

The Hindustan Times, 4 November, 2005

India, Russia to work for consensus on Iran vote

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The Statesman, 5 November 2005

INDIA UNRAVELLING

India's strenuous efforts to join the permanent members of the UN Security Council continue despite virtually no hope of success. It is unclear what such membership would achieve in any case because the sought after ability to veto major decisions is unlikely to survive the anger of serious international players. And when local heavyweights like Bangladesh and Pakistan are running rings around it, how India would veto even on its own behalf is perplexing. Perhaps such international symbols of recognition are expected to provide some form of domestic political mileage. This is why it comes as no surprise to learn that Delhi's Diwali bombers enjoy political patronage in UP. Or that within hours of the carnage, the UPA announced the opening of border crossings in J&K and reiterated that Aligarh Muslim University would be turned into what would effectively be a madrasa. Feeble protest: Not very long ago, murdered members of India's BSF were being returned, slung over bamboo poles like so much expired cattle, by the tough lady across the Padma. The Indian protest was a murmur that died down with time, which makes one wonder whether a display of self-respect ought to be a prerequisite for permanent UN Security Council membership as well. With complete lack of honour and shame, it was announced recently that the BSF would train the unpunished murderers of the Bangladeshi side. Perhaps the BDR needs instruction on how the mutilated bodies of Indian soldiers should be arranged when on public display. It reminds one of the gouged eyes and severed private parts of Lt. Kalia, courtesy General Pervez Musharraf.

The Statesman, 7 November, 2005

Saarc to focus on terror, economy

Dhaka, Nov. 6. - Anti-terrorism strategies, economic cooperation and poverty alleviation would be on the agenda of the upcoming Saarc Summit here, a senior Bangladeshi official said today. "This (summit) is going to be focussed (on) regional orientation on economic cooperation, poverty alleviation and cooperation on curbing terrorism," Foreign affairs adviser Mr Reaz Rahman told reporters here. The two-day 13th Summit of Saarc is set to start in Dhaka amid tight security from 12 November. Tangible projects aimed at making Saarc as a harmonising factor will figure prominently at the summit, Mr Rahman was quoted as saying by the official BSS news agency. Mr Rahman said four regional agreements will be signed during the summit.

The Hindu, 7 November, 2005

India, Russia calibrate stand on Iran (Vladimir Radyuhin)

MOSCOW: India and Russia have reiterated their objection to referring the issue of Iran's nuclear programme to the U.N. Security Council ahead of a U.N. nuclear watchdog meeting. "Both sides expressed the view that this complicated problem must be resolved through political and diplomatic means in the legal framework of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a press statement. The Iran problem was discussed during a telephone call External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh made on Friday to his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. The conversation indicates the intensity of Indo-Russian interactions on Iran, as the two ministers met in

Moscow barely a week ago. During his visit to Russia earlier this month, Mr. Singh tried to put India-Iran relations strained by Delhi's September vote in IAEA back on track when he met Iran's First Deputy President Parviz Davoodi on the sidelines of a Shanghai group meeting. Mr. Singh conveyed to the Iranian leader India's firm belief that the Iran file must not be sent to the Security Council.

The Hindu, 9 November 2005

Two more LoC posts to be opened soon (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday named the designated authorities from whom application forms could be obtained by people intending to cross the five points along the Line of Control (LoC). On October 29, Pakistan and India agreed on the opening of five posts across the LoC to enable people participate in earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts. On Monday one post was opened though only for exchange of relief material between officials as India and Pakistan are yet to exchange lists of people intending to avail themselves of the facility. Two more points are to be opened in the next two days. But it will take a few more days before people can cross. There are no indications yet as to when New Delhi and Islamabad will exchange the lists of people seeking to cross over. As per the agreement the procedure for people wanting to cross over is the same as the one followed in the case of passengers on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. Both sides have agreed to clear the names forwarded for crossing within 10 days of their submission.

The Statesman, 9 November 2005

Democracy should seal Delhi-Dhaka deal

New Delhi can form a democratic alliance with neighbour Dhaka and dub it pro-American. A Muslim nation joining hands with India would confuse the terrorists and force them to start all over again, writes Richard L Benkin. If you want to deal a crushing blow to the terrorists who are killing innocents in India and trying to kill democracy around the world, you can. Form a democratic alliance with your neighbour, Bangladesh. And if you want to jam a stake into their cold hearts, declare it to be a pro-American alliance, in contrast to the anti-American alliance Sheikh Hasina proposed last month. For, along with the USA and Israel, there is no nation that these terrorists so loathe and fear as India. A Muslim nation joining hands with India would confuse them utterly. Now, why does this suggestion make sense at this juncture? In the American movie, Independence Day, a malevolent alien force attacks the earth, killing millions of innocents. Even after the film's hero finds a way to fight back, the aliens continue to resist counterattacks; that is, until multinational forces attack them. In one of the scenes, Arab and Israeli soldiers work together to defeat their common enemy.

