

The Hindu, 1 March 2008

**India must take courageous decision: Burns**

Asking the Indian government to take a 'courageous' decision on the civilian nuclear deal considering the 'short timelines,' the Bush administration has cautioned it against attempting such an arrangement with other nations ignoring the United States. "We now are in the vanguard. We're the leading country that will support the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in making an international case that all nations should engage in nuclear trade with India. That cannot happen without the U.S. because the NSG, of which we are a leading member, has to decide by a consensus," the top U.S. negotiator for the deal, Nicholas Burns, said.

The Indian Express, 1 March 2008

**Pranab, Yechury discuss n-deal**

CPI-M LEADER Sitaram Yechury's meeting with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and the following silence from both sides have fuelled suggestions that the nuclear deal is on track. The meeting took place soon after the Budget, which was widely described as a poll-oriented one, indicating the Congress willingness to face the electorate. Yechury and Mukherjee, the key interlocutors for the Left and the Congress, held the discussions even as the Indian officials are talking to the IAEA to conclude an India-specific nuclear safeguard, the next step in the Indo-US nuclear deal.

The Indian Express, 1 March 2008

**Cong wants to conduct polls after signing n-deal: Venkaiah**

Describing the Congress-led UPA Government as an 'Ulta Pulta' alliance, senior BJP leader Venkaiah Naidu predicted that the Congress would prepone the parliamentary election after signing the nuclear deal with the US. Addressing an election rally at Polo Bazaar in Shillong on Friday, Venkaiah predicted that the Congress would be voted out of power and the BJP would stage a comeback at the Centre.

The Hindu, 2 March 2008

**Had BJP got this n-deal, it would have signed, been astonished: Strobe Talbott**

Strobe Talbott, former Deputy Secretary of State in the Clinton administration and one of the key interlocutors who helped redefine the Indo-US relationship during the Atal Behari Vajpayee regime, has said that the BJP-led government would not only have signed the Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation agreement if the same deal were offered to them but would have been 'astonished' at how friendly it was towards India. "Had the Clinton administration been prepared to offer the BJP-led government the deal which President Bush is willing to offer to Manmohan Singh and company, (the) Indian side would have gone for it and they also would have been astonished given what they knew about our position on the issues involved," Talbott said.

The Indian Express, 2 March 2008

**US trying to blackmail India over n-deal, says Bardhan**

CPI national secretary A B Bardhan on Saturday alleged that the US was trying to blackmail India over the nuclear deal and maintained there was no question of the Left allowing the UPA Government to push the 123 agreement through. He was delivering the

inaugural address at the CPI state conference which began at Thrissur on Saturday. Calling for a strong resistance against the continuing US interferences in India's foreign policy, Bardhan said this had all the makings of a blackmail attempt by the US and India needed to keep away from that country.

The Hindu, 2 March 2008

### **BJP dismisses Talbott's claim on Vajpayee government**

The Bharatiya Janata Party here on Saturday refuted the claim made by the former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, that the Vajpayee government would have been ready to accept 'half' of what the Bush administration has offered in the India-U.S. nuclear deal. Brajesh Mishra, former Principal Secretary to the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, preferred to dismiss this claim, adding: "I see no evidence for his claim." Such claims should not be taken note of. The former External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, who had met Mr. Talbott over more than a dozen rounds of talks spread over two years was not available for comment.

The Hindu, 3 March 2008

### **Boucher visit to focus on deal**

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher will undertake a two-day visit here from Tuesday during which the two sides are expected to review progress on implementation of the civil nuclear deal. Mr. Boucher, who is in charge of South Asia, will hold talks with his counterpart, Gayatri Kumar, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, and is expected to meet Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, sources told PTI on Sunday. The civil nuclear agreement issue is likely to dominate the discussions and the Indian side is expected to provide an update on its talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the safeguards agreement.

The Hindu, 3 March 2008

### **Centre to spell out plans on nuclear deal today**

Amid continued nudging by the U.S. to conclude the civilian nuclear deal at the earliest, the government is expected to spell out its plans on the issue on Monday in Parliament when External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee makes a statement. Mr. Mukherjee, who will be making the statement on 'foreign policy issues,' is expected to speak about the government's intent on the civil nuclear deal and the progress made in this regard, sources told PTI on Sunday. He will indicate the status of the negotiations with the IAEA on the safeguards agreement, which is a key step under the India-U.S. nuclear deal.

The Indian Express, 3 March 2008

### **India for no-nuke world order, ready to make no-first use a multilateral pact**

In anticipation of a Democrat-led US administration pushing for a tighter non-proliferation regime in less than a year's time, India, for the first time after declaring itself a nuclear weapon state, has enunciated a comprehensive seven-point agenda for nuclear disarmament. Listing its agenda of seven concrete proposals at the Conference of Disarmament - the lead global forum on these issues - in Geneva last week, India as a nuclear weapon state has formally proposed two multilateral agreements and two global conventions in a detailed framework for nuclear disarmament.

The Indian Express, 3 March 2008

### **UN Nuclear Watchdog to Focus on Iran**

European powers have prepared a resolution for next week's meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency that focuses on Iran's nuclear defiance, diplomats said Sunday. But a senior Iranian official warned against such action at the Vienna-based IAEA when the agency starts its 35-nation board meeting Monday. And diplomats said that traditional opposition by nonaligned IAEA board member nations could lead the Europeans to rethink their plans. In any case, a Western decision on whether to lobby all 35 nations to back such a resolution would likely wait until after Monday's scheduled vote on sanctions in the U.N. Security Council, they told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because the information was confidential.

The Indian Express, 3 March 2008

### **Iran Defiant Over New UN Nuke Sanctions**

The U.N. Security Council imposed another round of sanctions on Iran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment, but Iran defiantly vowed Monday to continue its nuclear program despite the nearly unanimous censuring vote. The resolution authorized a third set of sanctions targeting individuals, companies and equipment that could be used in Iran's nuclear program. It was adopted on a vote of 14-0, with Indonesia abstaining. Two previous sanctions resolutions were adopted unanimously, but diplomats said this vote still sent a strong message to the Tehran government that there is global concern that Iran is trying to produce nuclear weapons.

The Hindu, 4 March 2008

### **Pranab hopeful of political consensus**

The Central government made it clear on Monday that it had not given up on the civilian nuclear deal with the United States. It, however, told Parliament that its view of the Hyde Act was different from that of the U.S. government. Still hopeful of the deal getting the requisite "political consensus within the country" to fructify the agreement, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee countered Washington's impression that the Hyde Act would prevail over the 123 Agreement. "Let me take this opportunity to reiterate that the Hyde Act is an enabling provision that is between the executive and the legislative organs of the U.S. government. India's rights and obligations on civilian nuclear cooperation with the U.S. arise only from the 123 Agreement that we have agreed upon."

