addition to the world's second largest consumer - China. India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia have the observer status. Apart from attending the summit proceedings, Mr. Deora will hold several bilateral meetings. On arrival, he said, "India looks forward to associating closely with SCO members" on a variety of initiatives to promote economic cooperation. He expressed the hope that the organisation would soon announce its policies on the opportunities for observer-countries to have "meaningful and substantive collaboration within the SCO framework."

The Hindu, 16 June 2006

### **Tharoor "eminently suitable" for U.N. chief's post (Amit Baruah)**

NEW DELHI: Presently the Under Secretary-General in the United Nations, Shashi Tharoor, has been selected as a candidate for the post of U.N. Secretary-General. The announcement of this position, which falls vacant after the retirement of Kofi Annan this year end, was made on Thursday. Announcing Mr. Tharoor's candidature, External Affairs Ministry spokesman told presspersons that the U.N. official's "internationally acclaimed stature and experience" made him "eminently suitable" for this post. It is for the first time that an Indian will be contesting for the post of U.N. Secretary-General. According to South Block officials, getting Mr. Tharoor elected would be a "difficult task." South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Surakiat Sathirathai, Sri Lankan diplomat Jayant Dhanapala and Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong will also be contesting for this office.

The Hindu, 16 June 2006

### **Congress must not approve Indo-American nuclear deal, say Nobel laureates**

Washington: Terming the Indo-U.S. civilian nuclear technology deal as a "formula for destroying American non-proliferation goals," 37 Nobel laureates urged the U.S. Congress not to approve the deal "in its current form." "The recent nuclear agreement with India weakens the existing non-proliferation regime without providing an acceptable substitute. Since nothing is more important to the U.S. security than blocking further proliferation and possible use of nuclear weapons, the lawmakers should withhold their seal of approval until the deal can be rectified," they wrote in a letter, supported by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS). "While there are a hundred different areas in which the United States and India could, and should, establish closer ties, this nuclear agreement isn't it," the letter, released at a press conference on Wednesday, said. The laureates, including Kenneth Joseph Arrow (Economics, 1972), Paul Christian Lauterbur (Medicine, 2003), Alfred Goodman Gilman (Medicine, 1994), Roger Guillemin (Medicine, 1977) and Donald A. Glaser (Physics, 1960), urged the lawmakers to vote against the "enabling legislation" as they claimed bilateral ad-hoc agreements such as the one just announced with India undercut U.S. and world security.

The Indian Express, 16 June 2006

### **New Delhi to okay UN N-treaty today (Amitav Ranjan)**

NEW DELHI, JUNE 15: New Delhi plans to approve tomorrow the signing of a UN treaty that prevents nuclear terrorism and demonstrate to the international community that it is a responsible nuclear power committed to global security. A proposal for signing and ratifying the Russian-sponsored ?International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism? comes up before the Cabinet so that India can join the band of 105 nations that have already given their assent. The convention, that has been opened for signing since last September, tightens the nuclear export control regime. It would come into force 30 days after 22 nuclear capable countries submit the instruments of ratification. The treaty focuses on prevention and makes possession of radioactive material or nuclear device with a view to cause death or serious injury or damage to property or nuclear installations a crime. It also provides a legal basis for global cooperation in the investigation, prosecution and extradition of persons accused of such acts, thereby preventing transfer, export or proliferation of energy, equipment and material into wrong hands, specially terrorists and non-state actors. This is the 13th convention against terrorism but the first international legal instrument to be adopted by the UN General Assembly since 9/11. It is open for ratification until December 31.

The Hindu, 17 June 2006

### **U.S. declines comment on Tharoor's nomination**

Washington: The Bush administration has declined comment on India's formal endorsement of U.N. diplomat Shashi Tharoor as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. "Obviously, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is an extremely important position for the welfare of the whole world and the United States will be looking very carefully at all the nominees," a senior State Department official said, when asked to respond to Thursday's announcement by New Delhi. In fact, the United States has had little to say on the other candidates. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan leaves office in December this year after serving two five-year terms. The decision to field Mr. Tharoor, currently the U.N. Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, comes with an assertion that under the principle of regional rotation, the next Secretary-General should be from Asia. Hours after India's decision, Pakistan said it would field a candidate to challenge Mr. Tharoor.

The Indian Express, 17 June 2006

### **Indo-US nuke deal gets a solid backing, close to fruition (Chidanand Rajghatta)**

WASHINGTON: It's happening. The much anticipated US-India nuclear agreement is close to fruition. The deal got a solid endorsement on Friday from Senator Richard Lugar, who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. From the House side, Congressman Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations committee, has also signed on. The two committees may begin the mark-up, the process that fine-tunes the agreement into law, as early as next week. Hyde is scheduled to make a joint appearance in Congress on June 21 with Undersecretary of State Nick Burns, the administration pointman for the deal. Lugar, a famed non-proliferationist, chose a commencement address he delivered at the Naval War College in Rhode Island to announce his unqualified backing after giving the administration a torrid time for weeks with some 80 questions about the deal. Calling the agreement "the most important strategic diplomatic initiative undertaken by President Bush," he said it represents a fundamental departure from the crisis management mentality that has dominated foreign policy in both the executive and legislative branches in recent years.