The Indian Express, 10 November 2005

SAARC bites

In the deep waters of regional economic cooperation, SAARC is very small fish. Those despairing whether its size would ever matter may see - in the Tatas's three billion dollar investment proposal for Bangladesh - the first promise of a growth pill. Indian FDI can take care of a major problem in SAARC economic cooperation. The fear of large trade deficits has come in the way of freer trade with India for many fellow SAARC members. The fear may be economically illogical - free trade benefits all participants - but SAARC members are hardly the only countries in the world to ignore economics when it comes to trade. Politicians' grievances about a widening of trade deficit can be addressed by Indian FDI because the latter will add to the host country's volume and value of exports. This has happened with Sri Lanka, and in a lesser-and more messy way-with Nepal. This can happen with Bangladesh and Pakistan. But FDI can't cure the fear of trade if SAARC members fear FDI, too. And

here, India's case for delivering a sermon to its South Asian neighbours is not as strong as South Block may think.

The Statesman, 10 November 2005

PM has high hopes on Safta

New Delhi, Nov. 9. - Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said today that the South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) is the first step in the evolution of Saarc as a regional trade bloc and economic union. "To exploit its full potential, we need to complete the process of Safta expeditiously, complement it by a Saarc Investment Area and move on to deepen it further by forming a Saarc Customs Union and then gradually to an economic union," he said while addressing a function to mark the dedication of Haksar Memorial Conference Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, in Chandigarh. The Prime Minister also said that Saarc could evolve a forum for annual meetings of economic or industrial ministries to facilitate discussion on exploitation of complementarities in their economies for mutual advantage.

The Hindu, 11 November 2005

SAARC at 20: will the future be different? (Amit Baruah)

IT SHOULD have been the 20th summit, but it is only the 13th. When leaders of the seven South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations meet for their "annual" summit in Dhaka on November 12 and 13, they will have an opportunity to reflect on the performance of the 20-year-old organisation. Set up on December 8, 1985, SAARC has often found itself hostage to the India-Pakistan dynamic. Tensions between the two countries have meant several SAARC summits have not taken place. Though the beginnings of a free trade area will be set in motion on January 1, 2006, as agreed to by SAARC leaders in Islamabad two years ago, there is little doubt that South Asia, given its size and potential, is still to be reckoned as a regional trading area of consequence. India and Pakistan, having made steady progress in improving their relationship since a ceasefire took effect on November 26, 2003, can now take the lead in pushing ahead with trade facilitation measures and transport linkages that could serve as examples for the rest of the region.

The Indian Express, 11 November 2005

New Delhi ready with bold proposal: open skies over South Asia (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

New Delhi : In trying to push for greater economic integration in South Asia, India will be proposing an open skies arrangement at the SAARC meet in Dhaka much on the lines of what exists with ASEAN countries. The proposal is to come up at the ministerial meeting on Friday. This is in line with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's idea of improving connectivity among SAARC countries as a means to create better avenues for regional economic cooperation. Depending on the response it gets, India will decide on how to take the proposal forward. It was former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who had taken a similar initiative with ASEAN countries two years ago. As a result, all ASEAN members today have the rights to operate seven flights a week to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai besides getting unlimited access to 18 destinations in India. In the case of South Asia, India has a very liberal arrangement with Sri Lanka but the same cannot be said for the entire region.

The Asian Age, 11 November 2005

India may host S. Asia disaster centre (By Ashok Sharma)

Dhaka, Nov. 10: India has offered to host a South Asian disaster preparedness and management centre in a region where about 130,000 people were killed over the last year by a devastating tsunami

and a deadly earthquake. The Indian offer is likely to be taken up by the foreign ministers of the seven-nation South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (Saarc), when they meet in the Bangladesh capital on Friday, said Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran. In India, we have a very good institute of disaster management. If it was agreed that such a Saarc centre could be established, then it could easily be linked to this institute," Mr Saran told reporters on Wednesday. The reaction of other Saarc members - Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Maldives and Bhutan - was not immediately known. If approved by the foreign ministers, the Indian offer will be considered at a summit of South Asian leaders this weekend, which is expected to tackle poverty and disaster management in a region where most of the 1.5 billion people are impoverished.

The Asian Age, 12 November 2005

PM, Nepal king to hold meet (By Seema Mustafa)

Dhaka, Nov. 11: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will meet Nepal King Gyanendra for a bilateral meet, giving major relief to the Nepal leader who has been very keen on what he sees as a necessary "recognition" by the only democracy in the South Asian region. In fact, the Nepal King, who will make his first public appearance on a regional platform at the Saarc summit on Saturday, will be spending the next two weeks seeking international acceptance from West Asian and African countries and will return to Kathmandu only on December 2. The itinerary, according to sources, is impressive, including a safari in Kenya and a meeting with South African leader Nelson Mandela that has not been finalised, but is very much on King Gyanendra's list of priorities. Sources said that he will be travelling to Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa before finally returning home. His son Paras will be officiating during his absence.