The Hindu, 4 March 2008

### **'Hyde Act will hurt sovereignty'**

The Left parties on Monday warned the UPA government not to operationalise the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal and disagreed with the government assertion that the provisions of the controversial Hyde Act would not affect India. At a press conference, CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Sitaram Yechury said the party did not agree with the government's view and felt that the Hyde Act would severely compromise India's independent foreign policy and sovereignty. "We don't agree with the government that the Hyde Act's implications do not exist for India. ... We don't think that the government should proceed to operationalise the deal," Mr. Yechury said here.

The Hindu, 4 March 2008

**Convergence at IAEA: Congress**

The Congress on Tuesday gave a clear indication that following the "convergence of views" in the India-specific safeguards agreement talks at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) this weekend, the UPA government was all set to go ahead with the India-U.S. nuclear agreement. Even as the Left parties reiterated their opposition to the deal in response to External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's suo motu statement on foreign policy in Parliament on Monday, All-India Congress Committee (AICC) spokesman Abhishek Singhvi said: "We are happy at the significant progress made at the IAEA talks [over the weekend]. We are particularly happy that vast and diverse areas of differences [towards India-specific safeguards] have been ironed out in the fifth round and we are optimistic about the outcome of the talks at IAEA."

The Hindu, 4 March 2008

**Left committed to its position on nuclear deal: Yechury**

Reiterating their opposition to the India-U.S. civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, the Left parties on Monday warned the UPA government, saying "they cannot support a government that can enter into such a deal with the U.S." Reacting to the statement made by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee in the Lok Sabha earlier in the day, Communist Party of India (Marxist) Polit Bureau member Sitaram Yechury told a press conference here: "The government knows what our stand is on nuclear deal. The statement of the External Affairs Minister is not a single focus statement."

The Hindu, 4 March 2008

**CPI(M): no consensus on nuclear deal**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Monday said there was no political consensus on the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal and the UPA government should not proceed with the pact. In a statement, the Polit Bureau said External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's statement in the Lok Sabha referred to the negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency and in relation to the nuclear deal. The Polit Bureau said: "The Minister's statement draws attention to "some statements by U.S. officials" regarding the applicability of the Hyde Act to the civilian nuclear cooperation and asserts that the Hyde Act is applicable only to the U.S. side and India's rights are protected in the bilateral 123 agreement..."

The Indian Express, 4 March 2008

**Vienna meet reignites Iran nuclear debate**

Last Monday, the chief United Nations nuclear inspector gathered ambassadors and experts from dozens of nations in a boardroom high above the Danube in Vienna and laid out a trove of evidence that he said raised new questions about whether Iran had tried to design an atom bomb. For more than two hours, representatives to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were riveted by documents, sketches and even a video that appeared to have come from Iran's own military laboratories. The inspector said they showed work "not consistent with any application other than the development of a nuclear weapon," according to notes taken by diplomats.

The Indian Express, 4 March 2008

### **UN Security Council imposes new sanctions on Iran**

The UN Security Council has imposed fresh sanctions and tightened the existing ones to force Iran to abandon its uranium enrichment programme but Tehran rejected the resolution encompassing the embargo as "illegal" and aimed at furthering the national policies of some member States. The resolution, adopted by the 15-member Council with 14 affirmative votes with Indonesia abstaining, for the first time bans trade with Iran in goods which have use in both civilian and military nuclear programmes. It also authorizes inspection of shipments to and from Iran by sea and air suspected to be carrying prohibited materials.

The Hindu, 5 March 2008

### **We can move forward with Hyde Act and 123 Agreement: Boucher**

The United States has said the Hyde Act will have to be considered while operationalising the civilian nuclear agreement with India but indicated that it is unlikely for the legislation to impinge on the agreement. "The Hyde Act is a domestic legislation and the 123 Agreement is an international agreement. I think we can move forward with both in a consistent manner," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher told newsmen after meeting senior External Affairs Ministry officials here on the first day of his visit. Mr. Boucher made the observation when asked whether the Hyde Act would have any bearing on the nuclear deal. He met Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and Joint Secretary (Americas) Gaytri Kumar.

The Hindu, 5 March 2008

### **Iran slams Security Council sanctions**

Iran has said the credibility of the United Nations Security Council has been put on line after it passed a Western sponsored resolution on Monday, imposing fresh sanctions against it. "We are once again witnessing the bitter reality that the Security Council's position is belittled to an extent to serve as an instrument at the service of the foreign policy of a few countries," said Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations Mohammad Khazaie. Under the new set of sanctions - the third time that such a measure has been adopted since December 2006 - trade with Iran of goods which have both civil and military applications has been banned.

The Indian Express, 5 March 2008

### **'Sanctions may hurt but they won't stop Iran'**

The U.N. Security Council's decision to impose more sanctions on Iran will make life a little more unpleasant for thousands of Iranians but will not deter Tehran from pursuing its nuclear program, Western analysts said. The sanctions in themselves - an increase in the number of individuals and firms on a U.N. travel and asset-freeze blacklist, or calls for vigilance over Iranian banks and shipping firms - will not do much damage. The analysts said though they might appear weak, even symbolic, they sent a message to Tehran that even staunch trading partners like Russia and China opposed Tehran's determination to defy the Security Council and continue to enrich uranium.

The Times of india, 5 March 2008

**India, US to finetune N-draft before going to NSG**

With the MEA-DAE negotiating team returning from Vienna with a draft of the safeguards agreement, India and the US will put their heads together to study the draft and work out how best to pitch the nuclear deal - which includes the July 18 joint statement, separation plan, 123 agreement and the safeguards agreement - to the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). This is very important, because it will be this document that the US will take to the NSG for a "clean" exemption that India wants. It will be the US that will have to do all the heavy lifting at the NSG, therefore, it's important for both sides to work out acceptable language. So while the draft is more or less done, a little bit of tweaking is still to be done.

The Indian Express, 5 March 2008

**We are close to a final text: IAEA**

India's efforts to firm up a safeguards agreement with the IAEA have moved a decisive step forward with the agency today for the first time giving a firm statement that both sides were "close to a final text", indicating that only a few minor issues now remained before the draft agreement is ready for further consideration. It's learnt that talks are continuing even after the Indian negotiating team returned after the fifth round of productive discussions last week. "We are close to a final text," an IAEA spokesperson told The Indian Express when asked about the status of these discussions. As a scheduled meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors is currently in session, sources said, India's Permanent Representative to the IAEA Saurabh Kumar was holding consultations with agency officials and other key countries on the margins.

The Hindu, 6 March 2008

**Lot of work and not much time: Boucher**

Pointing out that India had a very tight deadline ahead to seal the nuclear deal, the U.S. on Wednesday hinted that the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) members, many of whom are strongly committed to non-proliferation, would closely question India. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher told newsmen that "time is very very short and there is an awful lot of work to be done." The official did not see any contradiction between the Hyde Act and the India-U.S. 123 Agreement. He refused to speculate about the turn of events in case India conducted another nuclear test. The U.S understood India's domestic political processes but it too must reciprocate by comprehending the situation in the United States.