The Hindu, 18 June 2006

### **India, Pakistan exchange list of civilian prisoners (Nirupama Subramanian)**

ISLAMABAD: As agreed by the Home Secretaries of India and Pakistan at their meeting here last month, the two Governments have exchanged the lists of their civilians in each other's prisons. The agreement was to exchange the lists by June 15 to facilitate consular access to the prisoners by July 31, and their release soon after. A statement from the Pakistan Foreign Ministry said Islamabad had given to India a list of 493 Pakistani civilians being held in Indian jails. India has not yet granted consular access to 169 of these prisoners, the statement said. Of the rest, Pakistan had verified the Pakistani nationality of 213, and was in the process of verifying the nationality of the rest. Aside from these, Pakistan has 30 fishermen in Indian custody and has requested its mission in New Delhi to obtain consular access to them, according to the statement. As many as 432 Indian fishermen are in Pakistani custody. India is awaiting consular access to 192 of them. In the category of other civilian prisoners, Pakistan said it had 116 Indians, while the Indian side believed the number was closer to 160. India obtained consular access to 32 of these.

The Hindu, 18 June 2006

### **Pakistan denies transit route for Indian goods (Nirupama Subramanian)**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has once again turned down a request for a transit route to Afghanistan through the Wagah border for Indian goods. At the June 14-15 Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Economic Commission meeting, Afghan Finance Minister Anwar ul-Haq Ahady reiterated the demand that Pakistan provide a transit route through the Wagah border for Indian goods bound for his country. Mr. Ahady said later that there had been no progress on this demand. The Afghan Minister said Pakistan had its compulsions for not giving the transit rights. "However, if the transit was extended, it would provide a relief to Afghanistan," he was quoted as saying. Pakistan has linked permission for the overland trade corridor to progress on solving the Kashmir issue. Pending that, Pakistan has said India could make use of the Karachi port to transport goods to Afghanistan.

The Hindu, 19 June 2006

### **Delhi, Dhaka to sign extradition treaty (Haroon Habib)**

DHAKA: Dhaka and New Delhi are about to sign an extradition treaty, with Bangladesh reportedly giving final touches to the draft handed over by India. Bangladesh has one such treaty with Thailand. Officials in both sides hope that once the treaty is signed, the fugitives who had been evading justice will be handed over to the respective countries. Bangladesh Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told newsmen that about 5,000 "foreign nationals," including 980 from Myanmar and India were now lodged in different jails. "Some of them have already completed their jail terms but they are not allowed to leave the country due to the absence of an extradition treaty." Dhaka has also handed over a long list of 'wanted criminals' to New Delhi alleging that they have taken refuge in various parts of India to avoid arrest. On its part, India has been alleging that insurgents from the northeast were hiding in Bangladesh and operating from there. Denying this, Dhaka has pointed out that it has killed a few dozens of 'Indian insurgents' in the bordering Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet region by launching major assaults on their hideouts.

The Hindu, 19 June 2006

### **U.S. Congress likely to finetune Bill this week**

WASHINGTON: The India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal is likely to reach a milestone this week, when Congress is likely to start the mark-up, a process of fine-tuning the legislation required to implement the pact. The International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives is scheduled tentatively to do its mark-up on Wednesday. Though the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has not set a date for its mark-up, it is expected to follow suit soon. Given the way mark-ups proceed in Congress, there is no sanctity about the dates. But even a postponement of the vote in the House Committee by a few days would neither be a reflection of the interest of lawmakers nor an indication of the legislation being in 'serious trouble.'

The Indian Express, 20 June 2006

### **Hopeful India waits another week for N-deal to move to House (C Raja Mohan)**

WASHINGTON, June 19: Even as a key Congressional committee postponed by a week the crucial debate on "marking up" the nuclear legislation on India, the prospects for positive action on the Capitol Hill appear to have considerably improved. Well placed sources say the odds in favour of the US Congress approving the nuclear deal this summer have finally got "better than even" this week amidst successful mobilisation of some decisive political support by the Bush administration and India. The challenge for the supporters of the deal now, sources here say, is to get widest possible and bipartisan support in the House International Relations Committee and the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee for the legislation and ensure that there are no deal-breaking amendments. In the Congressional procedure, "mark up" represents a critical phase in the enactment of new laws when the debate moves from the Committees to the floor of the two Houses. The Committees have the right to change the original bill before sending it to the full Houses. And the vote in the Committees will also reflect the depth and breadth of support to the new legislation. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee, which have been debating the nuclear deal with India for nearly nine months, are now expected to vote around June 27 to mark-up the bill to the floor of the two Houses. The House Committee vote was originally slated for this week.

The Hindu, 20 June 2006

### **Peace process on track: Musharraf (Nirupama Subramanian)**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has told a Chinese television station that the composite dialogue process between New Delhi and Islamabad was on track but the pace was below his expectations. The President, who was in China last week for the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation Summit, told China Central Television that the process needed "to be focussed on resolving the core issue of Kashmir," the official Associated Press of Pakistan reported. Conflict resolution was all the more important to normalise bilateral relations, he said. Describing the India-United States nuclear deal as a "bilateral arrangement," Gen. Musharraf said Pakistan wanted to be treated on par with India as far as strategic capabilities were concerned, APP said. Pakistan would not like anyone to treat it differently from India "because we have the same status."

The Hindu, 20 June 2006

### **Deora holds talks with Iran President**

New Delhi: In the first high-level interaction with Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad since he assumed office, Petroleum Minister Murli Deora held discussions with him at Shanghai on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project and the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG). Mr. Deora urged him to expedite the LNG supply agreement inked between the two countries at Teheran in June 2005. According to an official release, the meeting was held on the sidelines of the recently concluded Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) conference. Mr. Deora carried forward dialogue on the gas pipeline project and LNG supply with Iran Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri Hamaneh too. Reiterating India's commitment to the pipeline project, he said the three countries were discussing details of the project structure, route, gas pricing and framework agreement on a fast-track basis.