The Asian Age, 12 November 2005

India, Pak to discuss terror, Kashmir

Dhaka, Nov. 11: Terrorism and Kashmir will top the agenda when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh meets Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on the sidelines of the Saarc summit on Saturday. The meeting is not expected to be tense, but both leaders, while expressing their respective concerns on the above issues, will also review the opening of the Line of Control at five points and further measures that can be taken to provide relief to the earthquake affected people. Prime Minister Singh, before his arrival in Dhaka on Friday to attend the Saarc summit, had indicated his strong displeasure about Pakistan's continued support to terrorism. Pakistan has made it clear since that it is fully prepared to cooperate but it required solid evidence to prove any linkages with the terror blasts in Delhi. Officially, the position that the government is not supporting terrorism will be repeated by Mr Aziz at the meeting, although full cooperation will be extended to tackle the menace at different levels.

The Hindu, 13 November, 2005

Reconnect the subcontinent: Manmohan (Amit Baruah)

Dhaka: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday proposed that all South Asian countries provide reciprocal transit facilities to connect one another, as well as third countries in the Gulf, Central Asia and South-East Asia. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 13th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit, Dr. Singh also offered all the SAARC neighbours the facility of daily air services to Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata on a reciprocal basis. In line with an offer made to the Association of South-East Asian Nations some years ago, designated SAARC airlines could start as many services as they wanted to 18 other destinations across India. The Prime Minister proposed the creation of a centre of excellence - a South Asian University - which could

provide world-class facilities to students in the region. While India was willing to host such an institution, it was also prepared to locate it in another country. Addressing his first SAARC summit, Dr. Singh called for the establishment of a regional food bank to which all member countries would contribute. This could be used to meet shortages and losses caused by natural calamities in any SAARC nation.

The Statesman, 13 November, 2005

Zero tolerance for terror in South Asia

Dhaka, Nov. 12. - Coming together in a delayed summit, leaders of the member-countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) today agreed on a united effort to combat terrorism with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh asserting that there should be "zero tolerance" for cross-border terror. And, in a move to open up the skies over South Asia, India today unilaterally offered all Saarc nations the facility of starting daily air services to six metros (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad) and an unlimited number to 18 other major destinations on a reciprocal basis. Dr Singh also sought bold steps for promotion of regional economic cooperation, poverty alleviation and energy security from the leaders of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives and Bhutan. "There should be zero tolerance for harbouring hostile insurgent groups," he said during the inaugural session of the 13th Saarc Summit.

The Statesman, 13 November, 2005

India, US to double trade by 2008

New Delhi, Nov. 12. - In a bid to boost bilateral economic engagement, India and the United States today decided to double two-way trade to \$40 billion by 2008 while identifying the small and medium enterprises sector as a focus area for achieving the ambitious target. "Our current level of trade at \$21 billion dollars is way below potential. We should aim to achieve a trade target of \$40 billion in the next three years," Union commerce minister, Mr Kamal Nath said at a meeting with the visiting US trade representative, Mr Rob Portman, organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci). Agreeing with Mr Nath, Mr Portman said doubling the trade in three years was an ambitious but achievable target and assured the support of US Administration in this regard. India's total merchandise trade with the US stands at about \$21 billion, of which Indian exports are \$14 billion and Indian imports \$7 billion.

The Statesman, 14 November, 2005

Saarc sheds past inhibitions

Dhaka - Shedding past inhibitions, Saarc countries today agreed that there can be no double standards in the fight against terror and decided to undertake result-oriented efforts to translate pledges into commitments for accelerating economic growth and social progress in the region. Leaders from the seven-member grouping also affirmed their commitment to the realisation of the vision of South Asian Economic Union in a phased and planned manner. An eight-page Dhaka Declaration adopted at the end of the two-day 13th SAARC Summit said the leaders resolved to make regional cooperation more responsive to the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of South Asia. Describing the Declaration as a "forward-looking document", Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in his remarks at the concluding session said that it would add "new vigour" to the Saarc process. Addressing a press conference, Dr Singh said it was a "very productive summit" in terms of the number of proposals put forward and reflected the desire of Saarc nations to take more concrete action in regional cooperation.

The Hindu, 14 November 2005

India should emulate China in project management: FM

New Delhi, Nov. 13. - The finance minister, Mr P Chidambaram, feels that the cost and time over-run of mega projects in India has been endemic and so the country should emulate China in project management. During the inaugural function of the conference organised by the International Project Management Association, the finance minister said, "Time and cost overrun has become endemic. There are about 620 projects each with an investment of over Rs 20 crore which are suffering from time and cost over-runs." A total \$60 billion worth of investments are locked up in about 243 projects which are suffering time and cost over-run, he added. "If you look at bigger projects, there are 340 projects with a total investment of 40 billion dollars which are suffering from time and cost over-runs," he said, adding that road and railway sectors were 'notorious' for delays. Squarely blaming project managers for the delay in mega projects, Mr Chidambaram said, the country's infrastructure sector requires large number competent project managers for speedy infrastructure development.

