

The Hindu, 1 September 2004

**India's concerns conveyed to Pakistan**  
(B.Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 31 . India's High Commissioner in Pakistan, Shiv Shankar Menon, today called on the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar, and exchanged views on the dialogue scheduled between the two Foreign Ministers in New Delhi on September 5 and 6. Pakistan is peeved over what it believes are "hostile statements" by Indian leaders days before the Foreign Ministers are to meet to take stock of the outcome of the first round of the composite dialogue. India believes that Pakistan's "obsession" with Kashmir to the exclusion of all other issues for the normalisation of ties between the two sides does not augur well. This was evident from the candid comments made by the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, in New Delhi today. It is in this context that the meeting between Mr. Menon and the Mr. Khokhar assumes significance. According to Pakistan Foreign Office officials, Mr. Khokhar did raise the issue of "hostile statements" by Indian leaders. Mr. Menon is believed to have conveyed to him India's concerns and emphasised the need for movement on various fronts without getting stuck on Kashmir.

The Hindu, 2 September 2004

**Attack on rally: India offers Bangladesh help in investigation** (Haroon Habib)

DHAKA, SEPT. 1. India has offered assistance to Bangladesh in investigating the August 21 grenade attack on an Opposition rally while the United States renewed its offer to assist the country in the crucial probe. In a letter to the Foreign Minister, Morshed Khan, on August 27, the Indian External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, informed his Bangladesh counterpart that "the Government of India stands ready to assist the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh" in any inquiry into the attack. Expressing profound shock and sorrow at the grenade attack, Mr. Singh said: "Such mindless violence against innocent people threatens the constitutional principles and practices we have committed to uphold."

The Hindu, 2 September 2004

**Japan regrets Agni test** (P.S.Suryanarayana)

SINGAPORE, SEPT. 1. Japan has expressed "regret" over India's latest Agni-II test and called upon New Delhi to "sincerely respond to the efforts of the international community to promote disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles." In a statement on Tuesday, the Japanese Foreign Ministry regretted that "India conducted a ballistic missile test on 29 August 2004, despite the continuous efforts of the international community to promote disarmament and non-proliferation." While Tokyo's reaction is similar to its comment on July 5, following India's "missile test" on the previous day, the latest statement acquires significance in the context of the talks that the Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, held with Indian leaders in New Delhi last month. India and Japan had then agreed, among other things, to support each other's candidature for the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

Indian Express, 2 September 2004

**Delhi gets alert: MEA offers help on bodies**  
(Jyoti Malhotra)

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 1: The palpable relief over the release of the Indian hostages in Iraq mixed with the anguish over the killing of Nepalese hostages as South Block expressed grave concern over the mob rioting in Kathmandu valley. As Kathmandu's angry mobs threatened a religious riot over the brutal murder of its citizens at the hands of Iraqi kidnapers, New Delhi monitored the tense situation on a continuous basis. A message from the Nepalese capital early in the day to the Foreign Office here warned senior officials about the snowballing crisis. After a hurriedly called press conference in South Block this afternoon, where External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh and Minister of State E Ahamed expressed relief at the release of the Indian hostages in Baghdad, Singh also took time to express shock and concern over the killing of the 12 Nepalese citizens barely 24 hours ago. Singh said he had spoken to Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba today to convey the anguish and deep sympathy felt by India. He said that New Delhi had also "offered to provide any assistance that may be required by Nepal to bring back the bodies of the victims. Considering New Delhi and Kathmandu otherwise maintain almost daily contact and at

the highest levels, analysts here expressed concern that neither the Deuba government nor King Gyanendra had thought it fit to formally bring this to the notice of India, especially as they knew New Delhi was involved in backroom negotiations with a cross-section of Iraqis to have its own hostages released.

Indian Express, 2 September 2004

**India, Australia discuss defence cooperation**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 1: Talks to enhance Indo-Australian Defence cooperation through training and joint exercises were held today between Australian Defence chief General Peter Cosgrove and the Indian service chiefs, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Defence Secretary Ajai Vikram Singh. South Block sources told The Indian Express that Gen Cosgrove discussed furthering defence cooperation between India and Australia with Air Force chief S Krishnaswamy, Army chief General N.C. Vij and Naval chief Admiral Arun Prakash.

The Telegraph, 2 September 2004

**Pak warms to Somnath plan** (Kay Benedict)  
New Delhi, Sept. 1: A delegation from Pakistan has responded positively to a suggestion by Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee to form a joint parliamentary friendship forum that could help speed up the peace process between the neighbours. Sources said as people's representatives, the members of the proposed panel could hold talks in a tension-free environment without the constraints of realpolitik and exert pressure on the Indian and Pakistani governments to end hostilities. Chatterjee broached the subject with the delegation that called on him on Monday. The sources said the team, which included the former Speaker of the National Assembly, Gohar Ayub Khan, was receptive to the proposal. Khan, they added, told Chatterjee it was a valuable suggestion and the Indian leader could nominate a team to communicate with the National Assembly Speaker to set up the forum or, alternatively, a request could originate from the Pakistan House. Chatterjee, who stressed the need for dialogue, said the forum could facilitate frequent interaction among parliamentarians of both countries and strengthen people-to-people contact. He told the 19-member delegation that the Indian government was vigorously pursuing the peace process to normalise relations but talks at

various levels would go a long way in reflecting the mood of the people. The Speaker appreciated the keen desire of the visiting team to learn how Parliament functions.

The Pioneer, 3 September 2004

**CCS meet discusses Nepal & Indo-Pak talks**

New Delhi. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Cabinet colleagues comprising the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on Thursday reviewed the situation in Nepal and discussed the agenda for the forthcoming talks between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan. Dr Singh also talked to Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Wednesday and expressed grief for the killing of 12 Nepalese in Iraq and extended all possible help. External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh also talked to the Nepalese Prime Minister who was expected to visit Delhi early next week, sources said on Thursday. The CCS, which met here for over two hours under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, reviewed the situation in the neighbouring country where crowds had attacked places of worship in the aftermath of the killing of 12 Nepalese hostages by Iraqi militant groups. The CCS, which was also attended by the Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Home Minister Shivraj Patil, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh, and senior Government officials also took stock of the situation created by forced economic blockade by the Maoists in the Himalayan Kingdom, officials sources said. The forthcoming talks between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan also figured prominently in the CCS with the political leadership reviewing the entire situation in the context of Indo-Pak talks on Sunday and Monday next and approved the brief for negotiations regarding the crucial parleys, the sources said.

The Hindu, 3 September 2004

**Let's make LoC a bridge, says India** (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 2. India favours the conversion of the "hard" Line of Control into a "soft" line with people on both sides of the LoC being able to cross it with ease, highly-placed official sources said today. "We want to make it [the LoC] a bridge between the two sides," the sources said pointing out that the objective behind India's October 22, 2003 proposal for a bus service between Srinagar

and Muzaffarabad was precisely this. Asked about the problems related to starting the bus service, the sources said that India wanted to make it easier for the divided families on either side of the LoC to meet each other. New Delhi did not, however, favour turning the LoC into an international border. On Pakistan's insistence that travel documents, other than passports, be used by travellers for the bus service, it was clarified that the "local documents" that Pakistan spoke of applied not just to Kashmir, but were issued after Partition in Punjab and Sindh/Gujarat areas as well. India, it appears, looked at the issue as a package and would not simply agree to the use of "local documents" in Kashmir and not at other border crossings between India and Pakistan.