The Hindu, 21 June 2006

### **India-China border talks next week**

NEW DELHI: Continuing with their efforts to resolve the boundary dispute, Indian and Chinese Special Representatives will meet to discuss the issue in Beijing on June 26 and 27. This will be the eighth round of talks between the Special Representatives, South Block sources said on Tuesday. The Indian Special Representative for the talks is National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan while his Chinese counterpart is Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo. Traditionally, India and China have revealed few details of the discussions between their Special Representatives. After the last round in New Delhi and Kumarakom in March, a brief statement said: "The two Special Representatives continued their discussions for an agreed framework for the resolution of the boundary question in a constructive and friendly atmosphere." The two sides agreed upon the Special Representatives mechanism in June 2003 during the visit of the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to China.

The Indian Express, 21 June 2006

### **'N-deal approval unlikely this year'**

Washington, June 20: An influential lawmaker has said the US Congress is unlikely to give its seal of approval to the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal this year. Senator John McCain, considered the Republican frontrunner in the presidential elections of 2008, said Congress needed to scrutinise the deal more rigorously on account of the precedent it would be setting. Republicans and Democrats alike are keen that India and the IAEA come to an accord on the issue of safeguards and the non-proliferation community is worried that the deal would allow New Delhi to import uranium and free its domestic supply for use in a military programme. "For what it's worth, we have received assurances that India will not do that, but this is taking a risk," said McCain. "I believe the Senate needs to be briefed and Lugar (Richard Lugar, chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee) hold hearings and we go through the regular process. I have a tendency to support it, but we need to be well informed," he added. Asked if the prospects for movement on the deal this year are not good, McCain said, "You would have to talk to Lugar, but from what I can tell it is unlikely that we would get that resolved this year."

The Indian Express, 21 June 2006

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The Hindu, 22 June 2006

### **Tulbul talks on June 22, 23 (Nirupama Subramanian)**

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan will hold two-day talks here starting June 22 on the contentious Tulbul navigation project in Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian delegation is being led by Water Resources Secretary J. Hari Narayan and includes the Indus Waters Treaty Commissioner, officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and technical experts. The talks form part of the third round of the composite dialogue process. They were due to take place in April but postponed at India's request as Mr. Narayan was then preoccupied with the Narmada dam crisis. The Pakistan delegation will be led by Water and Power Secretary Ishfaq Mahmood.

The Hindu, 22 June 2006

### **India, Russia to hold naval war games in early 2007 (Vladimir Radyuhin)**

MOSCOW: India and Russia will hold naval war games next year, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Arun Prakash said here. "INDRA-2007," to be held off Russia's Pacific coast in early 2007, will be the third such exercise since 2003. The first one was held in Russia. "The basic idea is to create inter-operability and practise anti-submarine and anti-aircraft warfare," Admiral Prakash told The Hindu. "It's a progressive process of learning from each other," he said. Admiral Prakash, who arrived here on June 19, met Russia's Chief of Staff General Yuri Baluyevsky, Navy chief Admiral Vladimir Masorin and Air Chief-General Vladimir Mikhailov on Tuesday. Admiral Prakash undertook a 30-minute flight in the latest version of the MiG-29 multi-role fighter. "It's a very good, very capable aircraft," he said, adding that its naval version Russia was building for India will make its maiden flight in "two-three months." India has bought 16 deck-based MiG-29K planes for the Gorshkov aircraft carrier which is being retrofitted for the Indian Navy in Severodvinsk. Admiral Prakash said both projects were moving forward "satisfactorily" as per contracts.

The Indian Express, 22 June 2006

### **US holds Tharoor in 'greatest regard'**

Washington, June 22: The US holds India's nominee for UN Secretary General's post Shashi Tharoor in 'greatest regard', but has not made any decision on whom it would support to succeed Kofi Annan. "Our administration has not yet made a decision on whom we will support to succeed Secretary General Kofi Annan. But we certainly hold Shashi Tharoor in greatest regard and I look forward to meeting him in my office," Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns said. "I don't think President Bush will make this decision until much further into the process" he added. Burns declined to comment on the fact that Tharoor is an 'insider' on the ground that it will not be fair to other candidates currently running for the position or have made broad indications to that effect.

The Hindu, 23 June 2006

### **Lift trade barriers, U.S. told**

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath on Thursday asked the U.S. to remove all barriers in trade and services so that India can become its largest economic partner. Mr. Kamal Nath said this while addressing the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) in Washington on the theme of "Enhanced U.S.-India Trade: The Way Forward." India-U.S. merchandise trade stands at \$ 25 billion and the services trade is estimated at \$ 20 billion. "The rate of growth is remarkable, but bilateral trade could be much more," he said. Mr. Kamal Nath said India's eight per cent GDP growth for the past three years is riding on a solid entrepreneurial base. "It is the manufacturing

and industrial sector which offer the best opportunities for American investors." Stating that centres of economic gravity would gradually but inevitably move eastwards from the Atlantic Ocean towards the Indian Ocean, the Minister said the gap between Asia and the West would get reduced.

The Indian Express, 23 June 2006

### **Cheney hails India at business summit, says US committed to nuclear deal (Lalit K Jha)**

Washington DC, June 22: US Vice President Dick Cheney today expressed confidence that the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement, pending in the Congress for approval, would get bipartisan Congressional support. Addressing the 31st Annual Leadership Summit of United States India Business Council, Cheney came out strongly in support of the nuclear deal saying it was vital for both the countries. He also said that the agreement strengthens the non-proliferation regime rather than putting it in jeopardy. This was for the first time that a US vice president was addressing a USIBC meet, which many observers say signifies the growing importance of the economic relationship between the two countries. Referring to the jumbo Indo-US caucus at Capitol Hill, Cheney said its leadership constituted of both Republicans and Democrats and there was no reason why the nuclear agreement, which is an important foreign policy initiative of the Bush Administration, will not go through.