The Hindu, 6 March 2008

**"Bhishma Pitamah" should rise above party politics: PM**

Praising the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, for taking 'courageous steps' to foster peace with Pakistan, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday described Mr. Vajpayee as 'Bhishma Pitamah' of Indian politics and urged him to rise above narrow party politics and support the India-U.S. nuclear deal. "The Bhishma Pitamah of Indian politics Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee should listen to his conscience and let national interest prevail upon narrow politics," Dr. Singh said in the Rajya Sabha during his reply on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address to Parliament seeking support for the

crucial deal.

The Hindu, 7 March 2008

### **Left sets deadline on nuclear deal**

In a significant political development, the Left parties on Thursday asked the government to convene a meeting of the UPA-Left joint committee on the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal by March 15. CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat has sent a letter on behalf of the Left parties to External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, who is also the convener of the committee. The Left has demanded the urgent meeting to ascertain what the government wants to do about the nuclear deal. Mr. Karat's letter cites media reports that the negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency on the draft safeguards agreement have covered considerable ground.

The Hindu, 7 March 2008

### **Left parties to take all steps to stop India-U.S. nuclear deal**

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Thursday cautioned the government that it was 'mistaken' if it thought that it could go ahead and take steps for operationalising the India-U.S. nuclear deal after arriving at an agreed text with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on a safeguards agreement. "It will amount to a gross violation of the majority opinion in Parliament. The Left parties will take all the necessary steps to stop the government from taking such a harmful step. It is for the Congress leadership to decide whether it wants to be seen as kowtowing to the pressure of the Bush administration or acting democratically and heeding the voice of Parliament and the people. And this decision has to be a quick and clear one. The future of this government depends on the decision they will take," the party organ People's Democracy said.

The Indian Express, 7 March 2008

### **Left is batting for other countries (China), not India, says Sheila Dikshit**

Backing the Prime Minister's call for political consensus on the Indo-US nuclear deal, the Congress today questioned the Left's opposition to the deal and said "the deal will have to happen in the interest of the nation". At a public meeting in Kochi, Delhi Chief Minister and Congress leader Sheila Dikshit came down heavily on the Left, even questioning their patriotic credentials, the first such public attack by a Congress leader. The Communists, she said, would not have opposed the deal if it was between China and America. "The Left owes its allegiance to countries other than India. Are they against their own country?" she asked.

The Hindu, 8 March 2008

### **Bardhan: we cannot be party to government going ahead with deal**

The Communist Party of India on Friday warned the United Progressive Alliance government that the party would be left with no option except withdrawing support should it go ahead with the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal. In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan said it was not the nuclear deal alone but many other violations of the Common Minimum Programme were also causing disquiet to the party. The letter comes a day after CPI (M) general secretary Prakash Karat wrote to External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, asking him to convene a

meeting of the UPA-Left Joint Committee on the nuclear deal.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2008

**UPA-Left meet soon, Govt to put Russia, France, IAEA on the table**

With both the Left and the Congress having stated their respective positions on the nuclear deal, the government will soon convene a meeting of the UPA-Left committee, as asked for by the Left, to resume conversation on the future course in light of the progress made at the IAEA. After a series of meetings today of the Congress top brass, including discussions between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi, sources said, it was felt that the Congress must respond "positively" to the Left's call for a meeting of the committee before the Parliament goes into recess on March 20.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2008

**Like Left, we don't have anti-America policy: BJP**

The BJP said the party was against the Indo-US nuclear deal in its present form as it would mean surrendering the country's sovereignty to the United States. "Like the Marxists, the BJP had no anti-US policy," party vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu told a press meet. Asked about the threat by the CPM and CPI to withdraw support if the UPA Government went ahead with the deal, he said both the "Left parties are doing nothing, but merely threatening". Both the Congress and Marxists should end the "hide and seek" with regard to the deal and take the Parliament and country into confidence, he said.

The Hindu, 9 March 2008

**Pranab sees no early elections**

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said he did not foresee early elections. To a question whether there was a debate in the Congress if the nuclear deal was worth sacrificing the government for, he said: "Nobody is talking of holding elections now'there is no talk of sacrificing the government for something." On the May deadline set by senior U.S. senators and officials for the deal to reach Congress, he said: "Of course, there is a time frame because they have an election process but so far as India is concerned, we have mentioned to them that it's not possible for us to work within a specific time frame."

The Hindu, 9 March 2008

**Stability of government not our agenda: Yechury**

Stepping up pressure on the United Progressive Alliance government on the issue of the India-U.S. nuclear deal, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Saturday warned that its agenda was "not the stability" of the Congress-led coalition. "Our agenda is the nuclear deal and not the stability of the government or an early or late election. We are opposed to the deal because we think it is not in the interest of the country," CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Sitaram Yechury told reporters here. He said whether the government would go in for early elections was for it to decide. Mr. Yechury recalled that External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee had said survival of the government was more important than the deal and had ruled out the possibility of early general elections.

The Hindu, 10 March 2008

### **Date for UPA-Left panel meeting on nuclear deal to be fixed today**

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Prakash Karat on Sunday said the next date for the crucial meeting of the United Progressive Alliance-Left joint committee on the nuclear deal would be decided on Monday. "The next date for meeting of the UPA-Left committee on nuclear deal has to be decided keeping in mind the convenience of all constituents of UPA as well as the Left Front. External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee is holding talks with other parties to finalise a date, which is likely to be announced tomorrow [Monday]," Mr. Karat said, adding that the Left parties were in no hurry and want to discuss the issue thoroughly.

The Hindu, 10 March 2008

### **India aspires for atomic weapons-free world: Ansari**

India aspires for a non-violent, atomic weapons-free world and believes that the international community should conclude "universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable prohibitions on nuclear weapons" leading to their complete elimination, Vice-President Hamid Ansari said here on Sunday. Mr. Ansari said among the actionable and concrete steps towards achieving nuclear disarmament were "negotiation of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction," leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified time frame.

The Indian Express, 10 March 2008

### **Destruction of Iran's n-programme better if done by Israel: Kuwaiti analyst**

The destruction of Iran's nuclear capabilities would be in the interest of the Arab nations in the Gulf, and it would be "less embarrassing" if it was done by Israel rather than the US, a top Kuwaiti strategist said in remarks published on Sunday. Officially Kuwait, like the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, wants a peaceful solution to the nuclear standoff between Tehran and the West and will not allow the US to use its territories for any attack on Iran. But when asked in an interview with the daily Al-Siyassah about the consequences of an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear reactors, analyst and former government adviser Sami al-Faraj said it would not be such a bad thing.

The Indian Express, 10 March 2008

### **Don't count on a third chance (Rajesh Rajagopalan)**

The Indo-US nuclear deal is a historic opportunity not so much because it will immediately solve all of our energy problems or make us a great power. It may do all that eventually, but what is more important is that it will remove India from the ranks of an abnormal minority in the international community, whose only other members are Pakistan, North Korea and Israel. That company was the price we paid for our strategic dithering in the 1960s, when, instead of conducting a nuclear test and joining the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a nuclear-weapon state, we procrastinated on an important strategic opportunity. Today, four decades later, we are being offered a rare second chance to correct our blunder.