The Hindu, 3 September 2004

**'KGL paid abductors half a million dollars'** (Atul Aneja)

MANAMA, SEPT. 2. The Kuwaiti transport company whose seven kidnapped employees, including three Indians, were freed in Baghdad on Wednesday paid over \$500,000 for their release. The chief executive officer of the Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company, Saeed Dashti, told reporters today that "we paid half a million dollars in order to release the hostages and in the past we had paid other sums." KGL sources told The Hindu that the company had in the past made payments for "maintaining" its employees in captivity. "We had paid for everything including the food that the hostages were having," they said. Mr. Dashti said that the kidnappers initially demanded about \$6 million as well as the release of prisoners held in the United States military prison in Guantanamo. Besides, they had sought compensation for the victims of the U.S. attacks in Falluja, 50 km from Baghdad. The KGL executive, however, acknowledged that negotiations with tribal and religious leaders and parties close to the company had resulted in the kidnappers scaling down their demands.

The Hindu, 4 September 2004

**India, Indonesia naval patrol enhanced**

CHENNAI, SEPT. 3. The fourth India-Indonesia Joint Co-ordination Patrol (INDINDO CORPAT) started from September 1, for which the inaugural ceremony was held in Sebang, Indonesia. The purpose of the co-

ordinated patrol is to enhance mutual understanding and inter-operability between the naval units of both countries and jointly to prevent smuggling, piracy, drug trafficking and illegal fishing. During the month long patrol, the naval ships of both countries will patrol in their respective areas south of Indira Point in the Six Degrees Channel. Indigenously built Fast Attack Craft, INS Tarmugli commanded by Lt.Cdr Vijay Shah and INS Tarasa commanded by Lt.Cdr Venkatesh visited Sebang for the opening ceremony of INDINDCO CORPAT -04/02. Captain G.M. Gopakumar, Commanding Officer, INS Utkrosh was the senior officer who represented the Indian Navy, according to a press release.

The Hindu, 4 September 2004

**Musharraf, Aziz for progress on 'all issues'**

(B.Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 3. On the eve of the talks on the composite dialogue at the level of the Foreign Ministers, Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and the Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, have reiterated that progress on all issues including, Jammu and Kashmir, was "essential." At a review meeting with senior Foreign Ministry functionaries, hours before they flew for New Delhi, the two leaders said that Pakistan was seriously committed to promoting peace and stability in South Asia, which was essential for the development and prosperity of the people of the region. Implied in the remarks is Islamabad's position that the composite dialogue cannot progress without movement on Kashmir. Gen. Musharraf wants "simultaneous progress" on Kashmir and on the confidence-building measures (CBMs). He wants India to provide "comfort" for the Kashmiris by addressing their perceived grievances on human rights violations. Both leaders were given an in-depth briefing by the Foreign Minister, Khurshid M. Kasuri, and the Foreign Secretary, Riaz H. Khokhar. The official statement on the review appears to have deliberately been kept to the bare minimum to ensure that the coming talks are not affected. Gen. Musharraf is reported to have told the team leaving for Delhi to "engage" Indians and carry forward the process.

The Pioneer, 4 September 2004

**SAARC summit in Dhaka from Jan 9 (AFP)**

Dhaka. The next summit of the leaders of seven South Asian countries including India and Pakistan will be held in the Bangladeshi Capital, Dhaka from January 9-11, officials said on Friday. The agenda for the 13th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be finalised at a meeting of foreign secretaries from January 5-6, said Zahirul Haque, External Publicity Director of the Bangladeshi Foreign Ministry. Saarc, which was founded in 1985 in Dhaka, with groups from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The bloc represents a fifth of the world's population and nearly a half of its poor, but saarc has few regional achievements to show for itself owing to the nearly constant friction between its two largest members. The last saarc summit which took place in Pakistan in January 2004 was eclipsed by a landmark meeting between Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and India's then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who agreed to restart bilateral peace talks. The process initiated at the summit will culminate Sunday in New Delhi in the first talks in three years between the Pakistani and Indian foreign ministers. The summit in Islamabad was delayed by a year as Pakistan and India seemed on the verge of war.

The Hindu, 5 September 2004

**Better for Indians in Iraq to come back: Ahamed**

KOZHIKODE, SEPT. 4. The Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, today appealed to Indians in Iraq to return home and not to be deluded by any false sense of security because of the release of the three Indian truck drivers who were held hostage in Iraq. Speaking to mediapersons at the League House here, the Minister said the Indian Embassies had been instructed to facilitate the return of Indians from Iraq. There were nearly 5,000 Indians still in that country. "It is better for them to return home. But we cannot force them to come back. The Government has also clearly advised travellers out of the country not to go Iraq," Mr. Ahmed said. Mr. Ahamed said the hostage crisis should not be allowed to happen again though its resolution was a matter of pride for the nation. He thanked "our Ambassadors in Kuwait and Iraq and our brilliant diplomats in the Ministry of External Affairs" who helped the crisis management

committee led by him to get the Indian hostages released from their Iraqi abductors. He was also thankful to all those who had given him a free hand in and outside Parliament to handle the issue. The hostage crisis also brought into sharp focus the tremendous amount of goodwill that the nation enjoyed in the Arab world. Most of these countries had supported Indian efforts to get the hostages freed.

The Hindu, 5 September 2004

**China reaffirms friendship with India**  
(P.S.Suryanarayana)

SINGAPORE, SEPT. 4. The Chinese Vice-President, Zeng Qinghong, today emphasised his country's policy of developing friendly ties with India. In an interaction with a group of Indian politicians, on the sidelines of the ongoing International Conference of Asian Political parties in Beijing, Mr. Zeng pointed out that the India-China "friendship" had, despite some "minor" setbacks, spanned over the millennia. The Chinese leader's upbeat assessment of the current political mood on the bilateral front was summed up by Sitaram Yechury, member, Polit Bureau, Communist Party of India (Marxist). He said, over the phone from Beijing, that Mr. Zeng drew attention to how much China attached "importance" to strengthening ties with India. The Chinese leader was also quoted as indicating categorically that Beijing was "committed to work in this direction." The Indian political leaders, who called on Mr. Zeng, included the leader of the Congress delegation, Saifuddin Soz, and the chief representative of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Sushil Kumar Modi, besides Mr. Yechury and others.

The Hindu, 5 September 2004

**Manmohan to meet Musharraf**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today confirmed that he would meet the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, in New York later this month on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session. Asked at his press conference about the likely agenda for the meeting, Dr. Singh said: "I will be meeting him for the first time. It will be an exercise in mutual comprehension." On relations with Pakistan, he said the Government was committed to the peace process and carrying

forward the dialogue process. During the 100 days in office, it had already concluded the first round of the composite dialogue. "Our approach to the talks would be based on realism and the belief that the people of South Asia are bound together by a shared destiny. It is not in my nature to promise a false dawn but I do believe in the ancient saying that 'a road is made by walking step by step.'" On Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Singh said: "We are not afraid of discussing the J&K issue. We are committed to having a dialogue with all groups, whether in J&K or the north-east, provided they shun violence. I am confident that the Hurriyat Conference will also take part in the dialogue and benefit from the process."

The Hindu, 6 September 2004

**India, Pakistan differ on cross-border terrorism**  
(Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 5. India and Pakistan have agreed on incremental steps to take the dialogue process forward even as they differed on the issues of cross-border terrorism and Jammu and Kashmir at a meeting between their Foreign Ministers, Natwar Singh and Khurshid Mahmud, Kasuri, at Hyderabad House here today. Mr. Singh and Mr. Kasuri met for nearly 70 minutes without aides and for another 80 minutes with their delegations to review the progress made in the first round of the eight-subject composite dialogue. The two countries have reportedly agreed to hold technical talks on the Khokrapar-Munabao rail link, continue discussions on nuclear confidence-building measures, hold a dialogue between the respective Coast Guard and talk further on narcotics control and trade-related issues. Just 30 minutes of discussions have been scheduled for Monday, indicating that officials of the two countries were working on the sidelines to hammer out an agreement. "I have come with a positive frame of mind," Mr. Kasuri told The Hindu before the talks. Pakistan was not being "unifocal" (a term used by India on Saturday) by repeatedly bringing attention to the Kashmir issue, he added. Pakistan, he said, wanted peace in South Asia. According to Mr. Kasuri, both countries had to talk on all issues and they could not change their minds on this matter. Pakistan, he said, believed that having good relations with India was in its own interest. On his part, Mr. Singh said he shared the sentiments expressed by Mr. Kasuri. "We will carry the dialogue process

forward," he said. India was committed to having good neighbourly, friendly and cordial relations with Pakistan.