The Indian Express, 23 June 2006

### **Ensure ceasefire holds, India tells Lanka**

New Delhi, June 22: India today made it clear to Sri Lanka that there need to be made all efforts to ensure that the ceasefire between the Lankan forces and the LTTE not only holds but also gets strengthened. New Delhi also suggested that Colombo work out a devolution package that has the backing of all major political forces in Lanka. This was conveyed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera, who made a stopover in Delhi, on his way back from talks in Oslo, to brief the Indian leadership on the current state of the peace process. While conveying India's commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, Singh also told Samaraweera that the "legitimate aspirations" of all sections of the Sri Lankan society needed to be addressed expeditiously.

The Hindu, 24 June 2006

### **India pledges \$ 2 m. for UN Peace-building Fund**

New Delhi, June 23: India has decided to make an initial commitment of \$ 2 millions to the Peace-Building Fund proposed to be set up under the newly-established Peace-Building Commission (PBC) at the United Nations, a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said on Friday. India had welcomed the proposal contained in the 2005 World Summit Document to establish a Peace-building Commission at the UN as an inter-governmental advisory body to help countries in the process of post-conflict peace-building, recovery, reconstruction and development. As part of its composite engagement with other member states on issues related to the UN reform, India has been constructively involved in discussions to set up and operationalise the PBC. While the PBC was established in December, 2005, the process of forming its Organisational Committee was completed in May 2006. The UN Secretary General has scheduled the first meeting of the Organisational Committee at the UN in New York on Friday...

The Hindu, 24 June 2006

### **India-Singapore land route proposed to cut bandwidth cost, says Dayanidhi Maran**

Singapore, June 23: India is for creation of a "cost-effective" Asian sub-regional network in the "telecom and bandwidth" domain. Union Minister for Communications and Information Technology Dayanidhi Maran indicated this here on Friday during a media interaction. Mr. Maran said Singapore had evinced interest in the idea of establishing a "land route," linking Kolkata, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bangkok, Malaysia, and Singapore. Such a link would reduce the bandwidth cost between India and Singapore. The issue, he said, was raised during his meetings with Singapore Ministers. "Right now, the bandwidth cost is very expensive" and the link "is not fully utilised." Asked if the initiative was to set up a regional fibre optic network, he said the focus now was on a land route, which could also serve as "a standby [for] the submarine cable." Asked about the scope of his visit to Singapore and just-concluded tour of South Korea, he said the objective was to instil "confidence" among foreign entrepreneurs about the "security" of their potential investments in India in all sectors, including information technology and communications (ITC). Mr. Maran said the discussions with South Korean Ministers centred on creating a joint-working-group mechanism on subjects ranging from Internet to e-governance. Earlier, addressing the Institute of South Asian Studies and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mr. Maran said India was looking for investments from the City-State in core infrastructure sectors...

The Times of India, 24 June 2006

### **India refutes reports on nuclear weapons programme**

New Delhi, June 23: India on Friday refuted media reports that India had the capability to make about 50 nuclear warheads every year, a claim made by a retired intelligence official. The MEA spokesperson said there was a lot of "uninformed speculation" about India's nuclear programme. "The argument that the nuclear deal with the US would enhance our strategic capacity is as misplaced as its opposite extreme — that it would cripple our programme. We believe that US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice has accurately summed up the situation in her Congressional testimony when she has noted that the nuclear deal would have no impact on our strategic programme. India remains committed to a credible minimum deterrent," he said. The MEA response comes days ahead of a new report by a US think-tank, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which says: "India is currently separating far less weapons grade plutonium annually than it has the capability to produce." The evidence, says the new report by Ashley Tellis to be released on Monday, suggests that the government of India is in no hurry to build the biggest nuclear stockpile it could construct based on material factors alone. This report will also come out as the India nuclear deal gets ready for a mark-up vote in the US Congress...

The Hindu, 25 June 2006

### **Narayanan, Dai meet in Xi'an ahead of boundary talks**

Beijing, June 24: India's Special Representative to the India-China boundary talks, K Narayanan and his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo have met informally in the north-western Chinese city of Xian ahead of the official-level talks here tomorrow. Narayanan, India's National Security Adviser, who arrived in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi province yesterday, met with Dai, Executive Vice Foreign Minister. It is understood that they met informally and also went sight-seeing the famous Terracotta Warriors, known as the eighth wonder of the world. The official-level eighth round of boundary talks is scheduled from June 26 to 27 and the two sides are expected to continue their in-camera sessions in an effort to resolve the boundary issue under the "political parameters" set during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to New Delhi in April 2005. The new round of negotiations would be taking place after the recent successful visit to China by Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee as well as last week's historic agreement between India and China to reopen the Nathu La border trade point situated at 4,400 meters...

The Hindustan Times, 26 June 2006

### **Haroor to launch his campaign this week**

New Delhi, June 25: India's nominee for the post of UN Secretary-General, Shashi Tharoor, will launch his campaign this week when he travels to Gambia to muster support of 53 countries of Africa. He will be in Gambia during the two-day African Union Summit from July 1, sources said on Sunday. The visit, aimed at garnering support for Tharoor's candidacy for the top UN post, is expected to see him meeting leaders of various African countries, they said. With the election process likely to start from next month, the UN Under Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information is expected to undertake visits to various other countries after his Gambia visit. The countries likely to be visited by him include five Permanent Members of the Security Council, particularly China, considering the importance of their support, they said. Tharoor, who was here last week, had remarked that anybody unacceptable to the Permanent Members of the Security Council will not be able to make it to the top UN post...

