

The Indian Express, 3 October 2006

Pak response: If proof there, will act but no handing over

Islamabad, October 2: A day after New Delhi said it would confront Islamabad with the evidence of its involvement in the Mumbai train blasts, Pakistan today promised action against any of its nationals with links to the attack if it's provided information but said it would not hand over any suspect. She termed as "propagandist" Mumbai police commissioner A N Roy's assertion that the ISI masterminded the blasts which was carried out by activists of Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and SIMI. She said Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon has not spoken about the involvement of ISI...

The Times of India, 3 October 2006

Ban wins poll; will be next UN chief

Washington, October 2: South Korea's Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon will be the next United Nations Secretary General. Ban won the final informal straw poll with 14 votes, including support from all five Permanent Security Council members. India's Shashi Tharoor came runner up again with ten 'encourage' votes, three 'discourage' votes and two no opinions. In the three negative votes, one was believed to be that of a permanent member, which would have amounted to a veto...

Hindustan Times, 3 October 2006

India, SA see eye to eye on UNSC, nuke cooperation

Pretoria, October 2: The leaders of India and South Africa made a strategic trade-off on Monday. India decisively said it would support South Africa's bid to occupy a permanent African seat in a reformed United Nations Security Council, and Pretoria in turn said it would support New Delhi's ambitions on civilian nuclear technology. The two sides also agreed to step up cooperation on fighting terrorism. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and South African President Thabo Mbeki signed the Tshwane Declaration, which commits the two countries to a deeper and strategic relationship, and then addressed a joint news conference...

Hindustan Times, 3 October 2006

White House upset with Indo-US nuke deal failure

Washington, October 2: The White House said on Monday, it was disappointed the US Senate failed to approve a landmark US-India nuclear deal before adjourning, but expressed optimism it would be approved during a "lame duck" session in November. The initiative, which would allow nuclear-armed India access to US nuclear fuel and reactors for the first time in three decades, "continues to be a top priority for the administration," a spokesman said in a statement...

The Indian Express, 4 October 2006

India to give names of suspects to Pak

New Delhi, October 3: India will shortly present to Pakistan the names of its nationals suspected to be involved in the deadly Mumbai blasts along with related evidence through the joint anti-terror mechanism recently agreed upon, highly placed sources said in New Delhi on Wednesday. As many as 11 Pakistani nationals were directly involved in the serial blasts on July 11 in which nearly 200 people died, according to the Mumbai

police which said that the attacks were planned by ISI in Pakistan and carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba with the help of the banned Islamic Students Movement of India (SIMI)...

The Times of India, 4 October 2006

US Senate may take up N-deal after recess

Washington, October 3: The Bush administration has said it is doing everything to encourage the US Senate to approve the Indo-US nuclear deal in its "lame duck" session in November. While it was really up to the members how they wished to proceed, the administration is certainly hopeful that the Senate will take up the enabling bill when it meets again November 13 after the November 7 general elections, State Department Deputy spokesman Tom Casey said on Tuesday...

Hindustan Times, 4 October 2006

No Indian participation in Sampur power project

Colombo, October 3: Top Indian sources have denied that India is to participate in the setting up of a 1000 MW coal-fired power plant at Sampur, an area in Trincomalee district in Eastern Sri Lanka, which was recently captured from the LTTE after heavy fighting. Sources in New Delhi told Hindustan Times on Wednesday, that India was interested in a power plant in China Bay, where the Trincomalee harbour is located, and not in Sampur, which is across the Koddiyar Bay...

Hindustan Times, 4 October 2006, 4 October 2006

Editorial- Common good

October 3: The outcome of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to South Africa is yet another manifestation of the new directions of India's post-Cold War foreign and security policies. The effort to develop stronger political and economic ties with the largest and most-developed economy in the African continent is part of New Delhi's emphasis on building bilateral relations with influential countries, with the expectation that this will generate a regional, if not global, spin-off. This is clearly evident in India's engagements with the US, EU, China, Japan, Brazil and the Asean. Where non-alignment stresses consensus and solidarity, the new outlook emphasises deal-making and trade-offs...

The Hindu, 9 October 2006

PM leaving for UK, Finland today

New Delhi, October 9 : Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who leaves here today on a six-day visit to the United Kingdom and Finland, will have bilateral talks with his British counterpart Tony Blair and other European leaders at the India-European Union (EU) Summit in Helsinki with the main focus on terrorism. Arriving in London on October 9, Dr Singh will also address the India-UK Investment Summit on Tuesday. The UK is a key partner for India in view of a large Indian community of around 1.5 million people living in the country and the two countries have close political relations. Besides Commerce and Industry Minister, Kamal Nath, Minister of State for External Affairs, Anand Sharma and other senior officials, a 70-member business delegation is also accompanying the Prime Minister...

Hindustan Times, 9 October 2006

Pak admits having helped insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir

Washington:Pakistan has admitted that it might have helped insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir at "some time" but claimed it is now "trying our best" to prevent infiltration of militants into India."Jihad, insurgency or whatever you want to call it in Kashmir... Yes, Pakistan may have helped the jihad at some time but it was not started by us and now we are trying our best to stop people from crossing," Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Mahmud Ali Durrani said.He was delivering a lecture at the South Asia Programme of the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University when he was asked what Pakistan was doing to stop terrorist outfits like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) from crossing into Jammu and Kashmir...

Hindustan Times, 9 October 2006

India and Pakistan are ready to resolve Siachen issue: Mirwaiz

Islamabad:Pakistan and India were "ready" to resolve the vexed Siachen issue and a solution could emerge during a visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Islamabad, moderate Hurriyat faction leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has said.Farooq, who held talks with Pervez Musharraf in United States last month, said he got this "impression" from what the Pakistan President told him about his talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Havana last month."My impression is that they are ready to resolve the Siachen dispute," he said, according to a report in Pakistani daily "Dawn" from Washington. Singh had in principle accepted in Havana Musharraf's invitation to visit Pakistan.Musharraf "believes that the two sides can make headway on Kashmir as well when he meets the Indian Prime Minister," Mirwaiz said...