The Indian Express, 15 November 2005

Bangla policy is out of kilter (Saradindu Mukhreji)

It sometimes appears amateurish when our South Asia 'experts', both within and outside South Block, try to structure Indo-Bangladesh relations on the time-honoured parameters of mutual respect, sensitivity, trade, and cultural exchange. It is time we realised that this approach does not work with Pakistan and Bangladesh. What is missed out-consciously or unconsciously-is the crucial determinant that should ideally shape the relationship between India and the countries which were originally part of its territory, apart from Myanmar. If we bother to remember the traditional Japanese concept of kokutai - that a state cannot shed its fundamental character - and keep it in mind in our relations with both Pakistan and Bangladesh, our understanding of the basic problem may perhaps become clearer. The so-called foreign affairs experts in India have done more harm than good in fashioning this relationship. There was a time when stalwarts such as Subimal Datta, Ashok Kumar Roy and J.N. Dixit provided brilliant insights.

The Statesman, 15 November 2005

'WTO should focus on development, not ambitions'

New Delhi, Nov. 14. - In a clear signal to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ahead of its forthcoming conference next month, commerce and industry minister, Mr Kamal Nath, today said the Hong Kong ministerial should be about development and not just ambitions. "The central focus is to address developmental concerns of the developing countries while striving for fair and equitable trade. WTO is not only about free trade, but also very much about fair trade," Mr Nath said. He was addressing a seminar on "Important Issues for India's Negotiations in the WTO" organised by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) and the commerce and industry ministry. The challenge in the Doha Round, the commerce minister said, was to deliver pro-development outcomes acceptable to all, which meets the aspirations of diverse group of countries.

The Indian Express, 16 November 2005

Tehran does a U-turn, defers minister's visit

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 15 After trying hard and getting India to agree on the dates for a visit by its Deputy Foreign Minister ahead of the crucial IAEA meeting, Tehran did a sudden U-turn today and conveyed to New Delhi that the minister had "postponed" the visit for the time being. No reasons were officially conveyed for this sudden change. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Safari was to be

here on Thursday for a two-day visit ahead of the IAEA board of governors meet on November 24. This was an Iranian initiative and India conveyed its acceptance of the dates only a few days ago. Until Monday, the visit was on and necessary preparations were also under way. But the Iran Embassy today said the visit has been "postponed" and gave no reasons for the change of plan. When contacted, the MEA spokesperson said: "We are now informed that it has been postponed."

The Hindu, 16 November 2005

Defence ties with Moscow will remain robust: Pranab (Vladimir Radyuhin)

MOSCOW: Russia is and will remain India's largest and most secure source of defence hardware, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Tuesday. The ongoing deals with Moscow ran into almost \$9 billion, he said at the opening of the fifth session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) on military-technical cooperation here. A 10-year defence cooperation programme between India and Russia till 2010 included more than 200 projects worth \$20 billion, the Russian Defence Ministry said, ahead of the meeting. More than half of these projects were carried through and the rest would be undertaken in the next four years. "Defence ties are robust and will remain so," Mr. Mukherjee said. "Despite India's growing ties with many other countries, including in defence, India will not give up its time-tested and strategic partnership with Russia."

The Hindu, 17 November 2005

Stand at Vienna will be in national interest, says Saran

New Delhi: Refusing to discuss India's position at the coming International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in Vienna on Iran's nuclear issue, the Government on Wednesday maintained that it would be in accordance with the country's national interest. "I will not go into a hypothetical situation. Let us see whether there is going to be a vote or not," Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told reporters here when asked how India would vote at the November 24 meeting. Even if there was voting, India's "stance will be determined by what are the contents of the resolution," he said. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had already made that clear during his press conference in Dhaka. Mr. Saran said India's stance would be based on its judgment of the national interest. His comments come amid the Left warning to the Government not to go against Iran's interest.

The Indian Express, 17 November 2005

Deal on with Russia to help India develop nuclear submarine: Pranab (Vinay Shukla)

MOSCOW, NOVEMBER 16: Russia has agreed to help India develop indigenous nuclear-powered submarine and aircraft carriers, while India is ready for the joint development of a fifth-generation fighter aircraft, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said here on Wednesday, after talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Ivanov. "For some components joint ventures and joint production would be set up," he said when asked if he and Ivanov had discussed Russian cooperation in the development of the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) and Air Defence Ship (ADS) projects. ATV is an indigenous project for the development of a nuclear submarine and the ADS project is for the development of aircraft carriers. Speaking at a joint press conference, Mukherjee said India would also take part in the development and financing of a fifth generation super fighter aircraft project with Russia.