The Hindustan Times, 26 June 2006

### **Crack the nuclear sudoku- Pramit Pal Chaudhuri**

New Delhi's most curious foe at the start of the 21st century is the Dublin-Wellington Axis against India. It was an alliance that revealed itself most overtly during last month's Nuclear Suppliers Group plenary in Brasil. The NSG is the beating heart of the nuclear non-proliferation regime; the main link in the chain that has kept India in the atomic doghouse for three decades. The US, backed by the likes of France and Britain, tried to get the NSG members to insert a paragraph in the press release "taking note" of the Indo-US nuclear deal. As one diplomat present at the discussions said, "Ireland and New Zealand immediately went into a huddle." These two governments, backed by powers like Austria and Norway, insisted the relevant paragraph mention the NSG had "concerns" about the deal. The moral mites stood their ground. The plenary failed to give the Indo-US nuclear deal a hoped-for boost. Understand that getting an Indian exemption from the NSG is the most important act in the unfolding drama of ending nearly three decades of technology discrimination against India. The NPT may have outlined the principles of nuclear apartheid, but it's the NSG that converts theory into practice. This is where the beef is. While it has a stand-alone significance in terms of bilateral relations between India and the US, the present legislation being

contemplated by the US Congress wouldn't be particularly crucial to India's nuclear future if the NSG had opened up for India. Nuclear fuel and technology would then be available from any number of countries...

The Hindu, 26 June 2006

### **Hasina calls for strengthening India-Bangladesh relations**

Kolkata, June 25: There is a need to strengthen bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India and her party, the Awami League, would accord priority to this need if voted back to power, the former Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, said here on Sunday. However, She feared that the Bangladesh Nationalist Party would resort to electoral malpractices in next year's parliamentary elections to stay on in power. Ms. Hasina said she was confident that her party would be returned to power but "only if the elections were held in a free and fair manner" and the electorate cast its votes freely. On India's concerns over insurgents setting up camps in Bangladesh, she said: "Terrorism is a global phenomenon and Bangladesh is no exception." She and her party workers too were victims of terrorist attacks in August 2005, she recalled. Ms. Hasina also called on veteran Marxist leader Jyoti Basu at his residence and later said that they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries...

The Hindu, 26 June 2006

### **Kamal Nath to attend WTO meet in Geneva**

New Delhi, June 25: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Kamal Nath will attend the mini-ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation from June 29 to July 2 in Geneva. The meet will discuss the modalities for negotiations for agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) or industrial tariffs. While agriculture and NAMA are not the sole elements of the Doha agenda, these two areas are seen as the most crucial for breaking the current stalemate and moving the Doha Round forward. Trade Ministers from about 40-50 WTO member-countries are expected to participate in the Geneva meeting. The meeting assumes special significance as, according to analysts, if the issues are not resolved at the meeting, conclusion of the Doha Round launched at Doha in Qatar in 2001, could get inordinately delayed. The discussions will be based on the text of the modalities for negotiations in agriculture and NAMA, which was released by WTO earlier this week. Mr. Kamal Nath will be accompanied by a high-level delegation that will include representatives of the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, Agriculture and Textiles, an official release said here...

The Hindu, 26 June 2006

### **India, China begin eighth round of boundary talks**

Beijing, June 25: India and China opened the eighth round of boundary talks here today to find a political settlement to the vexed dispute. India's Special Representative to the India-China boundary talks, K Narayanan and his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo, met officially after a day of informal parleys in the northwest Chinese city of Xian. During the two days of talks, the two sides are expected to continue their in-camera sessions in an effort to resolve the boundary issue under the "political parameters" set during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to New Delhi in April 2005. The two sides formed the Special Representatives mechanism in June 2003 during the visit of the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to China. Among other things, these guiding principles commit both India and China sides to arriving at a "package settlement" of the boundary question in a spirit of mutual respect and mutual understanding, analysts said. India says China is illegally occupying 43,180 sq kms of Jammu and Kashmir including 5,180 sq km illegally ceded to Beijing by Islamabad under the Sino-Pakistan boundary agreement in 1963...

The Hindu, 27 June 2006

### **Australia to ship 500,000 tonne wheat to India**

Melbourne, June 26: Australia has decided to move ahead with a 500,000 tonne wheat shipment, which had been held up over quarantine concerns, after it resolved a long-running dispute with India over the USD 90 million grain deal. "AWB has successfully resolved key issues relating to its current Indian contract and is now moving to finalise its shipping programme for our customer," Australian Wheat Board spokesperson Peter McBride told PTI here today. About 100,000 tonnes of the contract has already been delivered to the southern Indian ports of Tuticorin and Chennai. But several other shipments had been held up because of quarantine concerns. The company, however, described the problem largely as a technical issue. Apart from filling the 500,000 tonne contract, AWB has also won a second similar deal that is likely to be filled over the next four months, he said. The one million tonne will come out of the national wheat pool. The initial contract was India's first large grain import in nearly a decade after being self-sufficient over that time. The two contracts are some of the first major sales since trade with Iraq was suspended over claims AWB paid USD 300 million in kickbacks to the former regime of Saddam Hussein.