The Hindu, 11 March 2008

### **Sonia expected to unveil strategy on N-deal today**

As political developments over the Indo-US nuclear deal gain momentum, Congress President Sonia Gandhi is expected to unveil the strategy on the issue for the party at a meeting here on Tuesday. Gandhi will be addressing the General Body of the Congress Parliamentary Party, the first in the Budget Session of Parliament. The meeting assumes significance as it comes in the wake of Left parties warning of serious consequences if the government goes ahead with the deal. The CPI has formally communicated to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that it would withdraw support if its goes ahead with the deal.

The Hindu, 11 March 2008

### **UPA-Left panel may meet on March 17**

A meeting of the UPA-Left joint committee on the India-United States nuclear deal is likely to be held here on March 17, informed sources said on Monday. The meeting is being convened after Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Prakash Karat sent a letter to External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee last week on behalf of the Left parties seeking an urgent meeting of the panel by March 15. Mr. Mukherjee is also the convener of the committee. Sources in the Left parties told The Hindu that the government on Monday started consulting all members of the committee to ascertain their availability at the earliest so that the meeting could be held soon.

The Hindu, 11 March 2008

### **World against intervention in Iran**

Britain and America are flying in the face of world public opinion as they push for tougher measures against Iran over its controversial nuclear programme, according to a BBC World Service poll which shows that opinion worldwide is overwhelming in favour of a diplomatic solution. It says that support for economic sanctions or military action has dropped "significantly" in most countries, including India, since a similar poll in June 2006. Worldwide, options of economic sanctions or military strikes were rejected in 27 out of 31 countries, covered by the poll. Instead, the most preferred approach was to either use only diplomatic efforts or not put any pressure on Iran at all. On average, 57 per cent were against foreign intervention with 43 per cent favouring diplomacy and 14 per cent opposed to any pressure tactics.

The Korea Herald, 11 March 2008

### **U.S. urges N. Korea to move forward**

U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Alexander Vershbow urged North Korea yesterday to make a move so that Washington will be able to take corresponding steps in the denuclearization process. "We aren't able to do that (remove sanctions) unless we get a clear signal from North Korea that they are ready to do their part on the declaration," Vershbow said during a press conference held on the sidelines of a general membership meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Korea at the Hyatt Hotel. He was referring to North Korea's "complete and correct" declaration of its nuclear programs, and Washington's promised lifting of sanctions against the North.

The Washington Post, 11 March 2008

### **U.N. Alleges Nuclear Work By Iran's Civilian Scientists**

Iranian nuclear engineer Mohsen Fakhrizadeh lectures weekly on physics at Tehran's

Imam Hossein University. Yet for more than a decade, according to documents attracting interest among Western governments, he also ran secret programs aimed at acquiring sensitive nuclear technology for his government. Experts at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have repeatedly invited Fakhrizadeh to tea and a chat about Iran's nuclear work. But for two years, the government in Tehran has barred any contact with the scientist, who U.S. officials say recently moved to a new lab in a heavily guarded compound also off-limits to U.N. inspectors.

Sify News, 12 March 2008

### **'Drafts of nuclear pacts with Russia, France ready'**

Even as its nuclear deal with the US remains stuck in domestic politics, the government on Wednesday said India has finalised the texts of civil nuclear agreement with Russia and France and is interested in nuclear cooperation with all friendly countries. "The texts of agreement of cooperation in civil nuclear sector have been finalised with the US, France and Russia," Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Prithviraj Chavan said in response to a question in the Lok Sabha. A joint statement issued on the occasion of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's visit to India in January 2008 reflects mutual interest about cooperation in this sector, he added.

VOA News, 12 March 2008

### **Seoul Urges N. Korea Nuclear Negotiators to Preserve 'Momentum'**

In his first media briefing since taking office, South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan expressed concern about the future of the North Korea nuclear talks. He says he is concerned the six-nation talks may lose "momentum." For five years, South Korea has worked with the United States, Japan, China and Russia to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear programs, in exchange for financial and energy aid along with diplomatic incentives. The six-nation diplomacy has produced progress in shutting down the North's main plutonium-producing facilities. However, Pyongyang has failed to produce a complete declaration of its nuclear activities and stockpiles it promised to submit by the end of 2007.

The Indian Express, 13 March 2008

### **Govt committed to nuclear deal: Ronen Sen**

The government of India is "committed" to the civilian nuclear deal with the US, the top Indian diplomat here has said, maintaining that New Delhi is only bound by the bilateral 123 Agreement that has been worked out by the two countries. Indian Ambassador Ronen Sen's comments come ahead a crucial UPA-Left committee on the nuclear deal on March 17 in the face of an ultimatum by the Government's Communist allies to make its stand clear on the agreement. Sen emphasised that the governments in both the countries will have to go through the "democratic process" before taking decisions and that neither of the parties would want to "lecture" the other on what it should or should not do.

Xinhua News, 13 March 2008

### **U.S. urges DPRK to disclose fully nuclear program**

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill reiterated here Wednesday American call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to disclose fully all its

nuclear programs. Speaking to reporters ahead of his talks with DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan on Thursday, Hill said Pyongyang must give a "complete and correct" declaration of its atomic activities. Hill, top U.S. envoy to the six-party talks on the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula, is to have one-day talk with Kim in Geneva on Thursday, focusing on the DPRK's delay in declaring details of its nuclear weapons program, the State Department said.

Moscow News, 13 March 2008

### **Russia to Build Four New Nuclear Plants by 2020**

Russia will build four nuclear power stations in the central part of the country and in the Urals by 2020, an official document revealed on Wednesday. In a document published on Wednesday, it was stated that the Russian government approved in February a general scheme for new nuclear construction until 2020, to be reviewed approximately every three years. The scheme envisions that overall domestic demand for electricity will increase 4 percent per year, and outlines plans to construct at least four nuclear plants in the Tver, Nizhny Novgorod, Chelyabinsk and Yaroslavl or Kostroma regions. Russia currently operates ten nuclear power plants with total capacity of 23.242 GW.

The Hindu, 14 March 2008

### **"Good progress in talks with IAEA"**

"Considerable progress" has been made in India's talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for an India-specific safeguards agreement and "it is in the country's interest that the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal goes through," Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar said on Thursday. "We have made considerable progress in our talks with IAEA and will be making further consultations in the matter," he told reporters.

The Hindu, 14 March 2008

### **Can sign deal with minority government: Boucher**

The U.S. has made it clear that it is not averse to wrapping up the nuclear deal with a minority government in India, seeking to set at rest questions over the fate of the agreement if Left parties were to withdraw support to the ruling UPA government. "Our basic government position is that we can sign an agreement with a duly-constituted government, whatever its political status," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher said in an interview to Outlook magazine. He was responding when asked about External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's comment that a minority government "cannot, need not and should not sign a major agreement" like the nuclear deal.

The Indian Express, 14 March 2008

### **UPA okay with IAEA draft pact, to convince Left at next meet**

Ahead of the next meeting of the UPA-Left joint mechanism on the Indo-US nuclear deal next Monday, the UPA members of the panel on Thursday backed the India-specific IAEA draft agreement. Despite the draft agreement being very technical in nature, the members, who met under the chairmanship of External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, are learnt to have agreed that the India-specific agreements "fulfil" all assurances given by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Mukherjee in Parliament after

the Left allowed the Government to proceed with IAEA negotiations. The members were "convinced" that the India-specific safeguards were in the best interests of the country, it is learnt.