Hindustan Times, 9 October 2006

India, ASEAN to negotiate trade pact soon

New Delhi:India will soon start negotiations for a free trade pact with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and seek to sort out the differences over commodities not under duty concessions, officials said on Friday."We made a revised offer to them some months ago. We will sit down and discuss the offer in a couple of days," Commerce Minister Kamal Nath said on the margins of a seminar in New Delhi. he revised offer is on the list of sensitive items in the free trade agreement, which covers the commodities that will be exempt from tariff cuts. Commerce ministry officials said India had originally proposed over 1,400 items to remain outside the ambit of tariff reductions. This had stalled the progress in negotiating the trade pact.Now, the list has been pruned to around 560 items in the revised offer made just before Kamal Nath attended the 38th meeting of the ASEAN economic ministers in Kuala Lumpur on September 3, officials added...

The Hindu, 10 October 2006

India condemns North Korean test - Siddharth Varadarajan

On board Air-India One: Anxious to avoid any possible comparison between North Korea and India as two nuclear-armed countries outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) system, New Delhi on Monday officially accused Pyongyang of violating its "international commitments" and "jeopardising peace, stability and security on the

Korean peninsula and in the region" by testing a nuclear weapon. In a brief statement, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesman also said the test "highlights the danger of clandestine proliferation," an implicit reference to the nuclear links which have existed in the past between North Korea and Pakistan...

The Hindu, 10 October 2006

No objection to India sharing evidence with others, says Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday said it did not mind India sharing the evidence of alleged cross-border involvement in the Mumbai blasts with other countries. But for Islamabad, it would remain an allegation unless it saw the evidence for itself, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said at a briefing here. The Ministry said it had not yet received any evidence from India of the Mumbai police allegation that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence was involved in the July 11 train blasts. India last week said it would share the evidence from the Mumbai investigation with the European Union during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit. The United States said it had already seen the evidence. Ms. Aslam came out strongly against the Bharatiya Janata Party for advocating harsh action against Pakistan for its alleged role in the blasts...

The Hindu, 10 October 2006

India should import more: Khaleda

DHAKA: Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said India should import more from the country to reduce the widening trade imbalance. She conveyed this to outgoing Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri. The Indian envoy thanked the Prime Minister for the successful holding of the SAARC summit in Dhaka and for the cooperation the government extended to her in discharging her duties. Begum Khaleda appreciated the Indian envoy for her efforts in improving bilateral relations. Later calling on Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, Ms. Sikri said she would miss Bangladesh, a country that had a special place in her heart for the warm hospitality she enjoyed here. A Foreign Ministry release said Mr. Khan appreciated the positive approach shown by the High Commissioner during her tenure.

The Hindu, 10 October 2006

India has a duty to resolve Sri Lankan crisis: Tamil parties

COLOMBO: Representatives of three parties from the North and East in Sri Lanka, just back from an official visit to New Delhi, have said that peace in the island nation cannot be achieved without 'Indian advice and guidance' and India has a 'moral duty' to play a role in the resolution of the ethnic strife. A statement released here on Monday on behalf of V. Anandasangaree, D. Sithardhan and T. Sritharan representing the TULF, PLOTE and EPRLF (Pathmanaba Group) gave a detailed account of their visit to New Delhi. It said they discussed matters ranging from devolution of power to escalation of violence. The military operation was "precipitated by a foolish action of the LTTE who kept the sluice gates of Marvilaru closed, depriving the people of their drinking water and water for the large extent of paddy crops close to the time of harvest."...

The Hindu, 11 October 2006

World big enough to accommodate India and China: Manmohan

London: A high-level gathering of business leaders from India and Britain presented a sector-wise wish-list to Manmohan Singh on Tuesday, but the Prime Minister steered clear of making any specific commitments on some of the more contentious issues involved. India and Britain are the third largest foreign investors in each other's countries, and Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) in Britain has exceeded the reverse flow since 2004. Tuesday's U.K.-India Investment Summit "an initiative of the CII, FICCI and the Confederation of British Industry" was aimed at finding ways of boosting the investment relationship...

The Hindu, 11 October 2006

For India, North Korea's test poses key challenge- Siddharth Varadarajan

THE ONE "silver lining" Indian diplomats have latched on to is the "Pakistani connection" to North Korea's "clandestine" nuclear status but this clever point aside, Pyongyang's test of a nuclear weapon has immensely complicated India's quest for assimilation in the existing nuclear order. The fact is that as of Monday, there is no longer any nuclear order, at least not in Asia. Experts can quibble about its low yield but the North Korean test has brought to a formal end the core bargain on which American nuclear policy in East Asia has rested: that in exchange for Japan and South Korea forswearing their right to nuclear weapons, the United States would guarantee not just their security against nuclear attack from Russia or China but also that there would be no new nuclear weapons state in the region...

The Hindustan Times, 11 October 2006

India apprises Britain of Pak involvement in Mumbai blasts

London :India will 'take advantage' of Islamabad's offer to act on evidence to be handed over by Delhi regarding the Mumbai train blasts and hand over 'credible evidence' to Pakistan in the matter. The two countries are in the process of setting up a joint mechanism to fight terrorism, which they had agreed to in Havana. British Prime Minister Tony Blair welcomed the discussions between Delhi and Islamabad at Havana but sounded Britain's strong disapproval to any support for terrorism. With regard to India's contention that Pakistan's ISI and terror groups based there are responsible for the July 11 Mumbai blasts, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in response to a question, 'We will take advantage of that (Pakistan's offer to cooperate) and will provide them, what we consider, is credible evidence.' The prime minister pointed out that the joint mechanism proposed to be drawn up by Islamabad and Delhi 'was in the process of being worked out'...

The Hindustan Times, 11 October 2006

India, Pakistan, North Korea all different: US

Washington: The United States says there is no comparison between a defiant North Korea and a "responsible" India or for that matter Pakistan, an ally "transitioning to its own form of democracy". "I think that the characteristics of the North Korean - this particular North Korean regime and the particular historical facts among those three different cases are quite different," State Department Spokesperson Sean McCormack

told reporters on Tuesday. In Washington's judgement, India has been a responsible actor in regard to non-proliferation and believed that the civilian nuclear deal with New Delhi will benefit both countries as also the non-proliferation regime, he said. McCormack was responding to a question whether North Korea might look at the examples of India and Pakistan, who also detonated nuclear devices against the wishes of the US, and hope to be accepted as a nuclear power in time...