The Hindu, 27 June 2006

### **India condemns bomb attack near Colombo**

New Delhi, June 26:India on Monday "unreservedly" condemned the "terrorist bombing incident" outside Colombo in which Sri Lankan Major-General Parami Kulatunga and other defence personnel were "tragically killed." "This incident is the latest in a series of recent terrorist attacks [in Sri Lanka] which are aimed at undermining the ceasefire and vitiating the environment for a political dialogue," the External Affairs Ministry spokesman told presspersons. Extending "sincere condolences" to the Sri Lankan Government and members of the bereaved families, he said, "India is determined to stand by the people of Sri Lanka in our common struggle against terrorism, of which both our countries are victims." India reiterated its view that political processes need to be activated "through sincere dialogue" to arrive at a settlement, which took into account the aspirations of all sections of Sri Lankan society while upholding the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country...

The Hindu, 27 June 2006

### **India gifts military radars to Sri Lanka**

New Delhi, June 26:After about six years, India has resumed its defence ties with Sri Lanka with the commissioning of two military radars to secure the island-nation against low-level aerial attacks. The decision to gift the indigenously made Indra radars was made late last year following reports that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was scouting the global arms market for air assets. At present, the LTTE is believed to possess a couple of micro light aircraft. It had also developed two airstrips in the area under its control. The last time India provided military capabilities to Sri Lanka was in 2000, when it gifted a fast attack craft, to help maintain sea dominance in general and check LTTE activities in particular. Confirming the installation of the radars, non-military sources said the gift fell under the category of "defensive and non-lethal equipment" and was in line with India's policy to help the militaries of neighbouring countries to counter threats from non-state actors...

The Hindu, 27 June 2006

### **Another step forward in strengthening ties**

New Delhi, June 26: India and China began on Monday the eighth round of talks between their Special Representatives on the border dispute — National Security Adviser M. K. Narayanan and Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo — marking another step forward on the slow road to resolution. The latest round of discussions comes against a background of steadily warming bilateral relations. In the last year, the two neighbours have entered into broad cooperation in areas where they have usually been portrayed as rivals: energy, security, and defence. Bilateral trade is galloping ahead and expected to touch \$20 billion before the end of this year. China is, in fact, expected to overtake the United States as India's largest trade partner within a few years. Cultural ties are also being strengthened after a 40-year period of deep-freeze. India and China are currently celebrating a "Year of Friendship." Film festivals are being planned and the ancient link of Buddhism that threaded the two countries together centuries ago is being highlighted through photo exhibitions and the building of an Indian stupa-style temple in Henan province. An exchange of high-level visits is also being worked on with President Hu Jintao expected to travel to New Delhi later in the year followed by a China visit for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh...

The Hindustan Times, 27 June 2006

### **WTO draft not in India's interest: Assocham**

New Delhi, June 26:Industry body Assocham on Monday said the draft text of the Mini Ministerial Meeting of WTO to be held in Geneva should be rejected since it falls short of India's expectations and makes it obligatory for developing countries for greater reductions in their industrial tariffs. "India should not be happy about the draft text on Non Agriculture Market Access because this text seems to prefer a simple Swiss formula for tariff reduction in industrial goods. This would mean that developing countries will be obliged to go in for steeper tariff cuts than the developed countries," Assocham President Anil Agarwal said in a statement. The industry chamber said the Doha Round of negotiations should be completed on time since collapse of this round would go against the interest of the developing countries. Tariff reduction formula should be such that developing countries are not unduly punished for their level of tariff. Developing and developed countries are at two different levels of industrial progress and, hence, industrialisation should not be compared, he added...

The Hindustan Times, 28 June 2006

### **US House panel approves Indo-US nuclear deal bill**

Washington/Delhi, June 27:The International Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives on Tuesday

passed a bill seeking an exemption for India from the discriminatory nuclear regime that exists under the US law. Of the 45 committee members who debated the bill, 37 voted in its favour, while five opposed it. The remaining three members abstained from voting. The Bush administration and New Delhi, said officials, had always been confident of getting a majority for the bill. What was needed was an overwhelming majority to provide a political momentum for a parallel vote in the Senate on Thursday and, eventually, a vote in the full Congress. Deal opponents had argued that other countries would also seek similar cooperation. Supporters were of the view that the proposed act strengthened the bilateral relationship and brought India into the nuclear mainstream. Most congressmen who spoke were full of praise for India. Committee chair Henry Hyde said the bill was "profoundly satisfactory". Ranking Democrat Tom Lantos called it a "defining moment in our relationship with India". After the debate, a series of amendments designed to wreck the bill "demanding, among other things, that India sign the NPT and cap its fissile-material production" were voted on by the committee. Four were defeated by over 30 votes. Only one cosmetic amendment was accepted. Officials said the vote indicated that the strategy of incorporating rhetorical demands of various congressmen to broad base support seemed to have worked.

The Hindu, 28 June 2006

### **Govt to check poaching along Nathu La pass**

New Delhi, June 28: Scotching fears of an increase in poaching following the opening of the Nathu La pass for trade with China, the Government on Tuesday, said security forces guarding the trading post will be trained to identify such products. Union Environment Secretary Prodipto Ghosh said the Government had taken several steps to check illegal trade of poached goods. He said the Chinese Government has also implemented certain laws disallowing the display of products made by using endangered animals. Besides, paramilitary forces guarding the Nathu La pass would be given special training to identify poached goods that could be traded in through the newly-opened post, he told reporters here.