The Hindu, 18 November 2005

Manmohan: let us fight terror together

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday asked the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to fight terrorism together. "We have a collective stake in ensuring peace and security in the SAARC region because no investor will come to this region if there

is no assurance of peace and security," he said, inaugurating the first SAARC Business Leaders' Conclave here. "To imagine that anyone of us can pursue what economists call 'beggar-thy-neighbour' policies and thereby prosper is to delude oneself," Dr. Singh said, underlining that the SAARC business community had a vital stake in regional security and in victory in the war on terror. "We must join hands to put our collective house in order as peace in the region will benefit all. Terrorism anywhere will hurt us all," he said. Business and trade would flourish in a secure environment.

The Indian Express, 18 November 2005

India pressing Russia over BrahMos induction (Dadan Upadhyay)

Moscow, November 17 India is pressing Russia to speed up the process of inducting the BrahMos anti-ship cruise missile, in its Armed Forces, before launching its marketing in third countries. "Some countries have shown interest in the BrahMos missiles. But before their marketing is launched, they should be inducted in the countries of their production," Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee told reporters after his visit to the NPOM Mashinostroenia, outside Moscow, on Thursday. "There is no problem from our side, in their induction. But Russian laws require to be amended for their induction into the armed forces," Mukherjee said. Mukherjee would not reveal the names of the countries, interested in the BrahMos "There are many competitors in this field and if I mention any particular country, others will approach them to buy the systems from them," he said.

The Indian Express, 18 November 2005

India-China business synergy set to change world: Study

Shanghai, November 18: The global business landscape is set to be galvanised by the inherent potential of a synergy between China and India with their combined GDP to account for up to 20 per cent of the world's total by 2025 if two Asian giants agree on free trade, a study has said. "The China-India business synergy is the tip of the iceberg of immense economic power," said Yuwa Hedrick-Wong, economic advisor to MasterCard International in Asia/Pacific. "The new generation of joint China-India companies will change the competition landscape in global business. Any way you look at it, this synergy is set to change the world. However, the extent to which the two economies can be brought closer together would increase their impact," Hedrick-Wong said. In one of its latest Insights Reports, MasterCard points out that rather than viewing Chinese and Indian economies as competing, it is much more important to understand their potential business synergy. The impact of a China-India business alliance will, however, catapult their corporate sector to be among the best in the world, the study said.

The Indian Express, 19 November 2005

As US Cong softens on India deal, NPT lobby plays the China card (C Raja Mohan)

NEW DELHI, NOV 18: As the mood in the US Congress begins to shift in favour of the Bush Administration's nuclear pact with India, the non-proliferation lobby in Washington has raised a new red flag-of China reacting to the deal by stepping up its own nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. In a letter to all members of the US Congress today, a section of the non-proliferation lobby in Washington has demanded a critical review of the "full implications" of the nuclear deal signed by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on July 18 "and pursue additional stipulations that might result in a positive outcome to US and international security." While many of the arguments put forward in the letter have already been articulated, it's the China argument that outlines a new stratagem in the campaign against the Indo-US nuclear pact. In playing the China card, the non-proliferation community appears to be betting on Beijing's opposition to the nuclear pact with Delhi in the 45 nation Nuclear Suppliers Group that must endorse it. China was among those who raised a number of questions on

the Indo-US nuclear pact at the NSG meeting last month. France, Russia, Britain, and Canada are supporting the nuclear pact.

The Hindu, 19 November 2005

Chinese People's Army team witnesses war games in Rajasthan's Thar desert

Pokhran (Rajasthan): In the presence of a high-level Chinese People's Army delegation, Indian armed forces on Friday conducted the largest ever war games in recent times in the Thar desert showcasing its prowess for short high-intensity wars in a digitised battlefield. This is the first time a Chinese military team witnessed such an exercise. Defence attaches from many countries were also present. In "Operation Desert Strike," the Army and the Air Force deployed their latest acquisitions, including Russian T-90 tanks, mechanised infantry combat vehicles in tandem with force multipliers like Israeli Searcher and Heron Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, to carry out rapid deep penetration blitzkrieg thrusts.

The Hindu, 21 November 2005

Manmohan invites Rajapakse to visit India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh telephoned the newly elected Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapakse, to congratulate him on his victory and invite him to visit India, official sources said on Sunday. In a separate message, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam also congratulated Mr. Rajapakse on his assumption of office. Mr. Kalam said Sri Lanka and India enjoyed excellent bilateral relations in all spheres. "I am sure that under your able leadership, our two countries will be able to cement and strengthen it further," he added.