The Hindu, 12 October 2006

US administration 'determined' to push through nuke deal

Washington : Amid concerns that North Korea's nuclear test could impact the implementation of the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, the US administration has said it is "determined" to fulfil commitments it has made to New Delhi on nuclear commerce. Asserting that there was a "world of difference" between the nuclear programmes of India and North Korea, US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns said, "We are determined to fulfill the commitments we made to the Indian government in this deal." "I have been in touch with Ambassador Shyam Saran and new Foreign Secretary (Shiv Shankar) Menon over the last week to assure that the US wants to go forward on all of the definite initiatives that President (George) Bush and Prime Minister (Manmohan) Singh talked in March in New Delhi," Burns told reporters here...

The Hindu, 12 October 2006

No decision on blacklisting Israeli arms firm: Pranab

New Delhi, Oct. 12: The government today said no decision has been taken to blacklist an Israeli armament company that makes the Barak missile, in the sale of which CBI has filed a case against former defence minister George Fernandes and his associate Jaya Jaitley for allegedly receiving kickbacks. A hint in this regard was given by Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee who, on being asked whether the company, Israel Aircraft Industries, was being blacklisted, said comparisons could not be drawn between it and South African arms major Denel. "These are totally different situations. The case of Denel and Barak are not comparable," Mukherjee told reporters on the sidelines of a function here to receive a dividend cheque of Rs 3.27 crores from state-run Goa Shipyards. "There is a specific case filed by the CBI regarding Barak missiles. It will go to the courts. Let's await the decision," he said.

The Hindu, 12 October 2006

Manmohan to meet EU leaders to improve trade ties

Helsinki, Oct. 12 : Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday was meeting European Union leaders in Finland, which currently holds the bloc's presidency, in a move to improve trade ties. Singh, who arrived in Helsinki on Wednesday, was to attend a business forum between India and the 25-member EU, the country's largest trading partner, with the aim of finding a pact to lift barriers to economic exchanges between the two sides. On Friday, he was to attend the EU-India summit where he was expected to sign an agreement on India's participation in Europe's planned Galileo satellite navigation system. About 25 percent of Indian exports go to EU countries, which provide the most foreign investment in India. Two-way trade between the two totaled about euro 38 billion (US\$46 billion) in 2005.

The Hindu, 12 October 2006

India, Pakistan involved in backchannel talks on Kashmir

Islamabad, Oct 12. (PTI): India and Pakistan are involved in backchannel diplomacy to explore possibilities to resolve the Kashmir issue, Pakistan Minister for Kashmir Affairs Faisal Saleh Hayat has said. Though both countries have not initiated a secret dialogue on Kashmir, they were involved in backchannel diplomacy to find a solution to the issue, he said. "Backchannel diplomacy is sometimes necessary especially when Governments face difficulties in reaching a final solution to sensitive issues," Hayat was quoted as saying by 'The News'. "You may call it backchannel (diplomacy) or Track Two or anything else, but it is always necessary for reaching a solution to the important and sensitive issues between the two countries," he said. To a question, he said India had taken the Kashmiri leadership on board to find a solution to the vexed issue and stressed that the process should move ahead more rapidly. Hayat stated that President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz have a conviction that they will get the issue settled in a specific timeframe. About the general elections scheduled next year in Pakistan, he said there was no legal hindrance to holding the polls before the announced schedule if the Government was willing to do so.

The Hindu, 12 October 2006

EU and India 'shaping a better tomorrow' - Jose Manuel Barroso

INDIA AND the European Union are the world's two biggest democracies. Together they make up a quarter of the world's population. They are natural allies and partners in today's global village. We have already developed a strong relationship based on our common values. While we are already working together to face global issues and challenges successfully today, we are poised to collaborate even more closely to shape a better tomorrow for all of us. This is the simple message that I hope will come out of the 7th EU-India Summit taking place in Helsinki on October 13. EU-India relations go far beyond annual Summits, important as they are. When the European Union, as the world's biggest trading bloc and the largest integrated single market economy, cooperates with the second most populous nation and the fourth largest economy (growing at one of the fastest rates) the significance of that partnership goes beyond their bilateral relations and impacts on global equations. The seeds of this kind of successful partnership are already in place...

The Hindu, 13 October 2006

Invest in infrastructure: Manmohan

Helsinki: Addressing the seventh EU-India business summit here on Thursday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the process of growth in India "is now more sustainable than ever before," and urged European firms to participate actively in the "infrastructure boom" in the country. Stressing the country's "open economy, open society and open polity," Dr. Singh said India and the European Union were natural partners and needed to deepen their relationship in all spheres. India, he said, had tried to address some concerns expressed by businessmen in the past, citing the new rule permitting 51 per cent equity in single brand retail outlets and the recent amendments to the Indian Patents Act as examples...

The Hindu, 13 October 2006

Pak accuses India of being nuclear proliferator

Islamabad, October 13 :Responding to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's remark that countries in the region proliferated nuclear technology, Pakistan on Friday accused India of being a proliferator of the sensitive technology. Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesperson Tasneem Aslam alleged it was India which started proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region, according to state-run APP news agency. India had conducted its nuclear test in 1974 much before Pakistan, she said adding the motive behind India's remark about proliferation in the region is to overcome the situation arising out of the opposition of the non-proliferation lobby to the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement. She said sanctions were imposed on several Indian companies and individuals for alleged proliferation and India will not be able to convince any other country on the allegations it was levelling against Pakistan...

Hindustan Times, 13 October 2006

India, EU decide to sign Trade and Investment Agreement

Helsinki, October 13: Giving a major push to their strategic partnership, India and the 25-nation European Union (EU) on Friday decided to sign a Trade and Investment Agreement, a comprehensive pact that will cover a vast spectrum of sectors. The India-EU Summit, attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, decided to launch negotiations on the agreement, accepting a report of the High-Level Group of businessmen set up last year. "We agreed to commence negotiations on a broad-based agreement," Singh told a joint press conference after the Summit along with Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, whose country is the current chair of the EU. Describing the development as significant, Singh said it will entail reduction of tariffs over a period of time, which will be a win-win situation for both sides.

The Hindu, 14 October 2006

India offers itself as partner of EU in Asia

Helsinki : India on Friday made a renewed pitch for a multi-polar world order based on well-defined rules and effective institutions, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stressing to European Union leaders the "strong geo-political underpinnings" between India's rising economic profile and global vision and the EU's integrated foreign and defence policies. In his opening remarks to the seventh EU-India summit here on Friday, Dr. Singh spoke of India as "a unique partner for the EU in the region extending from Gibraltar to the Malacca Straits", the two geographical extremities presumably marking the outer limits of European and Indian interests vis-à-vis the influence wielded by the United States and China...