The Hindu, 6 September 2004

**India's security concerns not addressed, Advani tells Kasuri** (Neena Vyas)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 5. The Leader of the Opposition, L.K. Advani, met the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, this evening to discuss the ongoing peace dialogue between India and Pakistan. It is learnt that the discussion was quite candid with Mr. Advani making it known that the Bharatiya Janata Party did not feel that Pakistan had adequately addressed India's security concerns. It was pointed out by him that the BJP considered the January 6 joint statement between the two countries issued in Islamabad a "very good high point" and it was expected that Pakistan would act on its assurance given in that statement not to permit any territory under its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. Mr. Advani said that while Pakistan had been taking action against the elements supporting the Al-Qaeda, similar action was lacking when it came to supporters of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and other groups engaged in acts of terrorism in Kashmir and other parts of India. It is understood that Mr. Kasuri assured Mr. Advani that there was no let-up in Pakistan's efforts to curb terrorism of all kinds.

Indian Express, 6 September 2004

**Turban: PM effort no help, France gets ban** (Ritu Sarin)

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 5: Even as National Security Advisor J.N. Dixit said he got a "positive response" from his French counterpart on the contentious issue of the Sikh children being prohibited from wearing turbans in public schools in France, officials in the National Minority Commission informed that the ban has already come into effect from September 1. It was Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who said during his visit to Amritsar that he had rushed Dixit to Paris and that he expected the issue to be "resolved soon". Dixit told The Indian Express that along with other issues, he had taken up the subject of the ban on children wearing turbans in school with Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, the diplomatic advisor to President Jacques Chirac. "I found him (the diplomatic advisor) to be very

responsible during the discussions. He said he had taken note of the Indian request and that they would be responsive to the sensitivities of the Sikhs," Dixit recalled. He said that the Prime Minister had asked him to raise the issue of the ban in France during his August 21-25 visit after a delegation of NRI Sikhs had met Manmohan Singh and asked for his urgent intervention. Despite such assurances from Singh and now from Dixit, Chairman of the National Minorities Commission Tarlochan Singh said they had no word of a turnaround from the French Government. The decision of the Prime Minister to rush Dixit as his special emissary to Paris to find an answer to the tangle was seen as a last-ditch effort of the Indian Government. Dixit, of course, clarified that the issue was only one of the subjects he raised with Maurice Gourdault-Montagne.

The Telegraph, 6 September 2004

**Nepal spanner in extradition** (Aloke Tikku)

New Delhi, Sept. 5: Nepal is likely to agree to a clause in the proposed treaty with India to extradite nationals of other countries but has stood its ground over not allowing Nepalis wanted for crimes in India to be extradited. Delhi and Kathmandu held talks late last month in an unsuccessful attempt to finalise the draft extradition treaty in time for Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to sign the treaty on his India visit next week. Deuba begins his visit on Wednesday but it is not clear if he will stay till Sunday as originally planned after the murder of 12 Nepalis hostages in Iraq sparked off protests back home. The two countries have been negotiating a new extradition treaty to replace the 1953 treaty that is restrictive and does not cover many crimes. That only one person has been extradited to India in the last 50 years indicates the ineffectiveness of the treaty. India sought to have extradition of each other's national and third-country nationals included in the treaty when talks began more than a year ago to expand the list of offences for which a criminal can be extradited. The existing provisions only notify 17 conventional crimes including murder, rape and arson as extraditable offences. In course of last month's talks, the two sides "broadly agreed" to include extradition of third country nationals on the lines of the model extradition treaty drafted by the UN. But the two sides have not got around to finalising the draft

because of Delhi's insistence that the new treaty cover Nepalis who flee to the Himalayan kingdom after crimes in India. Nepal has argued that accepting this demand would compromise its sovereignty. But India has said Kathmandu should be practical instead of taking an ideological stance.

The Hindu, 7 September 2004

**Modest 'progress' in talks: Natwar** (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6. Islamabad is "not imposing preconditions" that movement on Jammu and Kashmir is a must for pressing ahead with the composite dialogue on a range of subjects with India, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, said here today. At a joint press interaction with his counterpart, Natwar Singh, Mr. Kasuri, however, said that in order to put bilateral relations on an even keel, the Kashmir issue had to be tackled because once India and Pakistan started cooperating "the sky was the limit". If Mr. Kasuri spoke frankly on Kashmir, so did Mr. Singh on cross-border terrorism and infiltration. Admitting that only a "modest progress" had been made in the talks, Mr. Singh said that the Petroleum Ministers of the two countries would discuss the issue of an oil/gas pipeline running through Pakistan to India. A joint survey would be conducted of the boundary pillars in the horizontal segment of the international boundary in the Sir Creek area. Also, experts would hold meetings on both conventional and nuclear confidence-building measures. It was agreed to run a special day bus service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib and other religious places in Lahore on special occasions, Mr. Singh said. Technical talks on the Khokrapar-Munabao rail link would be held in October-November. As part of the composite dialogue, the Foreign Secretaries would meet again in December and Mr. Singh announced that he had accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan. No agreement appears to have been reached on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, with the two sides agreeing to discuss it further at the level of officials. The travel documents to be used for the service seems to be a sticking point.

The Hindu, 7 September 2004

**Khursheed for African Union meet**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 6. Senior Congress leader Salman Khursheed left here today to represent the country at a meeting of the African Union being held in Burkina Faso from September 7 to 9. Mr. Khursheed, a former Minister of State for External Affairs, will hold discussions with leaders of various African nations and lobby for a seat for India in the United Nations Economic and Social Council, sources in the party said.

The Telegraph, 7 September 2004

**Congo conflict draws in Indian air warriors** (Sujjan Dutta)

New Delhi, Sept. 6: More troops from India are being sucked into the vortex of a fullscale war in Congo, the African nation where UN forces have been transformed from peacekeepers to third party military interventionists. A special support services contingent of the Indian Air Force will be flown to the African nation this week. The support services contingent will be in addition to contingents of 243 air warriors from the air force and about a 100-strong team from 9 Para, an army special forces unit, that were deployed in Congo in July. The support services team will be in Congo to build helipads. Earlier, the IAF had sent 5 Mi-17 transport and four Mi-25 attack helicopters in response to a fervent UN appeal because the world body could not find anyone else from among its member states who would be able to fulfil its operational requirements. Last month, the UN extended the mandate for MONUC, the UN mission in Congo and secretary-general Kofi Annan urged for greater contributions in cash and kind. The Indian military, from its earlier deployments in Congo — the 9 Para team replaced another army team from Garhwal Rifles — had concluded that the size of the UN force in Congo was too small given the threat perception. This meant that Indian troops and other troops in the UN blue-helmeted force were at great risk from the warring Hema and Lendu tribal militia and rebel troops from President Kabila's army. India has made a case to send larger, reinforced armed contingents to the UN military missions because of increasing attacks from warring parties.