The Hindu, 21 November 2005

Do not back U.S. stand on Iran: Karat

HYDERABAD: The Communist Party of India (Marxist) wants the Centre to come out with an assurance that it will not support any U.S. move to refer Iran's nuclear programme to the Security Council. The crucial meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency to discuss the Iranian issue is slated for November 24. "The Government should clearly state that it will not take any position in the efforts to take Iran to the UNSC," CPI (M) general secretary Prakash Karat said. Participating in a convention on "Independent foreign policy," organised jointly by the CPI (M), the CPI, the RSP, the Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal (S) here on Sunday, Mr. Karat said there was tremendous U.S. pressure on the Indian Government to continue the stand adopted on September 24, when India signed the resolution supporting the U.S. action to refer Iran to the UNSC. "The country fears that its agreement on cooperation in nuclear power generation will not work otherwise."

The Hindu. 22 November 2005

Pakistan gave no proposal for self-governance: India

NEW DELHI: India said on Monday night that it had received no proposal regarding so-called "self-governance" in Jammu and Kashmir during the November 12 Dhaka meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Shaukat Aziz. During the meeting between the two leaders, Mr. Aziz said that in seeking a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue the two countries could, among other things, explore ideas such as self-governance and demilitarisation. "No proposal regarding so-called 'self-governance' was provided to which a response was expected," said an External Affairs Ministry spokesperson to a statement from the Pakistan Foreign Office.

The Hindu, 23 November 2005

Pakistan regrets 'evasive response' of India (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday 'regretted' the 'evasive response' of India to the ideas of 'demilitarisation and self-governance' on both sides of Kashmir. "It would be regrettable if the Indian side chooses to be evasive in responding to these ideas which must be considered with an open mind in the interest of finding a solution of the Kashmir dispute and durable peace in the region," the Pakistan Foreign Office said in a statement. It said the dispute needed to be addressed with 'sincerity, flexibility and courage' by both sides and "Pakistan is committed to promotion of a solution that meets the 'aspirations' of the Kashmiri people."

The Hindu, 24 November 2005

Canada govt report urges further probe into Kanishka bombing

VANCOUVER, NOV 23 : The victims of Air India Flight 182 deserve a "focused" independent inquiry into whether officials could have prevented the 1985 bombing, and then bungled the criminal investigation, according to a government report released on Wednesday. The report stopped short of calling for a full judicial review of government actions, but said there were enough unanswered questions that a inquiry was needed to make sure the mistakes were not repeated. "The Air India bombings were the worst encounter with terrorism that Canada has experienced. We cannot leave any issues unresolved," wrote the report's author, former Ontario Premier Bob Rae. The government appointed Rae in April to review the case amid public uproar after a judge acquitted two Sikh separatists charged with the bombings.

The Hindu, 25 November 2005

New probe into Kanishka tragedy

Vancouver: The former Ontario Premier, Bob Rae, will lead a new public inquiry into the 1985 bombing of Air India flight Kanishka to examine the failures in stopping the attack, Canada's Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan has said. The announcement came after Mr. Rae, independent investigator appointed to review the trial, delivered a report on Wednesday recommending a "focussed, policy-based inquiry" to answer lingering questions about the bombing, which killed 329 persons off the Irish Coast. Ms. McLellan, who tapped Mr. Rae in April to evaluate possible steps after the acquittal of the two principal suspects, said he was the ideal person to head the new inquiry, given his understanding of the case and rapport with victims' families. A formal order establishing the investigation would be in place to swiftly pursue answers to questions on the tragedy.

The Hindu, 26 November 2005

No plan given to India: U.S.

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday said it had not given India any plan on how to go about separating its civilian and military nuclear facilities to help implement the landmark bilateral nuclear deal. "We haven't given a plan on how India should separate its civilian and military [nuclear] facilities," a State Department official told PTI in response to reports that Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns in September presented Indian officials a blueprint on how the Americans might go about in the exercise. New Delhi is said to have given back the blueprint saying it was capable of going about on its own. "But we recognise that this is something that is necessary as Burns said in his [Congressional] testimony — that the arrangement between India and the U.S. involves a plan being devised by India on how they would be separating the civilian and military aspects of the nuclear programme which would then make it possible for us to work much more closely on the civilian side," the official said.

The Hindu, 26 November 2005

Note on Maniappan's body asks Indians to leave Afghanistan

NEW DELHI: A note pinned to the body of Ramankutty Maniappan, the Indian driver killed in Afghanistan by the Taliban, said Indians should get out of their country. "This (Afghanistan) is not India or America," the note said. Talking to a select group of presspersons, senior officials said India had tried in vain to get in touch with Mr. Maniappan's kidnappers — through both official and non-official channels. According to sources, it was clear by Sunday, the second day since the kidnapping, that the captors were not interested in negotiations. The sources said that India's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Rakesh Sood, had contacted President Hamid Karzai, National Security Adviser Zalmay Rasool and the American, Iranian and Italian ambassadors in Kabul to save Mr. Maniappan. While the Afghan driver in Mr. Maniappan's vehicle had returned, there was no word on the fate of the two Afghan security guards, who were also present. About the kidnapping, the Afghan driver revealed that their vehicle had been stopped by four armed men in a black Toyota Corolla which was followed by another vehicle with armed men. Mr. Maniappan was taken away alone in the black Corolla after the Afghan guards were disarmed, he said.