The Indian Express, 14 March 2008

### **US Sees Progress but No NKorean Pact**

The United States and North Korea made progress Thursday in overcoming obstacles that have stalled a major nuclear disarmament deal but remained short of a breakthrough, the chief U.S. negotiator said. Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters that the talks in Geneva were probably the most substantive that Washington has had with North Korea since problems developed in December over disarming Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. "We certainly are further along in this consultation than we were when I arrived this morning," Hill said after meetings with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan. "There has been progress."

News Today, 14 March 2008

### **Clinton backs India nuclear pact**

Former US president Bill Clinton has said future American governments will honour the Washington's nuclear deal with India. His comments on Thursday in New Delhi came amid speculation over the fate of the deal after President George Bush leaves office. 'In general, when new governments come in, they tend to honour the commitments of the previous administrations,' Clinton said. Battling for the deal, the former Democrat President said the deal was important to help India cut down on greenhouse gas emissions and generate clean energy.

The Hindu, 15 March 2008

### **If the government falls, it won't be because of us: Prakash Karat**

"The Left gives support on the basis of a policy framework. This government is stable because we are supporting it. It will last its full term. If the government falls, it won't be because of us," Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Prakash Karat has said. In an interview to Outlook magazine, Mr. Karat explained why the Left finally allowed the Manmohan Singh government to hold talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) although it had threatened to withdraw support if any such meeting took place.

The Indian Express, 15 March 2008

### **'UPA has told Left it won't go ahead with n-deal'**

The UPA Government has "privately" conveyed to its Left allies that it would not be pursuing the Indo-US nuclear deal, senior BJP leader L K Advani claimed on Friday. "Today, when I was coming to this meeting, a colleague of mine phoned me that he had met leaders from the Left who conveyed to him that privately the Government has said that they are not pursuing it," Advani said. Advani reiterated his party's position that it was not opposed to having a "strategic friendship" with the US, but made it clear that it was opposed to the nuclear deal because it was a "treaty between unequals".

The Times of india, 15 March 2008

### **Despite honeymoon, US pins India on non-proliferation**

Totally against the run of play, to borrow a sporting expression, India and the United States are locked in a messy episode involving allegations that New Delhi used private decoy businesses to smuggle sensitive American technology for use in its advanced weapon systems, a charge usually laid against rank proliferators like China and Pakistan. While the two countries are engaged in high-end space cooperation, including placement of American equipment and experiments on India's Chandrayaan moon mission, US law enforcement officials and proliferation watchdogs have been relentless in pursuing a case in which a Singapore-based Indian businessman with operations in US and India was charged with illegally exporting prohibited technology to India.

The Asian Age, 15 March 2008

#### **The truth Talbott hides (Brahma Chellaney)**

The Prime Minister has done well to assure Parliament that he will continue to "seek the broadest possible consensus within the country" over the nuclear deal with the United States. A critical matter like this, which is going to affect the future of India's nuclear programme and tie the country to perpetual, legally irrevocable international inspections, demands such a consensus. The partisan rancour over what has become an increasingly divisive issue needs to be defused. While giving that assurance, the Prime Minister referred to a recent claim by former US deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott that, had the Clinton team offered only "half" of what the Bush administration has proposed now, the Vajpayee government "would have gone for it." The truth is that Talbott says just the opposite in his detailed exposition in *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and the Bomb*, a book he published in 2004.

The Hindu, 16 March 2008

#### **UPA-Left meet: Pranab optimistic**

With two days to go for a crucial meeting of the United Progressive Alliance-Left joint committee on the India-United States civilian nuclear deal, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Saturday expressed the hope that differences with the Left allies on the issue would be resolved. Mr. Mukherjee, who is also the convenor of the committee, told reporters in Chandigarh that he was engaged in talks with the Left to sort out the matter. I am hopeful of sorting out the issue [with the Left], he said. On his forthcoming visit to Washington, Mr. Mukherjee said the nuclear deal was not the only issue which would come up for discussion with the U.S.

The Hindu, 17 March 2008

#### **Nuke deal: UPA-Left to meet today**

The crucial meeting of the UPA-Left committee on the Indo-US nuclear deal will be held here on Monday where the government is expected to hand over the Left leaders copies of the draft India-specific safeguards agreement it has reached with the IAEA.

Government is also likely to brief them on the over three-month long negotiations it held with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the safeguards agreement. The meeting comes in the backdrop of major Left parties asserting that they would withdraw support to the Congress-led government if it went ahead with the nuclear deal with the US.

Hindustan Times, 17 March 2008

**Junk N-deal, Left to tell govt**

The UPA-Left political committee would meet in New Delhi on Monday for the seventh round of talks to settle their differences on the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal. But there seems to be little scope for rapprochement between the two sides on the contentious issue. A Communist Party of India (M) booklet released earlier this month, titled "Policy Interventions by the Left Parties", explicitly states that the Left would make it clear to the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) that it cannot go any further with the deal. "Once the safeguards agreement is brought before the UPA-Left Committee, the Left will take the stand that government should not proceed further to finalise the safeguards agreement or go to the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The Left parties will work to ensure that the deal does not go ahead," the document says.

The Hindu, 17 March 2008

**Energy reality beyond the nuclear hype (Brahma Chellaney)**

India needs a mix of energy sources as a commercial hedge against unforeseen risks, and nuclear power certainly deserves a place in a diversified energy portfolio. But India needs to temper its new-found enthusiasm for nuclear power, which currently supplies barely 2.5 per cent of its electricity. First, generating power from imported reactors dependent on imported enriched-uranium fuel makes little economic or strategic sense. Had the proposed import of such light water reactors (LWRs) - the only type on offer - been part of India's planned transition to autonomous capability, akin to China's, the purchase of that model could have been justified. But India has no intention to design and build LWRs locally.

The Hindu, 18 March 2008

**More talks needed, says UPA-Left panel**

The United Progressive Alliance-Left Committee on the India-United States civil nuclear cooperation on Monday felt that further discussions were needed on the draft India-specific safeguards agreement that was negotiated with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Reading out a brief prepared statement after the seventh meeting of the 15-member committee, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said: "The members felt that further discussions were needed. It was decided to hold the next meeting in April."

The Hindu, 18 March 2008

**We'll have to study draft: Left leader**

At Monday's meeting of the United Progressive Alliance-Left Committee on the India-United States civilian nuclear cooperation, members were not given any text, a top Left leader told The Hindu. "We will have to study the draft [India-specific safeguards agreement that was negotiated with the IAEA] in detail, seek more clarifications from the government and continue our discussions on that basis. It is not enough but I hope before the next meeting the government will provide us more details." He said the committee's work was not yet over and it had to finalise its findings.