The Hindu, 8 September 2004

**Free visas for Pakistani journalists** (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7. It took an unorthodox setting to produce unusual "results". The Indian and Pakistan Foreign Ministers, Natwar Singh and Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, were subjected to a barrage of complaints about hurdles in the path of journalists crossing borders to perform their duties. A Pakistani journalist, Imtiaz Alam, who has promoted a group called the South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA), was in his elements — lambasting the Indian and Pakistani establishments for keeping a tight control on the media. While both Mr. Singh and Mr. Kasuri had previously "agreed" not to say anything in public to a large gathering of journalists and a sprinkling of politicians, Mr. Singh, in response to the long litany of complaints, announced that "free visas" would be issued to Pakistani journalists by India. As Mr. Alam was speaking, the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, who was also present, whispered something to Mr. Singh. As soon as Mr. Alam finished, Mr. Singh made the announcement of "free visas". "Mr. Dixit and I will persuade the Home Minister [Shivraj Patil] to go along with us," Mr. Singh said, indicating that the matter would also be placed before the Cabinet Committee on Security. "There should be no problem in allowing Pakistani journalists to move freely," he said and asked Mr. Alam, "Aap kahan jana chahte hain?" (Where do you want to go?) Mr. Kasuri now chipped in. Mr. Kasuri said he was the one who had taken up the case of SAFMA to be linked with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) — in fact, he was regarded as an anti-establishment figure in Pakistan.

The Hindu, 8 September 2004

**Kashmir the real issue: Shaukat Aziz** (B.Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 7. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, has asserted that the real issue between Pakistan and India was Jammu and Kashmir, and both should get into the next phase of "some timelines" in the dialogue. In an interview to the Pakistan English daily Dawn, the new Prime Minister reiterated that Pakistan favoured a durable solution that reflected the aspirations and wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The comments of Mr. Aziz more or less reflect

the sentiments expressed by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, during his meeting with the External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, in July on the need for a "reasonable timeframe" for the resolution of Kashmir problem. Asked whether he was satisfied with the current pace of peace talks with India, Mr. Aziz said in a veiled reference to Kashmir: "Well, I think we need to get now into the next phase where we get into some timelines." Expressing satisfaction with the symbolic gestures from both sides, particularly the increase in people-to-people contact, he said: "We also feel we need to have substantive talks on Jammu and Kashmir so that this core issue heads towards resolution. I think other peripheral issues will take their own course."

The Hindu, 8 September 2004

**India, Nepal ties to be reviewed**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 7. The Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, will pay a working visit to India from tomorrow to September 12 and hold talks with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. He will call on the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the External Affairs Ministry said. Senior Cabinet members representing the multi-party Government will accompany him. He will also meet the United Progressive Alliance chairperson, Sonia Gandhi. "The visit would provide an opportunity to comprehensively review, at the highest level, the entire gamut of India-Nepal bilateral relations, including issues relating to trade, water resources, defence and security and border management. India and Nepal have a long history of mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields. Our relations are underpinned by a vigorous and intimate contact at the people-to-people level," the statement said. It will be Mr. Deuba's first visit to India after taking over as the head of a multiparty government in June this year. He last visited India as Prime Minister in March 2002. The visit comes at a time when Maoist elements have intensified their campaign against the Nepalese Government — including the imposition of a blockade on the capital city of Kathmandu and a shutdown of operations by Indian companies in Nepal. India is concerned at the Maoist activities and has provided military support to Kathmandu to deal with the problem.

The Hindu, 8 September 2004

**China for early resolution of border issue (UNI)**

BEIJING, SEPT. 7. China today said it hoped an early settlement of the boundary issue with India could be worked out on a "fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable" basis as this was in the interest of both countries. "India is an important neighbour of China and it is the sincere wish and stated policy of the Chinese Government to continuously deepen the long-term constructive and cooperative partnership between the two countries," the Chinese news agency, Xinhua, quoted the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, as saying. Asked for his reaction to the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh's remarks about India-China relations at his recent press conference in New Delhi, Mr. Kong said the Chinese Government attached importance to Dr. Singh's remarks.

The Hindu, 9 September 2004

**Kasuri for joint working group on gas pipeline project (Amit Baruah)**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 8. India, Iran and Pakistan should form a joint working group to discuss plans for an oil-gas pipeline running through the three countries, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, said today. In an interview to The Hindu, shortly before leaving for Lahore, Mr. Kasuri said he had made this proposal on involving Iran to India. The feedback from the Indian leadership had been positive. In a somewhat defensive mode, he said: "The argument that we are using for our public, which is not accustomed to dealing with India, is that this pipeline is in Pakistan's interest. And, we are saying it's a stand alone project — it's not a reversal of our policy — we are still interested in Kashmir." Claiming that Pakistan was conditioning its public to a different kind of relationship with India, Mr. Kasuri was hopeful that a meeting of Indian and Pakistani Petroleum Ministers on the pipeline would take place soon. But what about having the pipeline as part of a package of improved economic relations? The "best thing," Mr. Kasuri said, was to ensure that politicians learned to move around certain things when the objective was "clear." According to him, the pipeline proposal flew right in the face of Pakistan's old stand that there could be no meaningful relationship with India until the

Kashmir issue was resolved. "It was thought that this was fundamental and could not be watered down," he said, adding that a calculated departure had been made from the previous position.

The Hindu, 9 September 2004

**Fresh list of insurgent camps to be given to Dhaka (Vinay Kumar)**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 8. India will give Bangladesh a fresh list of insurgent training camps being operated there when the Home Secretary, Dharendra Singh, pays a three-day visit to Dhaka from September 15. India is also likely to seek custody of fugitive insurgent leaders, including the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) chief, Paresh Baruah, from the Khaleda Zia Government. Mr. Singh will meet his counterpart, Omar Faruque. Well-placed sources in the Home Ministry said the revised list of camps will include those serving as shelter-cum-transit points for insurgents active in the north-eastern States. These camps belong to the ULFA, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and other militant outfits active in Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura. During talks with the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) last month, the Border Security Force (BSF) had submitted a list of 195 camps run from Bangladeshi territory. The BDR denied the existence of these camps. The list is being updated for the Home Secretary's visit. The Home Secretary will be accompanied by a joint secretary from the Ministry of External Affairs. The list of fugitive leaders, whose handing over is to be demanded, includes Paresh Baruah, who is hiding in Dhaka with the connivance of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Others are his deputy Arabinda Rajkhowa and the NLFT leader, Deve Burman. Mr. Singh will also reassert the Government's demand for extradition of the imprisoned ULFA general secretary, Anup Chetia, who was arrested by the Dhaka police in 1997 and will complete his jail term by this year-end. Chetia, who was sentenced for illegal entry into Bangladesh and possession of foreign currency, is wanted for crimes committed in India.

The Hindu, 10 September 2004

**Nepal seeks more arms (Sandeep Dikshit)**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 9. The Nepalese Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, who arrived here yesterday, has started talks with Indian leaders on military assistance to tackle the Maoist violence back home. Intelligence-sharing also was stressed during the discussions. Nepal is looking for increased grant to purchase arms from India to meet the requirements of its rapidly-expanding Army. The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, called on Mr. Deuba and they exchanged views on issues of regional and international concern. Mr. Deuba then met the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, for one-on-one talks followed by delegation-level discussions covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations. The talks were preceded by the signing of agreements for cooperation in weather forecasting, culture and sports at a ceremony presided over by the two Prime Ministers. After calling on the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Mr. Deuba met the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, and the Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil. Sources say that Nepal wants upgrades of India-designed INSAS rifles and ammunition and an increase in the supply of advanced light helicopters and mine protection vehicles. Last year, India provided a grant of over Rs. 100 crores to Nepal to enable it buy Indian defence equipment. Mr. Deuba's discussions with the Home Minister focussed on increased intelligence sharing in view of the 1,600 km-long virtually open border with India and the apprehension of Maoist insurgency affecting the Indian border States.