The Hindu, 27 November 2005

India should let nuclear agreement lapse: analyst

NEW DELHI: The civilian nuclear deal between India and the United States should be "allowed to lapse" because of the "onerous new conditions" the Americans were trying to impose on the July 18 agreement. Strategic analyst, Matin Zuberi, however, argued that India and the U.S. should continue cooperation in other areas of mutual benefit. In a paper written for the Observer Research Foundation, Prof. Zuberi raised several questions about the nuclear deal. Would India's declaration to be filed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) only contain a list of civilian nuclear facilities? Or would it also include the amount of nuclear material produced in them? If, the latter were included, then India would be going in for full-scope safeguards, he argued. Prof. Zuberi, formerly with the Jawaharlal Nehru University, felt that American interpretations of the July 18 joint statement should be treated as "pressure tactics" to obtain non-proliferation objectives.

The Hindu, 27 November 2005

Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan can join pipeline project: India

NEW DELHI: India, which is toying with the idea of being a party to the ADB-assisted Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) gas pipeline, on Saturday mooted a proposal to rope in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan so as to exploit Caspian Sea reserves. It also proposed a pipeline from Azerbaijan to the Arabian Sea to transport Caspian oil to the sub-continent, one of the fastest growing consumption centres. Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar suggested that the TAP pipeline originate in Azerbaijan and end in India during an interaction with Idriz Rzabeyov, head of the Energy Department, Ministry of Energy, Azerbaijan. Alongside, Mr. Aiyar suggested to the Minister for Foreign Economic Relations, Investment and Trade, Rustam Sodykovich Azimov, that gas from Uzbekistan pass through the TAP pipeline. India, Mr. Aiyar told newsmen here, decided to attend as observer the TAP pipeline steering committee meeting in January before committing itself to be a party in the project.

The Hindu, 28 November 2005

'Col.' Karuna for Indian mediation (V.S. Sambandan)

COLOMBO: The leader of the Tamileela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) V. Muralitharan ('Col.')

Karuna) on Sunday said his group would welcome "only the mediation" of India and the U.K., as "only these two countries understand our problems very well." In his "Heroes' Day" speech, the former LTTE special commander for two eastern districts said: "In particular, India is the country which should come forward to settle our problem." He also wanted the Sri Lankan Government to "immediately revise the ceasefire agreement that had paved the way for the LTTE to kill Tamils, Muslims and the armed forces." The Government "should also re-consider the role of Norway which had facilitated the agreement," he said. Mr. Muralitharan's speech was critical of the LTTE leader, V. Prabhakaran, whom he said was "preventing these two countries from intervening in our problem." He wanted the LTTE to be disarmed before recommencement of peace talks.

The Hindu, 28 November 2005

Indian workers in Afghanistan to get extra security

PATHANAMTHITTA: National Security Adviser M. K. Narayanan has said that the Union Government will provide additional security to Indians working at various sites as part of the ongoing road development project in Afghanistan. Mr. Narayanan was talking to reporters at the Sabarimala Sannidhanam during his pilgrimage to the lord Ayyappa temple on Sunday evening. He said the Afghan Government had also promised foolproof security cover to ensure the safety of Indian workers engaged in various development projects in Afghanistan. When asked about CPI (M) MP T. K. Hamsa's reported criticism of his statement on a suspected Pakistan hand in the killing of the Border Roads Organisation employee Maniappan, Mr. Narayanan said he stuck to what he had said.

The Hindu, 29 November 2005

Warships on a goodwill mission - Chinese vessels come calling in Kochi for four-day visit; joint exercises planned (John L. Paul)

KOCHI: Two ships of the People's Liberation Army of China arrived here on Monday on a goodwill visit and for joint naval exercises. Shenzhen, a Luhai class guided missile destroyer, and Weishanhu, a fleet-auxilliary ship, will be here for four days. They came in from Karachi. They will go on to Thailand. On board the Chinese ships was present Rear Admiral Han Linzhi, Deputy Commander of the South Sea Fleet and other PLA officers. Rear Admiral Rajender Singh, Chief of Staff of the Southern Naval Command, and other officers received the ships. Rear Admiral Singh inspected a guard of honour on board Shenzhen. Defence Attache of China Sr. Col. Li Zhao was present. Between them the ships have a crew of 544. The destroyer is equipped with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles. It has a Harbin Z9C helicopter on board. During their stay here till December 1, there will be exchange of visits between Indian and Chinese Navy personnel to the ships and training schools. INS Gomati is among the Indian ships that will take part in the joint exercises.