The Hindu, 14 October 2006

India, U.K. joint air exercises in Gwalior

GWALIOR: The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Air Force (RAF) of the United Kingdom are engaged here in the first-ever joint exercises in 43 years. Pilots and senior officers of the IAF are getting acquainted with the potential of the British AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System), which can spot any air activity within 300 kms. India will receive its first AWACS by the middle of next year. Officers say that the

Russian-Israeli system will be more potent than the RAF's E3D Sentry. The IAF will receive two more later. It may be noted that Israel, succumbing to the U.S. pressure, had cancelled a deal with China to supply AWACS...

The Hindu, 16 October 2006

India to buy 80 copters from Russia

New Delhi, Oct. 16: The Indian Air Force (IAF) will buy 80 medium lift multi-role Mi-17 1V helicopters from Russia, Indo-Asian News Service reported Sunday. The news agency quoted Chief of Air Staff Marshal (ACM), S P Tyagi, as saying that the procedure of purchase is expected to be over within a few months. Russia will start delivering the helicopters in 2007 and finish it within a year, he said. Tyagi did not mention the cost of the purchase, but it could be around 30 billion rupees (662 million US dollars) depending on the configurations and on-board equipment like avionic, the news said. Mi-17 1V is an upgrade to Mi-17, a derivative of Mi-8 which has long-served in the Indian Air Force and gradually phased out...

The Hindu, 16 October 2006

India, Pak. peace rally being planned: Pranab

Darjeeling, Oct. 16 : A 'Peace Expedition' to Mount K-2, the world's second highest peak, by mountaineers of India and Pakistan is being actively considered, Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said on Sunday. The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) has already initiated the proposal to Pakistan where the mountain is located, HMI Principal, Col. J S Dhillon, said. Earlier, Mukherjee announced the institution of the Tenzing Norgay international award for mountaineering to be introduced from the next year. The award will comprise a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a citation. Mukherjee was speaking to newsmen after formally inaugurating the four-day golden jubilee celebration of the Institute which began Saturday. He is the president of HMI in his capacity as Defence Minister...

Hindustan Times, 16 October 2006

India unhappy with Sri Lanka Govt over fighting

New Delhi, October 16: India is deeply unhappy with the continuing fighting in Sri Lanka that has the potential to derail the Oct 28-29 talks between Colombo and the Tamil Tigers in Geneva. While there is no ingrained sympathy for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in New Delhi, much of the present disappointment is with the Sri Lankan government for pursuing a military offensive that arguably can never lead to an outright victory. The Indian establishment feels that while Colombo reserves the right to take steps it deems fit in response to terror attacks, its attempt to crush the LTTE militarily over the last two months was an ill advised move. In that sense, the reverses suffered by the Sri Lankan military in the island's north last week has put a dampener on Colombo's perceived intentions of seizing large tracts of the island's east as well as the Elephant Pass, a narrow isthmus linking Jaffna peninsula with the mainland, so as to talk in Geneva with an air of superiority...

Hindustan Times, 16 October 2006

Iran, Pak, India agree to appoint consultant to sort pricing

Islamabad, October 15: Iran and Pakistan have agreed with India to appoint a UK-based Singapore consultant to help sort out the vexed issue of gas pricing for the proposed trilateral pipeline. An official of Pakistan's Petroleum and Natural Resources Ministry said it had been agreed with India to appoint the UK-based consultant - Gaffney Cline - to help sort out issues relating to gas pricing between the three countries. Based on their report, he said, a meeting of the working group of the three countries would be held in Tehran before the end of this year to decide the issue. The price formula for Iranian gas still remained to be concluded after which the issue of transit fee would be decided for taking the pipeline up to India, he told the 'Dawn' newspaper...

The Hindu, 17 October 2006

Bush to push for deal in Congress session

New Delhi: The U.S. President, George W. Bush, has assured India that his administration remained committed to the nuclear agreement with India and he would try to push for Congress' approval for the deal during its lame duck session. Mr. Bush's assurance came during a 10-minute talk he had on Monday evening (Indian time) with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. An official, who was present during the conversation, said Mr. Bush sounded sincere and keen on pushing the nuclear deal through the legislative process. The two leaders also discussed the Afghanistan situation. The Prime Minister, according to the official, cautioned against the possibility of Talibanisation of the Afghan society again. Mr. Bush appeared to share Dr. Singh's concern...

The Hindu, 17 October 2006

Why Hafiz Saeed was arrested - Nirupama Subramanian

ISLAMABAD: Hafiz Saeed, founder of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba and head of the Jamaat-ud-daawa (JuD), had to be detained because his activities could have hurt Pakistan's relations with neighbouring countries, the Lahore High Court heard on Monday. The detention order that the Assistant Advocate-General of Punjab presented to the court also says JuD workers were observed collecting donations for the war victims of Palestine and Lebanon, that the organisation had "generally" increased its activities, and that this could hurt Pakistan's relations with its "neighbours." The detention order does not mention any country by name. This is the first time the Government has given reasons for the detention of Mr. Saeed, a controversial figure in India-Pakistan relations as well as internationally, for his LeT associations...

Hindustan Times, 18 October 2006

India to work for curbing conventional weapons

United Nations, October 18: India has vowed to work towards steady progress in the areas of conventional disarmament as small arms and light weapons directly affect a large mass of people in conventional conflicts. If the entire spectrum of weaponry that is the focus of disarmament and arms control measures was to be placed within a pyramid, it would have a three-tiered structure, Indian delegate Anil Basu said in a UN General Assembly committee debate on Tuesday. "Nuclear weapons, our foremost priority, will constitute the top of the pyramid, followed by chemical and biological weapons at the middle layer.

But the broadest part of the pyramid will be made up by conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons," he noted. While it is vital to address the apex of the pyramid, its base constitutes a larger, more contingent concern, affecting directly a large mass of people afflicted by conventional conflict, Basu said...

The Hindu, 18 October 2006

Foreign Secretaries to meet on November 14, 15

ISLAMABAD, October 18: The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan will meet on November 14 and 15 in New Delhi to review the third round of the composite dialogue process, the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Tuesday. Aside from reviewing the third round of the Secretary-level composite dialogue that ended in June, the Foreign Secretaries are likely to fix dates for the fourth round. Another likely issue they may take up is the setting up of the anti-terror joint institutional mechanism, which both countries agreed upon in Havana. There is anticipation in Pakistan that India will present the evidence from Mumbai allegedly implicating its Inter-Services Intelligence in the July 11 train blasts...