The Hindu, 10 September 2004

**Morshed Khan's outburst against India termed 'unwise'** (Haroon Habib)

DHAKA, SEPT. 9. The Bangladesh Foreign Minister, M. Morshed Khan's tough talk on India has given rise to a wide spectrum of negative reactions among the majority of policymakers and senior leaders of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). They termed it as "most unwise and undiplomatic," the leading daily, Daily Star, reported today. The policymakers of the BNP feared that the "tactless blasting" might create a misunderstanding with India and widen the gap between the two neighbours, leading to the degeneration of relations. Quoting "sources", the paper said the Foreign Minister's speech at the inaugural session of an India-Bangladesh Dialogue of Young

Journalists was a much-talked-about subject among the BNP leaders. Most of them disapproved of such a direct attack on India, the newspaper said in a front-page item. The policymakers speculated that Mr. Khan might have been influenced by the "anti-Indian lobby within the BNP". However, some said his remarks were not unexpected given the developments and pending issues. Quoting the "aides to the foreign minister," the daily said, "He [Morshed Khan] made the statement on receiving the green light from the Government high command, otherwise he would not dare to make such comments."

The Telegraph, 10 September 2004

**Democracy drill debut with Africa** (Sujan Dutta)

New Delhi, Sept. 9: The embattled west African nation of Ivory Coast is the first country to which India will outsource democracy. The Election Commission of India will sign a memorandum of understanding with the Ivory Coast authorities tomorrow following which poll managers from India will advise the Ivorian government. Late last month, the poll panel signed an agreement with the UN electoral assistance division that is assisting elections in Iraq, Afghanistan and some 80 members of the world body. The deal with Ivory Coast is a first bilateral pact. Although commission sources said the MoU with Ivory Coast will be on "mutual cooperation", there is little, they privately admitted, that the Indian body is looking for from the African country where there have been six coups or attempted coups since 1999. India's standing in the global polity of democracies is rated highly after successive and successful parliamentary polls. Nations torn by conflict expect to legitimise their own electoral processes by associating with the Indian poll panel. The population of Ivory Coast, a former French colony, is about 17 million, a little more than that of Jammu and Kashmir, where polls were successfully concluded in 2002. The sources said the Election Commission had asked the government for "certain clearances" before signing the MoU but the agreement will still be signed tomorrow even though its requests are pending.

The Pioneer, 10 September 2004

**Indian born in Australia ruled a non-citizen (PTI)**

Sydney. In a verdict that could have a far reaching impact, Australia's highest court on Thursday ruled that a child born to two Indian asylum seekers was not a citizen of the country, making their deportation imminent. In a 5-2 majority verdict, the court dismissed the Indian family's challenge to a federal law that says the six-year-old Tania, born to Malkiat Singh and Sarabjeet, is not Australian. Tania and her family have 28 days, unless the minister for immigration intervenes and extends the family's period of stay in Australia, to leave the country. The young girl's parents, had arrived in Australia on a business tourist visa with their two-year-old son from Punjab in 1997. Once in the country, they applied for protection visas as refugees. Tania was born in Mildura in the state of Victoria in February 1998. Their applications were rejected by the immigration department and refugee review tribunal (RRT) and the decision of the RRT is still pending review in the federal court. In 2003, Malkiat Singh, sought a high court declaration that because Tania was born in Australia, the Migration Act's power to remove unlawful non-citizens did not apply to her. However, the court said that Parliament does have the power to treat someone like Tania, born in Australia, as a non-citizen. Australia is one of the few countries, where citizenship is not granted by birth. The verdict in the Singh v/s commonwealth of Australia case will have a far reaching impact on migrants born here.

The Telegraph, 11 September 2004

**Cloud on Teesta talks** (Sujan Dutta)

New Delhi, Sept. 10: The Bengal government's reservations about the sharing of Teesta waters with Bangladesh will hang heavy over secretary-level talks next week on the river that flows through north Bengal. An 11-member team, led by Union water resources secretary V.K. Duggal, is to visit Dhaka from Monday for the seventh meeting of the joint committee of experts on the sharing of the waters of the Teesta and six others — the Manu, Khowai, Gomti, Mukuri, Dharla and the Dudhkumar — in eastern and northeastern India that flow into Bangladesh. The committee has two points on its agenda: to finalise the terms of reference for a joint study on the availability of water in

the Teesta and the requirement in both India and Bangladesh; and examine Dhaka's request for an interim sharing agreement pending the results of the joint study. The study is estimated to take five years. The Bengal government's nominees are members of a joint technical group constituted under the joint committee of experts. The technical group has made visits to the site and has held two meetings so far and given its report. Details of the report are not being made public with the talks due next week. The central government is understood to have agreed "in principle" to an interim arrangement but the Bengal government has reportedly argued that there isn't enough water in the Teesta in the lean season. A decision is unlikely to be taken without the concurrence of the Bengal government. Significantly, Union water resources minister Priya Ranjan Das Munshi has been also elected from north Bengal.

The Pioneer, 11 September 2004

**South Block dismayed at Bangla FM remarks**

New Delhi. Three days after Bangladesh Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan made his nasty remarks against India, South Block moved to register a formal protest. On Friday, Bangladesh High Commissioner Hemayetuddin was summoned by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and New Delhi's "surprise and dismay" at Mr Khan's speech was conveyed to Dhaka. "The High Commissioner of Bangladesh was requested to convey to his Government that the remarks of the Foreign Minister could have a negative impact on our bilateral relations and on the spirit of goodwill and friendship that has hitherto characterised these relations," a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said on Friday. But careful not to ruffle feathers, the statement pointed out that it regards Bangladesh as a "close friend and valued partner". It was stressed that the recent high-level interactions between the neighbours had been conducted "in a friendly and cordial atmosphere" and that the two sides had reiterated their desire to take the bilateral relationship forward. "India, for its part, remains committed to this process," the statement added.

The Hindu, 11 September 2004

**India offers help to tackle Maoist violence**  
(Sandeep Dikshit)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10. India has offered wide-ranging assistance to Nepal to quell the Maoist violence in that country as it feels there cannot be a "purely military solution" to the problem. At the same time, India has made it clear that it does not agree with the tactics of achieving political objectives through violence. India will upgrade the Nepalese police force and despatch more armaments for use by the rapidly expanding Royal Nepal Army. It will also step up assistance for health, education and community development. It will develop rail links and improve road connections with Nepal as well as help set up a state-of-the-art telecom network, the Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, told newsmen at the end of the Nepal Prime Minister, Sher Bhadaur Deuba's interaction with Union Ministers and officials here today. Terming the Maoist insurgency in Nepal a "common threat to both countries," Mr. Saran said the two sides agreed to finalise an extradition treaty and a mutual legal assistance treaty on criminal matters. This would be backed by counter-insurgency training and strengthening the capability of the Nepal police to deal with the menace. In addition, India was meeting the "requirements" of the Nepalese Army and exchanging intelligence. The two sides also touched on the linkages between Nepal's Maoists and the Maoist Communist Centre of India and the People's War.

The Hindu, 11 September 2004

**'Cross-border terrorism should end'** (PTI)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10. Observing that the composite dialogue process was being pursued step-by-step, the External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh today made it clear that until cross-border terrorism was stopped, talks on the Kashmir issue cannot move forward. Talking to Star News, the Minister also brushed aside the importance being given to separatist Kashmiri leaders by the Pakistani leadership, emphasising that a duly-elected Government is in place in Jammu and Kashmir after elections which saw a voter turnout of 44 per cent. "Until cross-border terrorism is stopped, talks on Kashmir issue cannot move forward," he said. Asked about Pakistani leaders making it a point to meet Hurriyat leaders during visits as was done by Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri when he

was here, Mr. Singh said "I don't give much importance to the Hurriyat. Reality is known to all. First they (various Hurriyat factions) have to get together".