The Hindu, 29 November 2005

India, U.S. can contribute to better balance of power in the Asian region: Shyam Saran (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI: India and the United States could contribute to a better balance of power in the Asian region at a time when a major process of realignment was taking place on the continent with the emergence of China as a "global economic power house" and New Delhi poised to be a major player as well. Addressing the World Economic Forum India Summit 2005 on Monday, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said to manage the emerging security scenario in Asia more and more countries needed to be brought "within the discipline" of a mutually agreed security paradigm for the region. Both India and the U.S. could contribute to this, he said. Speaking in the presence of U.S. Under Secretary of State for Commerce David McCormick, Mr. Saran said he had not heard the word "containment" used

for China in India's bilateral discussions with Washington.

The Hindu, 29 November 2005

The road to an East Asian community - The Japan-India relationship if strengthened could provide a model for integration of an East Asian community (Toshio Yamamoto)

Today, The economy of East Asia is vibrant and growing. The nations of the region are deeply linked through intra-regional trade and cooperation - what is often referred to as the region's "de facto economic integration." On the other hand, in the political and security aspects, the nations of the region remain extremely diverse. Different types of political systems and principles continue to coexist. It is simply unthinkable at the moment to create an overarching political and security framework, like NATO. Regional stability has primarily been and will continue to be maintained through the building up of bilateral security agreements, centred around the United States. For the prosperity and growth of the region, it is necessary to secure a successful model of economic development, which is the benign circle of introduction of foreign investment from outside the region, and intensification of intra-regional trade. Under these circumstances, the first East Asia Summit (EAS) will convene in Malaysia on December 14. Japan has set forth several principles regarding regional cooperation in East Asia. These principles are "open regionalism," "functional approach," and "respect for and realisation of universal values and rules such as democracy."

The Indian Express, 30 November 2005

'B'desh bigger worry than Pakistan'

New Delhi, November 30: Bangladesh is emerging as a bigger worry than Pakistan, Director General of BSF R.S. Mooshahary said today. The BSF chief was talking to reporters here. BSF guards the 4,000-km-odd Indo-Bangla border and is also present along the LoC in the Indo-Pak border with the Army. "Bangladesh will soon pose a bigger problem than Pakistan," Mooshahary said, adding that the Indo-Bangla border is more difficult to man than the Indo-Pak border. "At the Pakistan border, both the Army and BSF are deployed, whereas the Indo-Bangla border is manned solely by BSF." He also admitted that illegal migration into North-East is continuing and in order to address the issue of infiltration, BSF has sought to raise an additional battalion of women. "I've sought the Home Ministry's permission to raise a women's battalion to deal with infiltrators, many of whom are women," he said. India is sure that there are about 172 terror camps operating in Bangladesh and that 307 "wanted-people", including top ULFA leaders Paresh Baruah and Arvind Rajkhowa, are in Bangladesh, he said, adding that "Dhaka has denied their presence without verifying the details given to them".

The Indian Express, 30 November 2005

China arms shadow over Indo-Nepal treaty Nepal: Delhi will tell Kathmandu that treaty may come under review if security concern not addressed (Shishir Gupta)

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 29: The supply of arms and ammunition by China to King Gyanendra's government in Nepal is going to find an echo in the Indo-Nepal Transit Treaty meeting this week, with New Delhi deciding to convey to Kathmandu that the bilateral document may come under review if its security concerns are not considered. According to the latest reports, China supplied 4.2 million rounds of 7.62 mm rifle ammunition, 80,000 high explosive grenades and 12,000 AK-series rifles to Nepal last week. Beijing has gone ahead with the supplies despite Washington and New Delhi urging it not to fish in troubled waters. In fact, US President George Bush also took up the arms supply issue during his recent visit to Beijing. While India and the US have taken a serious note of the Chinese supplies, even a political leader of Nepal, the CPN(UML)'s Madhav Nepal, has gone public asking Beijing to resist from arming the Kings. The first fallout of the arms supply is expected at the Transit Treaty meeting on

December 2-3 at Kathmandu. The Indian delegation will be led by M V P C Sastry, Joint Secretary (Commerce), and Pankaj Saran, Joint Secretary (North). Saran handles Nepal in the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Indian Express, 30 November 2005

LTTE ultimatum in hand, Lanka looks to India (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 29: In the urgency that has set in after the LTTE ultimatum to the new Sri Lankan government to get its act together, the new foreign minister, Mangala Samaraweera, will be here tomorrow to discuss the matter with India. President Mahinda Rajapakse is likely to visit in the second week of December. The date is yet to be worked out. Samaraweera will be here for a day and is slated to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to discuss the new government's ideas to take the peace process forward. A more concrete picture, however, will emerge after Rajapakse's visit. The new Lankan government has promised a consultative and transparent approach to the peace process and has indicated willingness to engage all the parties involved.