The Indian Express, 19 March 2008

**Nuke Deal: Ball in India's court, says IAEA**

Amidst mounting pressure by the Left parties on the UPA government not to go ahead with the nuclear deal with US, the IAEA on Tuesday said it was close to finalising the text of India-specific safeguards but the ball is now in India's court to ready the agreement. "Both the sides are close to a final text but India has to confirm to the IAEA that there is an agreement on the text," said IAEA Press and Public information officer Ayhan Evrensel in an email communication. "Until then, there is in fact no agreement. So, the ball is in India's court," he said.

The Indian Express, 19 March 2008

**N-deal: Left to send detailed questionnaire to Govt**

While the IAEA still awaits confirmation from New Delhi to conclude the negotiated safeguards agreement, the Left is gearing up to prolong engagement with the Government on the IAEA negotiations and is preparing a detailed questionnaire ahead of the next meeting. Left sources said the questionnaire would be sent to the Government, which could prepare its response before the next meeting. All parties of the Left would hold a meeting towards the month-end to clear this questionnaire. While this process starts here, a source familiar with the India-IAEA talks in Vienna said: "Yes, the sides are close to a final text but India has to confirm to the IAEA that there is an agreement on the text. Until then, there is in fact no agreement."

The Indian Express, 19 March 2008

**NKorea: Nuclear Arms Talks to Continue**

North Korea said Tuesday it has agreed to continue working with the United States to resolve a stalemate in international nuclear negotiations over the North's promise to fully declare its weapons programs. The communist country's official Korean Central News Agency said the two sides held "an in-depth discussion on the differences" during one-on-one meetings last week in Switzerland over a disarmament-for-aid agreement reached last year. The two countries agreed to "sit face-to-face with each other and continue the discussion" to find a solution to the impasse, which is holding up the nuclear deal, North Korean news agency said in a three-sentence dispatch, the first time it has mentioned the Geneva talks.

The Hindu, 20 March 2008

**Can neither mend nor end nuclear deal: Pranab**

Facing a stringent attack from Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha, the government on Wednesday said it could "neither mend nor end" the India-U.S. nuclear agreement as it was in dialogue at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Responding to a short duration discussion on foreign-policy related developments, Union External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee initially did not refer to the deal as, he said, there was nothing to report. However, when the Opposition and Left members insisted that he state the government's position, Mr. Mukherjee said, "Leader of Opposition Jaswant Singh said we should either mend it or end it, but we are at a stage that neither it can be ended nor it can be mended because we are in dialogue," he said.

The Indian Express, 20 March 2008

**N-deal: If UPA falters, we will pull it down, says CPM**

Key outside supporter of the UPA government, CPI(M) on Wednesday issued a fresh threat that it would pull it down if it "falters" on the foreign policy and "succumbs" to US pressure. "If it falters, we will pull down the government. We cannot afford to be drawn into the strategic tie-ups. We will not permit government to succumb to the US pressure," party leader Sitaram Yechury said in the Rajya Sabha. "Although we support the government now, we will be the first to oppose the government if it succumbs to the pressure," he added.

Yonhap News, 20 March 2008

**U.S., N.K. see no problem on declaration format**

The U.S. and North Korea reached an understanding on how Pyongyang will disclose its nuclear stockpile, but Pyongyang is still uncommitted to providing full and honest declaration, Washington's top nuclear envoy said Wednesday. "We have discussed format, and we anticipate we will not have a problem on format," Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said. "I think the really problematic element is, we don't have a commitment from the DPRK to provide a complete and correct declaration," he said, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Hindustan Times, 20 March 2008

**It's about options, not co-option (Nilova Roy Chaudhury)**

Whether the India-US civilian nuclear deal goes through or not, it is now simply a matter of politics. But what is difficult to understand is why nay-sayers want to foreclose India's nuclear options, even before the door opens. The most important aspect of the deal is that it widens the choices on offer for India - for environment-friendly and sustainable sources of energy, for access to technologies that have been long denied, and for a chance to arrive at the international high table of the UN Security Council. There is no specific compulsion, but there is an additional, much-required choice if the government of the day wishes to exercise it.

The Indian Express, 21 March 2008

**France to Cut Nuclear Arsenal**

President Nicolas Sarkozy said Friday that he will cut France's nuclear arsenal to fewer than 300 warheads, seeking to balance the defense of the nation - he mentioned the threat from Iran - against budgetary and strategic considerations. In his first major speech as president on the French deterrent, Sarkozy also urged the United States and China to commit fully to a treaty banning tests of nuclear weapons. In addition, Sarkozy shifted somewhat from the nuclear doctrine of his predecessor, Jacques Chirac, by being slightly more ambiguous about the circumstances that might lead France to employ its nuclear weapons. Sarkozy's decision to reveal the rough size of France's arsenal - the Defense Ministry said the exact number of warheads is still secret - appeared aimed at prodding other nuclear powers to be equally transparent.

The Indian Express, 22 March 2008

**Advani brings it back on table: amend law to insulate India from Hyde Act**

His party may have rejected the Indo-US nuclear deal and called for its renegotiation but Leader of Opposition L K Advani has once again suggested changing or amending the Atomic Energy Act so that India is insulated from the implications of the Hyde Act. Speaking to Shekhar Gupta, Editor-in-Chief of The Indian Express, on NDTV's Walk the Talk to be broadcast tomorrow, Advani said: "On the nuclear deal, I am still not convinced (by) the government's arguments that it doesn't in any way put constraints on our nuclear strategy." However, he added that the Government could have adopted "what I had suggested, namely a course of action by amending the Indian laws so that the Hyde Act would not apply to us," and wished the BJP were consulted "on this issue at length."

The Hindu, 22 March 2008

#### **Our problem is with the deal: Bardhan**

There is no change in the party's opposition to the India-U.S. nuclear deal, which "is not in the country's interest," CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan said on Friday. The government had briefed the United Progressive Alliance-Left Committee on the deal on the talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but "we have not come to grips [with the issues] yet." A lot of clarifications were sought from the government. "We have no problem with the IAEA. Our problem is with the deal." What was objectionable in the deal could not be overcome with the safeguards agreement with the IAEA, he told reporters here.

The Hindu, 22 March 2008

#### **Pranab: IAEA safeguards pact finalised**

On the eve of his visit to the United States, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has indicated that the text of an India-specific safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been finalised but can only be "initialled" after the political process is completed. "Some text has been reached, which only needs to be initialled, and that waits for the political process," he told CNN-IBN before leaving for Washington, where he will meet U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The Minister is also likely to meet President George W. Bush. Mr. Mukherjee, who is on his maiden bilateral visit to the U.S., made it clear that "the deal will be operationalised only after the IAEA, the NSG [Nuclear Suppliers Group] and the U.S. Congress give their approval and the Indian government then signs the agreement."

The Hindu, 24 March 2008

#### **Pranab for U.S. to review ties**

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee left for the United States on Sunday to review bilateral ties ahead of the end of the terms of the government there and here. "During his visit he will meet his U.S. counterpart, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, for discussions that will include a review of all aspects of the bilateral relationship," a Ministry of External Affairs statement said. Mr. Mukherjee last visited the U.S. as Defence Minister and inked a defence framework agreement aimed at further intensifying the military ties between both countries. Mr. Mukherjee's visit comes at a time when Washington is impressing upon New Delhi to complete the processes involved with the civilian nuclear deal.