The Hindu, 11 September 2004

**Kalam to visit Tanzania, South Africa**  
(Vinay Kumar)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 10. The President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, will leave here tomorrow on a four-day tour of Tanzania and South Africa. The highlight of the tour will be his interaction with a number of heads of states and leaders at the Pan-African Parliament meeting in South Africa. Mr. Kalam will be the first non-African head of state to interact at the Pan-African Parliament. About 35 to 40 heads of states will be present. It will also be the first visit by an Indian President to South Africa. He will address the Parliaments of the two nations, official sources said. The visit is part of the country's continuing "Focus Africa" policy. It is expected to help highlight India's traditional and old links with the two countries where a large number of Indians live. The tour, beginning at Cape Town, will take him to Durban and Johannesburg. Several Memorandums of Understanding in the fields of telecommunication, information technology and health care are likely to be signed. Three South African ministers — Geraldine J Fraser-Moleketi, Ivy Matsepe-Cassuburi and Esap Pahar — who take care of public administration, human resource development, communication and Presidential office respectively — are on a visit here to finalise the agreements to be signed. The South African President, Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, visited India between October 15 and 19 last year and five major agreements were signed. These pertained to an extradition treaty, agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, cultural exchange programme, cooperation in power and hydrocarbons.

Indian Express, 12 September 2004

**India to talk water with Nepal, Bangla**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 11: This year's flood fury in eastern India has once again brought into sharp focus the country's water-sharing agreements, or the lack of them, with its neighbours. It has now been decided that there will be four meetings with Nepal in the next two months on flood-control measures,

especially on the Pancheshwar project coming up on Mahakali river. Some progress was made on implementing the project when the Nepal PM came visiting this week. After almost four years, an umbrella body at the secretary level — the Joint Commission on Water Resources — would also take up the issue. Meanwhile, an 11-member delegation would visit Bangladesh on Monday to find a solution to the vexed Teesta water-sharing issue. Though 83 per cent of the river flows through India, Bangladesh has been insisting on a 50-50 share, besides water for navigation purposes. “We are going in a positive frame of mind and hope an equitable distribution of water between the two countries can be worked out,” said M.L. Goyal, Commissioner, eastern region, Ministry of Water Resources.

The Hindu, 12 September 2004

**Militant camps issue to be raised with Dhaka** (Sushanta Talukdar)

GUWAHATI, SEPT. 11. India will raise the issue of the presence of the camps of north-east militant groups in Bangladesh during a meeting at the Home Secretary-level between the two countries scheduled for next week. The Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka, Veena Sikri, said at a press conference here today that security concern is still a very high priority for India and all other related issues will also be discussed at the meeting which is going to take place after four years. Ms. Sikri said that issues such as infiltration, the extradition of the jailed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) general secretary, Anup Chetia, to India would also be raised by the Indian delegation. The Secretary (East), in the Ministry of External Affairs, Rajiv Sikri, who also addressed the press conference said that a Joint Working Group had been constituted by India and six other Asian countries — Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, Thailand and Sri Lanka — to curb terrorism in the region. The decision to set up a Joint Working Group on counter terrorism was taken at the first summit of the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Cooperation held in Bangkok in July.

The Pioneer, 12 September 2004

**Aziz-Dixit hold covert talks**

New Delhi. The National Security Advisors of India and Pakistan reportedly met here three

days back to discuss important issues and etch out the agenda of meeting between Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and General Pervez Musharraf later this month in New York. Pakistan's National Security Advisor Tariq Aziz came to Delhi via Amritsar and held talks away from the media glare with his Indian counterpart J N Dixit, it was learnt. The two advisors, who are close to their respective leaders, took stock of the ongoing peace process and chalked out the agenda of the first ever meeting between Dr Singh and General Musharraf. The two Heads of State would be in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly and were scheduled to meet on the sidelines of the assembly session. The Dixit-Aziz meeting comes close on the heels of the Foreign Minister-level talks earlier this week between Mr K Natwar Singh and Mr Khurshid Kasuri. The two Ministers had expressed satisfaction over the progress made on composite dialogue and on finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the complex Jammu and Kashmir issue. Incidentally, Mr Aziz also shared an excellent rapport with former national security advisor Brajesh Mishra. Both the advisors played an important behind the scene role to lay the road map for the peace process after the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took the initiative in 2003 to offer a hand of friendship to Islamabad.

The Hindu, 13 September 2004

**India, Nepal to combat terrorism** (PTI)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 12. India and Nepal today expressed their determination in combating the scourge of terrorism as the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, assured Kathmandu of further strengthening their security forces to curb the Maoist insurgency. New Delhi's assurance was contained in the joint statement issued at the end of the five-day visit of the Nepalese Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba. "The Prime Ministers reiterated the determination of the two countries in combating the scourge of terrorism. They agreed to further intensify cooperation in curbing the activities of the extremists. Mr. Deuba thanked India for the "timely and substantive" support it provided in Nepal's efforts to deal with insurgency. The two Prime Ministers stressed the need for early conclusion of the Extradition Treaty and Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance on

Criminal Matters and directed the Home Secretaries to take up the matter at the meeting here next month to finalise the documents.

The Hindu, 13 September 2004

**Report inaccurate, says India** (UNI)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 12. India today termed as inaccurate a news report that it may skip the SAARC summit at Dhaka in January in view of some anti-India statements emanating from Bangladesh. "The report is grossly inaccurate and speculative," an External Affairs Ministry spokesman said, when his attention was drawn to a newspaper report. On Friday, India had lodged a strong protest with Bangladesh over certain remarks of its Foreign Minister.

The Hindu, 13 September 2004

**Kalam offers Zanzibar help in healthcare** (Vinay Kumar)

ZANZIBAR, SEPT. 12. It was the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's day out today to the nearby archipelago of Zanzibar, comprising mainly the isles of Zanzibar and Pemba, just 20 minutes by a special aircraft from Dar-es-Salaam. Arriving at the Zanzibar International Airport this afternoon, on the second day of his four-day visit to Tanzania, Mr. Kalam was in for a pleasant surprise. Traditional 21-gun salute, inspection of guard of honour apart, there were cultural troupes at the airport dancing to the rhythmic beats of their traditional music instruments. The President, escorted by his Zanzibar counterpart, Amani Abeid Karume, wended their way through the folk dancers. A cordial and informal atmosphere prevailed right through the luncheon hosted by the Zanzibar President, where Mr. Kalam's speech was distributed among the delegates and the media. The two leaders had discussions lasting for nearly an hour on a variety of issues, including the possibility of India's assistance in strengthening Zanzibar's healthcare system, education and small-scale industry. Cooperation in tourism and fisheries also came up during the talks.

The Hindu, 13 September 2004

**Pakistan will not give up Kashmir: Musharraf**

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 12. Vowing that his country would never give up Kashmir, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said he would convey his country's stand to the

Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in "unequivocal terms" at their meeting in New York later this month. "We will not give up Kashmir, we have fought wars over it. Pakistan will have to ensure the interest of the Kashmiris. I will meet Manmohan Singh [on September 22] and tell him in unequivocal terms about our stand on the issue. We will not give up Kashmir," he told a meeting of Army officers and soldiers at a "Garrison Darbar" in Quetta yesterday. However, Gen. Musharraf said there was general apprehension in the outside world that whatever was happening in Afghanistan and Kashmir was originating from Pakistan. Pakistan is also being accused of nuclear proliferation, he said, adding Pakistanis are generally considered extremists devoid of tolerance. "Wherever I go I am faced with these questions. I have been refuting their charges but they stick to their opinion about our people," he said.