The Hindu, 18 October 2006

Centre denies reports of Bush threat

NEW DELHI, October 18: The Centre on Tuesday rubbished media reports which suggested that United States President George W. Bush had "threatened" Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday that India should not vote for Venezuela in the elections for non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. "When two leaders speak to each other, they do not threaten each other," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said while commenting on the news report that said Mr. Bush had issued the threat when he called up Dr. Singh on Monday evening...

The Hindu, 18 October 2006

There is a way out: UNP

COLOMBO: The main Opposition United National Party (UNP) said on Tuesday it was ready to support any legislative move by the Mahinda Rajapaksa Government in Parliament to restore status quo of north and east after the Supreme Court nullified the merger. At a news conference here, a spokesman said the UNP's understanding was the Supreme Court had only questioned the merger through a Presidential decree and it was open to the Government to move a bill on merger. "We believe there is a way out," he said. Briefing on the deliberations of the executive committee on forging consensus with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) on important issues, he said the party had unanimously agreed on the six-point agreement with the ruling party. "We have authorised our leader Ranil Wickremesinghe to conclude the agreement with the SLFP," he said adding that a common approach to the north-east problem was necessary. He avoided a direct answer on whether or not the party would join the Government and said a decision would be taken later...

The Hindu, 19 October 2006

India to sign BIPA with Ethiopia, cos investing \$ 500 mn

New Delhi, Oct 19. (PTI): India will sign an investment protection pact with Ethiopia as part of measures to increase the flow of capital as well as trade between the two countries, a senior Government official said on Wednesday. "India will soon sign a Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement with Ethiopia. We are also keen to expand the trade basket," Anup Pujari, Joint Secretary in Ministry of Finance, said at a CII seminar here. Pujari said the country was eager to enhance cooperation with the African nation in non-traditional areas such as information technology and IT-enabled services. Ethiopian trade minister Girma Biru invited Indian investments and said so far 184 Indian companies have received approval for investing in his country. Tax holidays of up to five years, exemption from import duties, Government guarantee against nationalisation, duty incentives and foreign exchange remittances are among the major benefits given to investors, he said...

The Hindu, 19 October 2006

Pakistan's intentions will be on test: Manmohan

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday said the Anti-Terrorism Institutional Mechanism would put to test Pakistan's intentions and capabilities in implementing its assurances of the past three years. "We have put Pakistan on notice that any democratic Government of India would find it difficult to continue on the present path of addressing all outstanding issues unless its Government clearly deal[s] with terrorism," he told top commanders of the armed forces at their annual combined conference. Dr. Singh said: "As terrorist networks are sustained by acts of commission and omission of states, our strategy cannot be restricted to the perpetrators of terror acts. It should also seek to modify the behaviour of the states where terrorists find a safe haven, sanctuary and material sustenance." "The fight against terrorism, "which is the biggest challenge of the times," must be comprehensive and cannot be restricted to a region, religion or organisation...

Hindustan Times, 19 October 2006

India attacks rich nations for inequities in trading system

United Nations, October 18: Lambasting the developed nations for trying to entrench imbalances and inequities in the international trading system, India has demanded that the rich reduce agriculture subsidies and allow "real" access to the products of the developing nations to their markets. Agriculture is more than trade and has vital ramifications for developing countries, India's Ambassador to the United Nations Nirupam Sen said addressing a UN committee on Tuesday. "Food security and rural livelihood are of immense economic relevance and have a socio political dimension in many developing nations," he said, warning against restrictive practices. Regretting that the developed nations have not fulfilled the understanding given when agriculture was brought into the multilateral trade negotiations that "trade distorting" subsidies would be phased out in a definite time-frame, Sen said minimising vulnerabilities of poor farmers should be the world's collective priority...

Hindustan Times, 19 October 2006

Chinese president Hu to visit India Nov 20

New Delhi, October 18 :India and China, among the world's fastest growing economies, are set to deepen their ties when Chinese President Hu Jintao comes in India on an official visit on November 20.Hu comes 20 months after Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited India in April 2005, a historic visit that saw the finalisation of guiding principles and political parameters for resolving the border row besides progress on economic and energy cooperation between the Asian giants.Hu, who took over as the leader of the Communist Party of China in 2002, will also go to Mumbai, India's financial hub, and the country's tech capital Bangalore, reliable sources said.He will discuss a range of bilateral, regional and global issues with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, including the border dispute, enhancement of trade and economic cooperation, the North Korean nuclear crisis and UN reforms...

Hindustan Times, 20 October 2006

India to be workshop of the world: Manmohan

Haridwar, October 19 : Lauding the dynamism shown by major Indian firms against global competition, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday expressed his government's desire to transform India into the 'workshop of the world', just like England once was. Acknowledging the potential of manufacturing industries towards making the country an industrial giant as well as creating millions of jobs, Singh stressed on the need to turn India into a global manufacturing hub. 'The UPA government will do whatever is necessary to realise this goal,' he said while laying the foundation stone of the world's largest two-wheeler company Hero Honda's third manufacturing unit at Haridwar on Thursday. Listing his government's economic policies that have resulted in eight per cent annual growth for the last three years, Singh said that it had been possible because of creation of an environment where creativity and enterprise could flourish...

Hindustan Times, 20 October 2006

India seeks UN focus on global migration

United Nations, October 20: India wants the United Nations to focus on promoting teamwork amongst nations to maximise the benefits of international migration while reducing its negative effects."In the context of globalisation, there is need to recognise the inevitability of international migration," Indian delegate Anil Basu said in a UN General Assembly committee debate on 'Globalisation and Interdependence' on Thursday.The increased demand for specialists in developed countries can be matched by their availability in developing countries, he noted but developed countries also need to be more receptive to enhanced market access...

Hindustan Times, 20 October 2006

India, US expanding agricultural collaboration

Washington, October 20:India and the US are expanding their agricultural science and technology collaboration under a new initiative aimed at reducing rural hunger and poverty, a senior US official said.The partnership, called the US-India Agricultural Knowledge Initiative (AKI), seeks to increase agricultural production, said Ellen Terpstra, deputy under secretary for farm and foreign agricultural services.Terpstra, who

co-chairs the AKI board of directors with Mangala Rai, secretary of India's Department of Agriculture Research and Education, spoke on October 18 at the World Food Prize Symposium in Iowa, according to an official report. During its first three years, the programme is slated to focus on improvements in food processing, marketing, biotechnology and water management in India. It also plans to help universities in India develop community farm extension services delivered through programmes based in agricultural universities, she said...