The Hindu, 24 March 2008

**Agni-I test-fired successfully**

Nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missile Agni-I was successfully test-fired on Sunday from the Wheeler Island, off Damra village, on the coast of Orissa. A significant aspect of the test-firing was that it was totally executed by the Army, user of the missile. This is the second time the Army is test-firing the missile on its own. The missile soared majestically at 10.15 a.m. from a road-mobile launcher, a huge truck, on the Integrated Test Range on the island. It cut a parabolic path across the sky, climbed into space and dived into the Bay of Bengal, reaching a distance of 700 km. Its re-entry system worked flawlessly.

The Hindu, 25 March 2008

**Political problem over nuclear deal being resolved: Pranab**

Facing timelines, India and the U.S. on Monday waffled on the civilian nuclear deal with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee saying there was some political problem domestically and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asserting Washington would continue to work on it. We are interested in implementing the landmark agreement reached. But now we have some political problem. Currently we are engaged in the process of resolving them, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters after a 30-minute meeting here with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The Hindu, 25 March 2008

**We've to develop nuclear energy potential: Manmohan**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday said his government was committed to further development of nuclear power both as an environment-friendly source and for widening the energy basket. Laying the foundation stone for a 1,500-MW gas-based power plant at Bawana in Outer Delhi, he said the country needed to develop its nuclear energy potential. Our strategy for energy security is a multipronged one. We do not have the luxury of depending on only one or two sources. While some sources of energy may be cheap today, we have to think for the future. Our energy demands are bound to grow. With the economy growing at 8-9 per cent per annum, the demand for electricity was outpacing existing sources of supply, Dr. Singh said.

The Hindu, 25 March 2008

**U.S. will continue to work on nuke deal**

India and the U.S. on Monday held talks on the nuclear deal with External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee saying there is some political problem domestically and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice saying Washington will continue to work on it. PTI

The Hindu, 25 March 2008

**NSG waiver: U.S. to seek promise from Australia**

The United States is likely to seek a promise from Australia that it will not vote against a Nuclear Suppliers Groups waiver for India to allow nuclear commerce with it, a key requirement for the implementation of the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal. The thorny issue of Australia's attitude to the civil nuclear agreement is expected to come up during a meeting between U.S. President George W. Bush and Australia's new Prime Minister

Kevin Rudd in Washington this week, The Sydney Morning Herald reported on Monday.

The Indian Express, 25 March 2008

**US Prez, Pranab discuss N-deal, bilateral ties**

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee met US President George W Bush at the White House in Washington and discussed the entire gamut of bilateral ties, including the civilian nuclear deal. The 35-minute meeting, held at the Oval Office on Monday afternoon, was described as one in which the atmospherics were said to have been excellent and cordial. Bush and Mukherjee are said to have exchanged not only pleasantries but also discussed the width and depth of the United States-India relations that included the civilian nuclear initiative. Specific details of the meeting have not been made available to the media excepting the point that the Indian Minister would like to describe them first hand at the press conference, now scheduled for Tuesday.

The Hindu, 26 March 2008

**India will await political consensus on civilian nuclear deal: Pranab**

India on Tuesday said it would not move forward on the civilian nuclear deal with the U.S. until a political consensus was achieved. The government was making efforts to evolve a "meeting ground" with the Left parties, supporting the ruling coalition from outside and opposed to the deal. "If we are able to evolve a consensus then it will be possible to hasten the process [of taking the deal forward]," visiting External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters, as the U.S. nudged India into concluding the agreement with the IAEA and seek NSG waiver by May to give Congress time to have a final vote on the deal.

The Hindu, 26 March 2008

**Pranab, Bush discuss nuclear agreement**

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Monday met United States President George W. Bush at the White House and discussed the whole gamut of bilateral ties, including the civilian nuclear deal. The 35-minute meeting, held at the Oval Office, was described as "excellent and cordial." Details of the meeting were not made available to the media excepting the point that the Minister would like to describe them first hand at the press conference. "You will know from the Minister," said a senior official asked about details.

Yonhap News, 26 March 2008

**Lee steps up anti-nuclear pressure on N. Korea**

President Lee Myung-bak Wednesday urged North Korea to completely abandon its nuclear weapons program to pave the ground for inter-Korean peace and closer economic cooperation. Lee then warned that the communist North may fail to stabilize its regime and attain economic prosperity unless its attitude towards nuclear weapons is changed through the framework of six-party nuclear talks. "In the early 1990s, North Korea already signed an inter-Korean accord to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. I hope the North Korean nuclear issue is resolved through the six-party talks in line with the denuclearization accord that took effect in 1992," said Lee at a policy briefing session of the Unification Ministry.

Yonhap News, 26 March 2008

**Next two weeks critical in nuclear talks: U.S. envoy**

The next couple of weeks could be critical in North Korean denuclearization talks, and recent contacts with the North Koreans suggest that the contentions over Pyongyang's atomic weapons disclosure can be resolved, the top U.S. nuclear envoy said Tuesday. "We continue to have talks through the New York channel," Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said, referring to the diplomatic contact point between the two countries. "Some of those discussions, some of the specific things we have been talking about, could lead to a resolution," he said in a speech at the Atlantic Council in Washington.

The Washington Post, 26 March 2008

**Nuclear Parts Sent To Taiwan In Error**

The Defense Department mistakenly shipped secret nuclear missile fuses to Taiwan more than 18 months ago and did not learn that the items were missing until late last week, Pentagon officials acknowledged yesterday, deepening concerns about the security of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Officials with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) sent four nose-cone fuse assemblies to Taiwan in August 2006 instead of four replacement battery packs for use in Taiwan's fleet of UH-1 Huey helicopters. The fuses help trigger nuclear warheads on Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles as they near their point of impact

The Indian Express, 26 March 2008

**Iran Wants Compensation for UN Sanctions**

Iran is demanding compensation for what it says are unlawful sanctions imposed by the U.N. for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment, the Mideast nation's foreign minister said in a letter obtained by The Associated Press on Wednesday. In the 20-page letter, Manouchehr Mottaki said Iran rejects the sanctions resolutions because the U.N. Security Council went beyond its powers, and its actions are inconsistent with the U.N. Charter. The United States, the European Union, Israel and others suspect Iran's goal is to produce nuclear weapons. But Iran insists its program is aimed solely at producing nuclear energy and has defied the council by stepping up its enrichment activities.

The Hindu, 27 March 2008

**Deal not at "now or never" point: U.S.**

The India-United States civilian nuclear deal has not reached the point of "now or never," the White House said after External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's talks with President George Bush here. "We have a little bit of time before we have to say now or never. We've got several months to continue to work with India," White House Press Secretary Dana Perino said. Wrapping up his two-day visit, Mr. Mukherjee said the United Progressive Alliance government was "interested" in pursuing the deal and it was aware of the July time line suggested by Congress members.