Indian Express, 13 September 2004

**India moves warships to Persian Gulf for 3 weeks** (PTI)

NEW DELHI, SEPteMBER 12 In a forward deployment, India has positioned a powerful Naval flotilla, comprising guided missile destroyers, stealth corvette and submarines in strategic Persian Gulf area. A Naval spokesman said "overseas deployment" in the Persian Gulf is for the duration of three weeks and is an exercise which the Indian navy undertakes from time to time. The task force, comprising six warships, is commanded by Flag Officer Commanding Western fleet, Rear Admiral P.S. Pye. It includes two indigenous daily-class 6,700 tonne displacement guided-missile destroyer, the Indian Navy's latest acquisition, and the Russian-built stealth frigate INS Tāwar. The Naval task force includes indigenous missiles, INS Kulich and indigenous-built fleet tanker INS Aditya. The taskforce would be divided into two groups with one visiting Muscat, the Capital of Oman from September 13 to 17. The second group of the daily class destroyers, the fleet tanker Aditya, would be tested at the strategic Iranian Port of Banfer Abbas on the Makram coast from September 14 to 18. The Naval spokesman said during the three-week deployment, the warships would also make Port calls at Abu Dhabi and Port Salman in Bahrain. This was an attempt to showcase advancement made by Indian warships and its

subsystem over the years, including missiles, building torpedos, sonars, radars and helicopters. The fleet will return from the Persian Gulf in early October.

The Hindu, 14 September 2004

#### **Dixit-Aziz meetings generate hope**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13. After last Friday's meeting between the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, and his Pakistan counterpart, Tariq Aziz, in a third country, the Government hopes that the Manmohan Singh-Pervez Musharraf interaction in New York next week will produce a clutch of workable "options" on Kashmir. The two Advisers are confident of squeezing in another meeting before the principals' meet. So far, there have been three Dixit-Aziz meetings, away from the glare of media attention. According to a foreign office aide, Mr. Dixit is said to have described Mr. Aziz as the "most reasonable" Pakistan interlocutor in his three decades of contacts with Pakistan officials and diplomats. The assessment is that Mr. Aziz can deliver and has delivered. He is deemed to have the trust and confidence of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf. The two Advisers seem to have hit it off. Because of the chemistry between the two, New Delhi has chosen not to take too harsh a view of Gen. Musharraf's latest remarks in Quetta where he was reported to have said that "we will not give up Kashmir." A few telephone calls between New Delhi and Islamabad were enough to elicit the explanation that Gen. Musharraf was speaking to his audience of army commanders, the very group that is engaged in carrying out the most intense anti-terror military campaign on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The Dixit-Aziz interaction, according to knowledgeable sources, is marked by frankness. The Indian side has reiterated concern over the terrorist infrastructure remaining intact in that country.

The Hindu, 14 September 2004

#### **South Korean President to visit India**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13. The South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, will pay a State visit to India from October 4-6, it has been officially announced in both New Delhi and Seoul. It will be the first visit by a South Korean President to India in eight years — then President Kim Young-Sam had come to India in February 1996. Mr. Roh's visit comes at a time when trade between India and South

Korea has been increasing. Official sources said that trade between the two countries had touched \$4 billion in 2003-04 as against \$2.6 billion in 2002-03. A statement posted on the website of the South Korean Foreign Ministry said that the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and Mr. Roh would discuss the establishment of a comprehensive cooperative partnership based on a 30-year relationship between the two countries. "They will also participate in the signing of the RoK-India Treaty on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and the Treaty on Extradition. During the visit, President Roh also plans to visit Korean business working in India, participate in a luncheon hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and businessmen of India to exchange views on ways to further promote substantial cooperation between the two countries, and meet with Koreans living in India," the announcement said. The last high-level visit from India to Seoul was that of the then Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, in 1993. However, Yashwant Sinha and Jaswant Singh visited South Korea in their capacity as External Affairs Ministers when the previous Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition government was in power.

The Hindu, 14 September 2004

#### **U.N. should `represent a just world order': Kalam (Vinay Kumar)**

DAR ES SALAAM (TANZANIA), SEPT. 13. Away from banquets and formal engagements, the President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, had a stimulating 50-minute interaction with intellectuals here last night. And, it was his opinion on strengthening and restructuring the United Nations that got everyone talking about it. In Mr. Kalam's opinion, a world body like the U.N. should be "equitable" and "represent a just world order." There should not be any country in the U.N. with veto power. "A world body like U.N. should not be dependent upon financially on one or a group of nations for its functioning," he told a group of about 30 intellectuals in the conference room of his Royal Palm hotel. However, he was quick to point out that these were his "personal views and not of my government." The President was responding to a query by a former Tanzanian Prime Minister, Salim Ahmed Salim, on how the U.N. could be restructured and strengthened. Mr. Kalam answered a volley of questions during his free-wheeling interaction,

ranging from the menace of terrorism to the ways of shaping up Tanzania's economy, agriculture and small scale industries. He told the Indian High Commissioner, Dinesh Jain, to let the intellectuals shoot queries freely and it was left to the President to conduct the proceedings himself.

Indian Express, 14 September 2004

**India, Israel to hold joint air exercise in '05**  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 13: The defence relationship between New Delhi and Tel Aviv has deepened further with India and Israel agreeing in principle to hold joint air exercises involving US-made F-16s and Russian-built Su-30 MKI fighters. While the modalities of the first ever Indian Air Force and Israeli Air Force exercise will be decided by the executive steering group under the bilateral Defence Cooperation Group, Air Chief S. Krishnaswamy discussed the issue with his Israeli counterpart during his visit to Tel Aviv last week. The IAF chief interacted with Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz and Israel's military top brass during his week-long trip. He also flew a one-hour sortie on a twin-seater F-16 I fighter piloted by Major Jonathan from Ramon air base, south of Tel Aviv last Wednesday. Sources said both sides were keen on pushing interaction between the two air forces and were all for exchanging operational tactics with each other. The joint exercise will be slated for 2005 after IAF Sukhoi-30 MKIs have done their tour of France. Though Israel is smaller than Kerala in geographical area, its air force is one-and-a-half times more potent than the Indian Air Force. While IAF has a force level of 36.5 fighter squadrons, the Israelis have more than 30 fighter squadrons including 349 F-16s, 79 F-15s and 140 Kfir fighters. Apart from undertaking joint exercises, New Delhi is also looking at Tel Aviv for help and hardware for its indigenous AWACS project.

The Telegraph, 14 September 2004

**Delhi fires rebel salvo at Dhaka** (Dhirendra Singh)

New Delhi, Sept. 13: Days before the Indian and Bangladeshi home secretaries meet in Dhaka, Delhi issued a strong statement, accusing its neighbour of providing "logistic support" to militants and expressing concern at the country emerging as a transit point for arms routed to insurgents. Delhi has been

articulating its disappointment with Dhaka for not acknowledging insurgent camps on its soil and taking action against them, but this time it has directly linked "Bangladesh authorities" to the militants. The home ministry statement said these two would be the "priority issues" in the talks between the home secretaries beginning Thursday. Bengal home secretary Amit Kiran Deb would be part of the team, which will also include representatives from the Border Security Force and the foreign ministry. Rajiv Aggarwal, the joint secretary in the home ministry, said home secretary Dhirendra Singh will also ask his Bangladeshi counterpart about investigations into a huge cache of arms seized at Chittagong this April. India suspects the consignment was meant for insurgent groups operating in India, including Ulfa. The official added that Dhaka would be asked to detail the steps taken to ensure that it does not become a transit point for arms smugglers. The Indian delegation will also enquire about action taken on the list of 195 insurgent camps and leaders that had been submitted by the BSF earlier this year, insisting that the evidence and details given were sufficient for the authorities to proceed against the groups.