Hindustan Times, 20 October 2006

China above Pak, America on top

New Delhi, October 19: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has devised a 'Relevance for India' (RX) index that categorises countries on the basis of their political and strategic importance and their economic and commercial value to India over the next decade. The index forms the basis of its ambitious expansion plans. While it comes as no surprise that the US and UK top the index as the two most important countries in New Delhi's view, officials are puzzled why China, that is far more crucial to India in proximity and strategic importance, is ranked after Japan. 'The RX index serves as an indicator of the importance of a particular country to India from the political, economic, commercial and cultural perspective on a 1-100 scale,' a classified document says...

Hindustan Times, 20 October 2006

Army denies joint operations in Myanmar

Yoruba (Nagaland), October 19: The Indian Army on Thursday denied reports of joint operations in Myanmar to flush out camps of northeast militant groups, but was optimistic about positive reaction from the military junta towards India's sensitivities. "I am not aware of any joint operation inside Myanmar," GOC of Army's 3 corps, Lt Gen MS Dadwal told newsmen here when his attention was drawn to recent media reports that the Indian army along with Myanmar had launched joint operations to flush out militant groups camping in jungles on other side of the 1,640 km long international border. Asked about the number of camps set up by such groups in Myanmar, Lt Gen Dadwal said, "offhand, it is difficult to give the exact number of camps, because these groups frequently change their camps. Due to various factors, they sometimes close down camps at one place and shift to some other place .. but we keep them (Myanmar army) informed about the movements of militant groups."...

Hindustan Times, 23 October 2006

Pak's ISI trying to subvert armed forces, says India

New Delhi, October 23: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Monday that ISI's efforts to maintain and nourish spy rings within the Indian armed forces is a matter of "extreme concern". Mukherjee added that armed forces would conduct internal investigations to unravel the extent and impact of such rings within the forces. "It is a matter of concern that ISI is trying to infiltrate and subvert our armed forces," Mukherjee said at a function of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Monday. This was Mukherjee's first comment following the busting of two spy networks in the Capital. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police arrested two Army personnel over the weekend for allegedly trying to sell confidential information to their handlers from Pakistan. Mukherjee added that

investigations into the two cases have begun in full swing and it appears that the networks were inter-connected. The rings also linked Jammu & Kashmir, New Delhi and Kathmandu, he said...

Hindustan Times, 23 October 2006

Romania backs India on civil nuclear issue

New Delhi, October 23:Romania, a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), on Monday supported India's quest for civil nuclear cooperation with the international community and expressed willingness to establish strategic partnership in energy as well as defence sectors.The two countries also strongly emphasised the need for democratic nations to join efforts to "effectively" deal with the problem of terrorism and favoured early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) by the UN.Cooperation in nuclear and defence fields and enhancement of trade and economic ties dominated the discussions Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had with visiting Romanian President Traian Basescu here for about 90 minutes...

Hindustan Times, 23 October 2006

Army personnel, ISI agent held

NEW DELHI: An Indian Army personnel was arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi police while he was allegedly supplying sensitive defence related information to an Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) operative posted in the Pakistan High Commission. The ISI agent has been handed over to the High Commission for further action.According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Alok Kumar, Anil Kumar Dubey, posted with the Army General Insurance (AGI) Directorate here, was arrested around 7.30 p.m. on October 20 at Mahipalpur in southwest Delhi. Mohammad Farooq, the ISI agent, was also taken into custody.Documents relating to various defence-related matters and compact discs suspected to contain more information about the movement and deployment of Army troops were recovered...

The Hindu, 24 October 2006

Pranab: ISI network must be unearthed

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Monday said it was a "matter of concern" that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence was active in the country.Investigations were on into last week's arrests of two Army men for spying, and "strict action" would be taken against such personnel, he told newsmen after inaugurating a Coast Guard Commanders' conference here.Mr. Mukherjee said: "It is not a question of giving somebody [Pakistan] another opportunity. Whenever espionage takes place, strict action is taken." "The espionage rings might have started from Kashmir. We have to first unearth the network they have developed. It appears that they were networked in Delhi and Kathmandu. Other kingpins have to be found out..."According to the Delhi Police, signalman Anil Kumar Dubey was caught while handing over documents to a Pakistani Embassy staffer and havaldar clerk Ritesh Kumar was nabbed on his way to meet his handler in Kathmandu, where he had gone twice earlier. "The police have interrogated them, and they will be handed over to the Army authorities for detailed investigations and possible court martial."...

The Hindu, 24 October 2006

Musharraf: let us make LoC irrelevant

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf views his proposals on self-governance and joint management of Kashmir as the via media between the Indian and Pakistani positions, one that will make the Line of Control (LoC) "irrelevant." In an interview to Geo TV, General Musharraf said India would not accept a redrawing of borders, and Pakistan would not accept the LoC as a permanent border. "We need to work out a via media. My proposals are this via media, which means giving them self-governance with a joint-management system, on both sides of the LoC, so that the LoC becomes irrelevant." "This way neither do we need to redraw the borders, nor does the LoC become permanent," he said. He dismissed criticism of his proposals by the hardline Hurriyat faction leader Syed Ali Geelani...

The Hindu, 24 October 2006

Salmon high on the agenda -Norwegian royalty to head business delegation

OSLO: Salmon will be high on the agenda when Crown Prince Haakon and Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway arrive in India in the first week of November at the head of a 100-plus business delegation. The monarchy in Norway is completely ceremonial, but a recent meeting with the Crown Prince and Crown Princess revealed that they are excellent diplomats for their country, and at ease with promoting business, culture and commerce. Salmon, though important for the Norwegians, will not be all 'representatives of oil and gas companies, engineering firms and more will be part of the official delegation. But salmon is an important export and the Norwegians believe that high-end restaurants in a "rising India" will be major buyers of the fish.