The Hindu, 27 March 2008

**"Nuclear deal and weapons plan not connected"**

National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan said on Wednesday that the civilian nuclear

agreement with the United States had "nothing to do with the strategic weapons programme." Delivering the Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal memorial lecture here, he regretted that domestic debate on the issue had "unfortunately been dominated by other considerations." The "reality" was that it was intended to end India's isolation from global nuclear commerce and to increase its power generation, he said.

The Hindu, 27 March 2008

**"No need to be scared of deal"**

Rahul Gandhi, general secretary, All India Congress Committee, said here on Wednesday that the people of the country need not be scared about the proposed nuclear deal. Addressing a gathering of students at the TMA Pai International Convention Centre, he said that there was an unnecessary fear among the people about the deal. But India was strong enough to succeed against challenges from the rest of the world. "We should engage with the rest of the world. We need not be scared of anybody," he said.

The Indian Express, 27 March 2008

**Low on fuel and no sign of deal, nuclear power plants take a hit**

With the Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement still far from being done, a shortage in fuel supplies has resulted in a majority of nuclear power plants in India showing a decline in their operating capacities compared to last year. This has led to a 10 per cent reduction in overall power generation. According to information available on the website of Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), the capacity factor of ten of the 17 units has gone down in 2007-08 (till February) compared to the previous year. In some cases, like Unit-I in Kalpakkam, the fall in the operating capacity has been drastic, coming down to 36 per cent from 72 per cent last year.

The Hindu, 28 March 2008

**Pranab meets David Miliband**

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee had talks with his British counterpart David Miliband here on Wednesday on his way back home from Washington after discussing the controversial nuclear deal with American leaders. Details were not known, but a spokesperson of India House said the meeting was part of the continuing India-U.K. dialogue and the talks centred around bilateral and regional issues. "The two leaders had an extensive exchange of views on bilateral issues and regional issues of mutual interest," an official statement said.

The Indian Express, 28 March 2008

**Report: North Korea Test-Fires Missiles**

North Korea test-fired several short-range missiles off its western coast Friday, a news report said. Yonhap news agency reported that the launches happened around 10:30 a.m. (9:30 EDT Monday), citing an unidentified government official. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Defense Ministry said they were checking on the report. Yonhap said the North had showed signs of preparations earlier this week for testing short-range missiles as part of routine training, declaring a no-sailing zone off the coastal city of Nampo and placing a military boat equipped with anti-ship missiles on standby there.

The Indian Express, 28 March 2008

### **NKorea Blasts US Delays in Nuke Dispute**

North Korea blamed the United States for the deadlock in their nuclear negotiations, warning Friday that the Americans' attitude could "gravely" affect ongoing disablement of its atomic facilities. The North's Foreign Ministry said the communist nation had done its best to clear U.S. suspicions that it pursued a uranium-based atomic bomb program and also transferred nuclear technology to Syria, but Washington was sticking to its "wrong" claims. "The United States is clinging to shabby magic to make us a criminal in order to save face," the ministry said in a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

The Indian Express, 28 March 2008

### **N-Deal: "Several other issues dominating America"**

Notwithstanding the bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, the Indo-US civil nuclear deal appears to have taken a backseat in the American scheme of things as a vigorous Presidential campaign has assumed centre stage. However, Indo-US ties will remain unaffected if the nuclear deal does not come through as the relationship is not confined only to the political sphere, feels a prominent Indian-American group. "There are several other issues dominating the big scheme of things in the US and chances get more and more difficult to get people focus on the nuclear deal," Sanjay Puri, Chairman of the US-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), said.

The Indian Express, 28 March 2008

### **Pak to maintain minimum credible deterrence: Gillani**

Describing itself as a "responsible nuclear state", Pakistan's new Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani on Friday said his government it will maintain a minimum credible deterrence to ensure peace and stability in the region. A strong and credible defence is the ultimate guarantee for peace, he told army chief General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani, who called on Gillani at the Prime Minister's secretariat in Islamabad and congratulated him on assuming office. Pakistan is a peaceful country and its defence policy is based on peaceful co-existence with its neighbours, Gillani said. As a responsible nuclear state, he said, Pakistan believes in maintaining a minimum credible deterrence to ensure peace in the region.

The Indian Express, 29 March 2008

### **We are fully committed to nuclear deal, says US**

The US has said it was "fully prepared" to move forward on the civilian nuclear agreement with India once New Delhi takes a decision on domestic political issues related to it. "... they had a discussion about where we stand. We made it clear that we are fully prepared once the Indian Government has taken certain steps to submit the agreements to the Congress so that they can be passed," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said when asked about the talks between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Minister of External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee earlier this week.

The Korea Herald, 29 March 2008

### **N.K. threatens to pull the plug on nuke talks**

North Korea yesterday threatened to bring its denuclearization efforts to a halt in an apparent warning to Seoul and the other six-party talks members. The North also fired several short-range missiles into the West Sea earlier in the day, but South Korean officials said the move appears to be part of a seasonal drill. Pyongyang also warned against "provocative actions" near the disputed maritime border yesterday. "The Northern Limit Line doesn't exist," a spokesman for the North Korean navy said, according to Pyongyang's state broadcasters. "We will not sit and watch South Korean battleships creep into our waters and provoke us."

The Indian Express, 29 March 2008

#### **Nuclear ground realities (M.R.Srinivasan)**

Given the uranium crunch, the Indo-US nuclear deal is crucial to India's ambitious programme. The opposition stems from a mental block, writes M.R. Srinivasan, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. India is facing a severe uranium crunch - one in the short term and another in the long term. The short-term crunch affects the operation of the India-designed and built Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR). The PHWR capacity is now about 3500 MW and will go up to about 4500 MW by the end of 2008. India began exploring for uranium about 50 years ago and mining activities have been going on for some 40 years. In the early years of the programme, India's uranium needs were modest; it was required to fuel the research reactor CIRUS and Rajasthan reactors 1 and 2. Uranium production was in excess of our needs and so a stockpile got built up.

The Indian Express, 31 March 2008

#### **We will take final call on n-deal by April-end: CPM**

The CPM will take a definite call on the Indo-US nuclear deal issue in April-end when the UPA government will convey its considered position, CPM politburo member Sitaram Yechury said here today. "We have asked them not to get the deal ratified by the IAEA board of governors because the deal will be on autopilot from the moment that is done. The government will be taking a risk if it goes ahead with it," said Yechury while briefing the media at the 19th congress of the CPM.

The Hindu, 31 March 2008

#### **U.S. delegate backs CPI(M) stand on the civilian nuclear agreement**

Representing what she says is the voice of "another America," a leader of the Communist Party of the United States feels that Washington's overall strategic plan for Asia was to pit one country against another to isolate China. Talking to The Hindu here on Sunday, she declared full support to the CPI(M) stand of India pursuing an independent foreign policy and protecting its sovereignty. "There should be cooperation, including in key areas of nuclear energy, with the U.S. but what is worrying is that such a civilian nuclear agreement with America threatens to impinge on India's sovereignty. India cannot do this," she said.