The Hindu, 28 June 2006

### **Revised WTO draft text on NAMA not sufficient for India: FICCI**

New Delhi, June 28: Industry body FICCI on Tuesday, said the revised WTO draft text on industrial tariffs did not reflect the mandate of providing market access to products of export interest to developing countries like India. The revised text on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), which was released by the WTO on Monday, also pointed to the imbalance against developing countries' interest with regard to tariff cuts, the chamber said in a release. The text did not have a clear provision for giving market access to developing countries, FICCI said. Further, there is no mandate to consider export related policy instruments such as export taxes and export restrictions in the Doha round of trade talks, it said. FICCI had earlier opposed the inclusion of 'simple Swiss' formula for tariff reductions in industrial goods, saying it would require developing countries to cut tariffs more, compared to rich nations.

The Hindu, 28 June 2006

### **Talks with China end on a friendly note**

Beijing, June 27: The eighth round of talks on the border dispute between India and China ended here on Tuesday. As with the preceding rounds of dialogue, these were held behind closed doors and details of what was discussed were not made public. A brief press release issued at the conclusion of the two-day negotiations stated that the talks had been held in a friendly, cooperative and constructive atmosphere. A similar statement had also been made following the last round of dialogue in India earlier this year in March. Special Representatives M.K. Narayanan, who is also the National Security Adviser, and Dai Bingguo, the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, are in the process of devising a framework for a settlement of the border issue on the basis of the "political parameters and guiding principles" finalised during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India last year. The actual demarcation of the border can only begin after the framework is realised, official sources say...

The Hindu, 28 June 2006

### **Putin calls for quantum jump in ties with India**

Moscow, June 27: Russian President Vladimir Putin has called for a quantum jump in bilateral cooperation with India, including in the energy and defence fields. Speaking at a bi-annual meeting of Russian diplomats, Mr. Putin said Russia intended to strengthen relations with both India and China. "It is essential to increase dramatically the volume of our trade and the level of investment [with India], our cooperation in the energy and other fields, including military-technical field," Mr. Putin said. Describing Russia's relations with China as "all-embracing" and "friendly," the Russian leader stressed the need to sustain the growth in bilateral ties apace with "dynamic

development of China and its changing role in the region and the world."

The Hindustan Times, 28 June 2006

### **LTTE extends hand of friendship to Karunanidhi**

Colombo, June 27: In an effort to mend fences with India in the context of its growing international isolation, the LTTE has not only expressed "deep regret" over the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, but has also extended a "hand of friendship" to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi. While the LTTE's chief spokesman Anton Balasingham told NDTV in London on Monday, that India should be "magnanimous", put the past behind, and play an active role in restoring peace in Sri Lanka, the outfit's political commissar, SP Tamilselvan, told the Singapore-based daily Tamil Murasu that it was ready to extend a hand of friendship to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. "If one looks at it from one's individual interest, there will be no close relations between the LTTE and the DMK government in Tamil Nadu. But looking at it from the point of view of the people's welfare, we will surely extend a hand of friendship," Tamilselvan said...

The Hindu, 29 June 2006

### **Indian warships on goodwill mission to Israel**

Haifa, June 29: Two Indian warships are on a four-day goodwill visit to this northern coastal city to "reaffirm old ties" with Israel. The two ships -- INS Mumbai and INS Brahmaputra -- from the Navy's western fleet have modern weaponry, electronic sensors and missile systems, and both carry a 'Seaking' anti-submarine helicopters as well as Chetak helicopter in their twin hangars. "The visit shows the importance India attaches to the growing Indo-Israeli relations and continued cooperation and engagement between the two countries is expected to grow", a release said. "Indian warships have regularly paid visits to ports in the West Asia and East Africa reaffirming their peaceful presence and solidarity with countries in the region", it said. Indian ships last visited the port city in 2004. The current visit kicked off yesterday when the two warships anchored at the Haifa coast. India last month sent INS Tabar, a guided missile frigate, to Indonesia to provide food and relief material in the aftermath of the earthquake.

The Hindu, 29 June 2006

### **Nuke agreement with India under special circumstances: US**

Islamabad, June 29: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said the nuclear deal with India was made under "special circumstances" and declined to give any commitment on extending the arrangement to Pakistan. "The deal we made with India is under special circumstances," said Rice after holding talks with President Pervez Musharraf and a separate meeting with Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri here. Asked whether Pakistan has raised the issue of extending the US-India nuclear deal, she said Washington is having very "fruitful" discussions with Islamabad on how to provide "reliable, safe and clean" energy. Her comments came barely hours before a US Congressional Committee endorsed a deal for sharing civilian nuclear energy with India. During her talks with Musharraf, Rice told him that the US expected the military backed government to hold next year's general elections in a free and fair manner. "I have had discussions with the President, with the Foreign Minister, with the Prime Minister about the importance that the world and the international community, friends of Pakistan, attach to a process next year that results in free and fair elections..."

The Hindu, 29 June 2006

### **India, EU to sign partnership programme for tribal uplift**

New Delhi, June 29: Seeking to improve governance at the grassroot level, the European Commission (EC) and India would soon sign a State Partnership Programme (SPP) focussing on development of tribals in Chattisgarh and Rajasthan. Spread over a period of six years, the SPP would concentrate on the progress in education, health and family welfare in tribal-dominated areas of both states, Francisco Da Camara Gomes, Ambassador and Head of European Delegation in India, said on Wednesday. It would also assist in refining and implementing a new water resources policy for Rajasthan, he said inaugurating a seminar on the tribal communities in India and the European Commission's experience. "The SPP would supplement the efforts of the Government of India and state governments to accelerate progress towards the millennium development goals," Gomes said. On the success of EC's initiatives on tribal education, he said "the share of tribal children in the overall enrolment in the elementary level has increased from 8 per cent in 2002-03 to 9.2 per cent presently..."