The Hindu, 25 October 2006

Mukherjee for 'tension-free' atmosphere on borders

New Delhi, Oct. 25 (PTI): Taking over as External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee today sent out a message to Pakistan and other neighbours that "tension-free" situation should be created on the borders to enable countries of the region to live in peace. He steered clear of the controversy over the kind of proof collected by security agencies with regard to Pakistan's involvement in the July 11 Mumbai blasts, saying "certain evidence" had been gathered which will be shared with Islamabad. "We cannot alter our neighbours. As we cannot alter our neighbours, it is desirable to live with our neighbours in peace and create tension-free situation on our borders with our neighbours," Mukherjee told reporters while responding to questions on Pakistani role in terror attacks in India. Mukherjee, who has moved from the Defence Ministry, said peace and tranquility in the region as well as other parts of the world was "most important" to ensure that India succeeds in its ambition of achieving sustained high economic growth of 9-10 per cent and above...

The Hindu, 25 October 2006

We will exchange information: Pranab

NEW DELHI: The new External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday said India would exchange information with Pakistan under the joint mechanism to fight terror and await its response. On the fate of the India-U.S. nuclear accord, he told presspersons

here that the Bush administration had assured India that it would do its best to see that the deal was through. Asked about the change of his portfolio from Defence, Mr. Mukherjee said it was the Prime Minister's prerogative. The new Defence Minister A.K. Antony said he saw the assignment as a "great challenge" and would try to perform it with dedication. Congress president Sonia Gandhi said she would have to reshuffle the AICC, now that two senior leaders Ambika Soni and Oscar Fernandes had joined the Government...

The Hindu, 25 October 2006

China's dam plan will hit north-east, says Gogoi

Guwahati: Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi on Tuesday expressed concern at media reports of Beijing's plan to construct a dam on part of the Brahmaputra flowing in China and divert about 200 billion cubic metres of water to feed the Yellow River. He urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to take up the matter with the Chinese Government in order to safeguard the interests of the country, especially Assam. In a statement here, Mr. Gogoi said the Brahmaputra-Barak-Meghna river system contributed almost one-third of the total surface water resources of the country and any large-scale diversion would have serious repercussions for the northeast and the country as a whole. The State Government would set up an expert committee to study the matter...

Hindustan Times, 25 October 2006

Dependence on foreign arms vendors risky: Pranab

New Delhi, October 24: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said reliance on foreign sources for the country's defence needs is fraught with dangers and the antidote to such dependence is creating new public-private partnerships in defence procurements. Speaking at a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) function on Tuesday, Mukherjee said the efforts of the government had been to evolve procurement procedures to encourage the indigenous industry to play a larger role in servicing the needs of the armed forces. 'Every nation that relies on imported weapons and systems is vulnerable to a sudden cessation of supplies during wars. Ironically, this happens when they are most needed. India has in the past also been adversely affected by such policies of supplier nations,' he said...

The Hindu, 26 October 2006

BJP opposes military aid to Sri Lanka

Chennai, Oct. 26 (PTI): The BJP's Tamil Nadu unit today alleged that the Indian government was providing military aid to Sri Lanka and urged the Centre to stop it immediately as it would be "used only against Tamils in the island." "Sri Lanka has no enemies in its neighbourhood. Hence, the weapons given to it will be used only against Tamils in the island and fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu," State BJP president L Ganesan told reporters here. Welcoming the negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, he said "both parties had in the past used the time to make preparations for war. The Sri Lankan government had never honoured any of the previous agreements with the Tamils." "India had a responsibility in the Lankan issue, as thousands of refugees were coming from the island to Tamil Nadu. The BJP would send a team to the refugee camps to study the refugees' condition and submit a report to the party's state

leadership, he said...

The Hindu, 26 October 2006

Change of policy or time-off for tit-for-tat'

ISLAMABAD: Even tit-for-tat diplomacy needs its downtime, unless this is a policy change. The expulsion by India of a driver working at the Pakistan High Commission on charges of espionage has not yet provoked a retaliatory action by Islamabad. Officials declined to comment on whether this was a shift in the way Pakistan and India have long conducted their diplomatic ties, but said it was more likely due to the nearly weeklong Id holidays here. Less than three months ago, Pakistan declared the Indian visa counsellor here persona non grata. Within hours, India had sent the political counsellor at the Pakistan High Commission packing. India picked up the driver, Mohammed Farooq last Friday alleging he was part of an ISI spy ring trying to infiltrate the Army. A retaliation in kind would have been normal, but Pakistan left it at a statement saying the "illegal detention and manhandling" of Mr. Farooq was a violation of diplomatic norms and international conventions...

The Hindu, 26 October 2006

India, Japan to raise ties

SINGAPORE : India and Japan have evinced keen interest to tone up their engagement by enhancing the "strategic orientation" of their existing "global partnership." They have also set their sights on attaining the "full potential" of this relationship across a wide spectrum ranging from trade and economy to defence and security issues. The two sides are understood to have explored the possibilities in this regard when National Security Adviser M. K. Narayanan called on Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other leaders in Tokyo earlier this week. Mr. Narayanan, who left Tokyo on Wednesday, discussed with them the broad agenda of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's prospective visit to Japan later this year. India's Ambassador to Japan, H. K. Singh, participated in these talks...

Hindustan Times, 26 October 2006

India to buy 330 T-90S tanks from Russia

New Delhi, October 26: India has signed a fresh contract with Russia to buy 330 T-90S main battle tanks (MBTs) in complete sets of components for local assembly, a leading British defence journal has reported. Citing military-diplomatic sources, the authoritative Jane's Defence Weekly declared that the order for the additional T-90S kits would in no way impinge on the agreed scope of the license programme to construct the MBTs at the Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF) at Avadi, near Chennai. India bought 310 T-90S in 2001 for around \$800 million - 124 in completed form and the remaining 186 to be assembled at Avadi in response to Pakistan inducting the Ukrainian-built T 80 UD MBT into service 1997 onwards. The Indian Army was the first export customer for the T-90S, which had been in the Russian army service since the mid-1990s. Deliveries of the initial 124 T-90S tanks began in December 2002 and were completed within 12-14 months while another 180 MBTs have since been assembled at Avadi and the first part of the order is nearing completion. The T-90S tanks have been inducted into six armoured regiments in northern and central India...

The Hindu, 30 October 2006

Kasuri: close to pact on Siachen

Islamabad: Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said on Sunday that India and Pakistan were close to reaching an agreement to resolve the Siachen issue and suggested a "breakthrough" on this was expected next month to enable Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to visit Pakistan. He said meetings of the Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Ministers to be held in Delhi next month would hopefully achieve it. Mr. Kasuri said he would visit New Delhi next month to attend the wedding of the daughter of Panchayati Raj Minister Mani Shanker Aiyer during which he hopes to meet External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, who recently took over as the new External Affairs Minister. "As a Foreign Minister of Pakistan, I know we are very close to an agreement. I will not go into details. It depends on political will and I hope that the Prime Minister and the (new) Foreign Minister of India will show that political will," Mr. Kasuri told PTI here in an exclusive interview...

The Hindu, 30 October 2006

Pakistan Ministry opposes train service from Amritsar

Islamabad: Pakistan's Interior Ministry has opposed the launch of a train service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak located in the country's Punjab province. "The Ministry neither supports the train service between Amritsar and Nankana Sahib, nor does it favour the extension of the route of the Samjhauta Express up to Nankana Sahib, presently running between Lahore and Attari," Daily Times quoted an Interior Ministry official as saying in response to a letter sent by the Pakistan Railways Ministry. The letter sought the Interior Ministry's remarks on the proposed train service between the two cities of the divided Punjab in addition to the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib and Amritsar-Lahore bus services. The federal Cabinet, in its meeting last year, had directed the Railways Ministry to explore the possibility of launching a service between Amritsar and Nankana Sahib and submit a summary to the Prime Minister's Secretariat for approval. The Railways Ministry, after examining the Cabinet proposal, concluded that instead of launching a new service, the existing route of the Samjhauta Express should be extended...

Hindustan Times, 30 October 2006

Security alert along India-Bangladesh border

Agartala, October 30: Security was tightened Monday along India's border with Bangladesh in the northeastern state of Tripura following political instability and continuing violence in the neighbouring country ahead of general elections next year. "All the border outposts and patrol parties of the Border Security Force (BSF) have been asked to maintain high vigil along the international border," said BSF spokesperson SK Thakur. Training battalions of the BSF were also deployed to prevent infiltration from across the border. India shares over 4,000-km border with Bangladesh. Tripura has an 856-km border with Bangladesh, a majority of the area unfenced with just concrete pillars separating the two countries. Political violence in Bangladesh has hit border trade with India, besides affecting movement of people from states like Tripura to the neighbouring country...

The Hindu, 30 October 2006

Citation for Indian battalion in Lebanon

Jerusalem: The Indian contingent in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been awarded the Force Commander's Unit Citation for its commendable service during the war in southern Lebanon. Seventy-three officers and soldiers of the battalion have also been given the Force Commander's Commendation Card for their good work. The Indian battalion, 4 Sikh Regiment, on Friday celebrated its Medal Day Parade to commemorate the successful completion of its second mandate in UNIFIL with Force Commander Alain Pellegrini commending its role during the war. The battalion under the command of Colonel Subhash Panwar, who received the UN medals from the Force Commander, is occupying a number of sensitive posts on the Lebanon-Israel border...

The Hindu, 31 October 2006

Interest in Hindi growing in China- Pallavi Aiyar

IT IS a crisp autumn morning at Peking University, China's most prestigious centre for higher education. Earnest, bespectacled, twenty-somethings scurry around the campus on their way to class, thoughts focussed on future careers. In one unassuming building near the sprawling campus' east gate, a class is in progress. The dozen seated students sip tea from their flasks and peer into their textbooks with furrowed brows. The teacher stands up front writing out sentences on the blackboard. It is a scene that is mirrored in dozens of other classrooms across the campus with one startling difference. The teacher is not writing in the pictographic characters used in Mandarin Chinese but in the Devanagari script of Hindi. With Sino-Indian trade poised to touch the \$20 billion mark by the end of this year, interest in learning Hindi and other Indian languages is burgeoning in the Chinese capital...

The Hindu, 31 October 2006

India wants joint naval exercises to be multilateral

On board INS Mysore, Oct 31. (PTI): The Indian Navy has said that it plans to expand its bilateral joint exercises into multilateral ones. The Indo-US joint exercise Malabar 06, which is underway off the Goa coast, has participation of Royal Canadian Navy. "As you can see, it (Malabar 06) is not a bilateral exercise... We intend to graduate into multinational exercise canvass, which would generate confidence between participating nations," Rear Admiral Anup Singh, chief of the Western Command Fleet, told reporters on board INS Mysore on Monday. "Such exercises are beneficial to participating navies as it provides access to higher technology. For US Navy, the exercises would enable them to learn to operate in warm environment," Singh stated. "We hope some day Pakistan will be able to join us (India) in some exercise," Singh said adding, "We always need to built confidence with neighbours sharing common waters." The ninth edition of Malabar, began on October 24, has entered its second phase on Monday. The third and last phase of the joint exercise, consisting of combat operation, will culminate on November 25...

Hindustan Times, 31 October 2006

Kashmir, Siachen can be resolved: Pakistan

Islamabad, October 30:Pakistan on Monday expressed optimism that issue of Kashmir and Siachen would be resolved."We believe that issues like Jammu and Kashmir and Siachen are resolvable," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tasnim Aslam told a press briefing in Islamabad.Aslam's remarks comes a day after the Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri said Pakistan and India were close to an agreement on the Siachen dispute.However, she refused to offer any comment when asked if the understanding reached between the two South Asian neighbours as a result of a compromise by the either side."The foreign minister feels optimistic that given the political will, the issue can be resolved," she added.The two countries, which resumed their peace talks in February 2004 after years of tensions, have so far failed to budge an inch from their respective positions on the 71-kilometers long glacier, which Pakistan claims, was occupied by India in 1984 in violation of the Karachi agreement of 1948...

Hindustan Times, 31 October 2006

Avoid knee-jerk reaction to terror: Pak to India

Islamabad, October 30:Asking India to avoid "knee-jerk" reactions to terror attacks, Pakistan has said it is interested in improving ties but made it clear that "two-way trust" has to be developed. Citing National Security Advisor MK Narayanan's comments on the evidence of Pakistan's involvement in the blasts, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said Pakistan leadership avoided knee-jerk reactions like blaming India whenever a violent incident takes place in Pakistan."I have read with interest the statement of Narayanan on the quality of evidence... We should avoid knee-jerk reactions.In Pakistan by and large when an incident happens ...We try and not voice (it) and the president, the prime minister and I avoid making (such) statements."We get lot of information through our own sources. But we do not go public until we feel that we have clinching evidence. Otherwise it makes the case worse," he said.He said in the case of Mumbai blasts Pakistan had "unreservedly and very seriously" condemned it but the Indian accusations have damaged the peace process...