The Hindu, 29 June 2006

### **Nuclear deal: 'major hurdle' crossed**

New Delhi, June 28: Upbeat about the endorsement on Tuesday of a Bill on nuclear cooperation with India by a key

U.S. Congressional panel, senior officials here said a "major hurdle" in the implementation of the July 2005 nuclear deal had been crossed. A senior official, however, cautioned, "We are not quite there yet," as the Bill still has to be passed by Congress and the Senate. "But our estimation is that this will be the most difficult stage — to ensure that the proposed change of law contains no conditions that we cannot accept. And we have managed that." Barring a "killer" amendment on the floor of the House, the official said the "operational parts" of the Bill, in its current form, allow the U.S. President to waive restrictions on nuclear cooperation on the basis of a "template" that is consistent with India's obligations under the July 2005 joint statement and its subsequent plan for the separation of civilian and military nuclear facilities...

The Hindu, 29 June 2006

### **"If you want to be treated like India, be like India"**

Washington, June 28: Even as the landmark India-United States nuclear deal sailed through the 50-member International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, supporters in the House termed it a defining moment in relations between the two countries. The legislation was piloted by the Chairman of the House Committee, Henry Hyde, Ranking member Tom Lantos and the co-chairs of the India Caucus, Gary Ackerman and Ilena Ros Lehtines. Mr. Ackerman called the Bill a "right balance" and one that deserved careful consideration. The New York Democrat argued that it was better to have India inside the non-proliferation system than outside...

The Hindu, 30 June 2006

### **Senate panel nod for nuclear deal**

Washington, June 29: The New Delhi-Washington nuclear deal cleared another hurdle on Thursday with a United States Senate panel overwhelmingly voting in favour of sharing civilian nuclear technology and knowhow with India. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee took just 90 minutes to endorse the U.S.-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act by a 16-2 vote. The nod came two days after the deal crossed its first major hurdle, securing the approval of the International Relations Committee in the House of Representatives in a 37-5 vote. The votes make it likely that both chambers of Congress will approve the agreement when it is placed before them. This is expected to take place before Congress goes into recess in August. Of the three amendments proposed in the Senate Committee, two were approved by voice vote while one was rejected. By a convincing margin of 13-5, the committee rejected an amendment by Democrat Senator Russell Feingold requiring U.S. President George W. Bush to certify that India would not divert nuclear fuel for its weapons programme. The Committee gave its nod for an amendment by Lincoln Chaffee, Republican from Rhode Island, that the U.S. was not supporting India's nuclear weapons programme directly or indirectly...

The Hindu, 30 June 2006

### **TULF president: Indian model will suit Sri Lanka**

Chennai, June 28: The Indian model of Centre-State ties is best suited for Sri Lanka, according to Tamil United Liberation Front president V. Anandasangaree. He said the Indian model satisfied those opposed to the idea of a federal constitution and also those against a unitary type of constitution. "First and foremost you [Indians] do not call it federal or unitary. A lot of people in our country are allergic to the one word [federal] or the other [unitary]," he said in an interview on Wednesday. Mr. Anandasangaree said his proposal had found widespread acceptance among the Tamils, the Sinhalese and senior Buddhist monks. "I have also written to the [Sri Lankan] President, Mahinda Rajapakse, LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran and many other leaders, including the representatives of diplomatic missions in Sri Lanka." He said his views had been articulated widely in both English and Sinhalese media. "The Tamil papers do not publish any of my statements under threat [from the LTTE]." The reactions suggested that many wanted to consider the proposal and have a re-look at the ethnic problem...

The Hindu, 30 June 2006

### **Editorial: On track with China**

When India and China agreed three years ago to begin focussed, high-level discussions on the border question, they made two key assumptions. The first was that the issue was complex enough to warrant political involvement on a continuous basis. The second assumption was that regardless of the pace or contours of the settlement that emerge, bilateral relations would not be held hostage to disputes over a line on a map. The two sides also agreed not to reveal details of their sensitive discussions until a settlement acceptable to both governments was reached. After the eighth round of talks at the level of Special Representative, which concluded in Xian earlier this week, it is evident that India and China are intent on sticking to this method and style of work. For journalists, the process may seem opaque with nary a word about the proposals being considered and discussed leaking out from either side. But

given the political complexity of the situation — in which territorial adjustments of one kind or another will almost certainly be involved — it is perhaps necessary that the ongoing dialogue be conducted away from public glare. Whether the territorial adjustments will involve actual transfers of land or simply the relinquishing of a cartographic claim sustained all these years on paper alone, there is no gainsaying the fact that each government will have to `sell' the agreement to its own people...

The Hindustan Times, 30 June 2006

**China may be controlling the flow of the Sutlej into India — making no noise, breaking no treaty.**

New Delhi, June 29: For the past few years, Chinese authorities have been building a barrage on the river in a remote part of west Tibet. Located across the Zada (Tsamda) gorge, an important crossing point, the barrage is probably intended to generate power for Zada town. The satellite images of the gorge, which is also the access point to the ancient Toling monastery and Tsaparang (capital of the ancient Guge kingdom), show the barrage distinctly. The images suggest work on the barrage has been completed, but it could not be confirmed. China has not sought publicity for it, as it had done for the Three Gorges Dam. Whatever be the stage of construction, the idea of a barrage across the Sutlej — which enters India near Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh — is bad news for the country. Given the wide body of evidence showing the drying up of lakes, streams and rivers on the northern side of the Himalayas, the barrage raises concern that China may finally be controlling the flow of water into India...