The Pioneer, 14 September 2004

**Nepal under pressure to re-think India bus service** (IANS)

Kathmandu. Nepal wants to re-think a bilateral transport pact inked in February for direct passenger bus services with India. The Indo-Nepal Friendship Bus Services agreement inked by then Indian Foreign Secretary Shashank during his Nepal visit may be jettisoned due to pressure from local transport operators, who have been opposing the project from the very beginning. The agreement, signed during the tenure of the Surya Bahadur Thapa Government, may not be honoured by the present coalition Government of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. This is despite a joint press communique by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in the wake of Deuba's five-day visit to New Delhi expressing satisfaction at the progress on the implementation of various Nepal-India economic and development cooperation projects. Both countries agreed to operate 53 buses daily through five border points, going up to Indian cities like New Delhi, Darjeeling, Benaras, Patna and Hardwar. The direct bus

service would have meant a huge slash in travel costs, greater security for those travelling by road and open windows for entrepreneurs on both sides of the border. It was to have been implemented after the signing of a protocol between the two countries. Nepalese Minister for Labour and Transport Management Raghuj Pant, who belongs to the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (UML), has vetoed signing the protocol, saying it should be reviewed. However, a section of the Nepalese media has been portraying the agreement as an attempt by India to overrun Nepal. There is a fear that the opening of direct bus services to Indian metros will enable business entrepreneurs from there to establish a monopoly in Nepal.

The Pioneer, 14 September 2004

**Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrims resent poor facilities (IANS)**

Taklakot (China). Indians on the annual pilgrimage to Mount Kailash in Tibet return with many unforgettable and happy memories. But they also have an unpleasant remembrance of the facilities provided by Chinese authorities. The 26-day yatra or pilgrimage, organised and co-ordinated by India's External Affairs Ministry and the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN), is held between March and September. About 600-odd participants, selected every year through a draw of lots among over 15,000 applicants, have to pay \$600 (Rs.27,700) to Chinese authorities for accommodation and transport arrangements for the 13 days to be spent in Tibet. Taklakot, 22 km from the Indian border, is the only major town in the Chinese part of the route to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake, considered among the holiest of pilgrimage sites by Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. Liaison officers, usually Indian officials of the rank of Under Secretary, who accompany every batch of pilgrims, are also upset. Official sources said that in recent years, the liaison officers have referred to pilgrims' complaints in their reviews. There has, however, been little improvement. The KMVN and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), a paramilitary force that guards the border with China, provide medical support to pilgrims and a doctor accompanies every batch on the trek on the Indian side. Such arrangements, however, are missing on the Chinese side, where the

high-altitude and high-risk trekking make them even more necessary. Chinese authorities could not be contacted for their comments.

The Hindu, 15 September 2004

**Implementation of foreign policy weak: Saran**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14. The "delivery system" must match the "weapon." The Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, said that while India's foreign policy (which he compared to a weapon) was good, implementation of that "policy" by the delivery system was "often very, very weak." Speaking at a function to release a book, "The 21st Century Ambassador," by India's former Ambassador to Germany, Kishan S. Rana, today, Mr. Saran said that India needed to increase its capacity to "deliver effectively." Diplomacy was no longer about keeping secrets. The world was in the information age and the source of authority today was the power to disseminate information. Admitting that a change in the mindset was quite difficult to bring about, he said that public diplomacy was becoming more important, with the "cloak and dagger bit" receding in importance. Mr. Saran said he had once taken over as India's envoy to Mauritius from Mr. Rana and that Mr. Rana had left a "handing over note" for him. This tradition of leaving a note behind for the successor was rare and most Ambassadors had to re-invent the wheel and claim that the "predecessor" had not done any work. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rana said "effective diplomacy" was not more expensive than ineffective diplomacy. An Ambassador today could be seen as a public service entrepreneur. For instance, the French Foreign Ministry's economic section and Thailand's consular services had been granted the ISO 9000 certification.

The Pioneer, 15 September 2004

**'India for strategic partnership with EU' (IANS)**

Brussels. External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh has said New Delhi is willing to deepen political dialogue with the European Union (EU). Singh said here Monday a high-level EU-India summit in October will mandate the development of a "new strategic partnership" between the two sides, reports Xinhua. Following a meeting with European Commissioner for External Relations Chris

Patten on the same day, Singh said: "The new Government attaches a lot of importance to the further deepening and strengthening of its relationship with the EU." The summit scheduled for Oct 14 in The Hague of the Netherlands will see an agreement to launch negotiations on joint action, highlighting new areas of cooperation, he said. One EU official, who declined to be named, described the Monday meeting as good and said that the Indian government had responded well to a set of proposals by the European Commission, the EU's executive body. Among the proposals was to establish dialogue before meetings at international fora such as the United Nations. During the talks, both sides also discussed other issues including developments in the EU and India's ongoing talks with Pakistan.

The Hindu, 15 September 2004

**Ahamed to visit Palestine** (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14. India today announced that the Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, would visit Palestine from September 17 to 19 to call on President Yasser Arafat and hold discussions with the Palestinian Foreign Minister, Nabeel Sha'ath. A statement of the External Affairs Ministry said this evening that Mr. Ahamed's visit reflected the Manmohan Singh Government's "continued commitment and support to the Palestinian cause, including to the relief and reconstruction efforts of the Palestinian National Authority". Talking to this correspondent from Kannur, Kerala, the Minister of State said his visit to Ramallah had been on the cards for some time. "I will also be handing over 12 Tata Sumo jeeps and Rs. 1 crore worth of medicines to the Palestinian Authority," he said.

The Hindu, 15 September 2004

**French assurance on turban issue**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 14. The issue of the ban on turbans for Sikh children studying in France was expected to be resolved soon. This was conveyed by the French Ambassador in India, Dominique Girard, to the Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab, Ashwini Kumar. Mr. Kumar, who is the president of Indo-French Parliamentary Friendship Group, had made an on the issue appeal at a dinner he hosted in honour of the president of the France-India Friendship Group of the French Senate, Pierre Fauchon. Mr. Fauchon is leading a delegation

to India that includes Xavier De Villepin. In a statement issued today, Mr. Kumar said he drew the delegation's attention to the "sensitive" issue pertaining to the French policy of prohibiting the wearing of turbans in public by members of the Sikh community. He said the move was affecting school-going Sikh children. Responding to the appeal, Mr. Girard said the French Government would soon resolve the issue "to the satisfaction of the Sikh community which is held in high esteem in France." Mr. Girard also assured Mr. Kumar that Sikh children would be able to attend classes consistent with their religious sensitivities in the spirit of liberalism and equality.

The Hindu, 15 September 2004

**Kalam in South Africa** (Vinay Kumar)

CAPE TOWN, SEPT. 14. After rounding off his four-day visit to Tanzania, the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, reached here on the second leg of his five-day visit to South Africa, the first by an Indian President. Mr. Kalam's visit assumes significance as it is taking place the same year in which South Africa is celebrating a decade of democracy and freedom after shedding the rule by a white minority that considered itself superior. The Presidential visit is expected give a fresh boost to India's "Focus Africa" policy. Official sources described visit as the one necessary to "maintain the momentum in the development of bilateral relations following the highly successful visit of the South African President, Thabo Mbeki, to India in October 2003." They expressed the hope that the visit would further enhance the existing strategic partnership between the two countries. Mr. Mbeki was elected by Parliament for a second five-year term that began in April this year after his ruling ANC romped home with a resounding victory in the general elections. The two Presidents will then have a one-on-one discussion. Mr. Kalam will visit the Robben Island where Mr. Mandela had spent several years in exile. He will address the joint session of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.

The Telegraph, 15 September 2004

**Delhi fires Bangla camp salvo at Pak**

Sept. 14: India has accused Pakistan of moving militant training camps to Bangladesh to avoid world attention even as the US urged

the three nations to cooperate in the war against terror. Border Security Force chief Ajai Raj Sharma said: "There are firm reports that ISI has set up new training centres for terrorists in Bangladesh." Most militant groups operating in Kashmir now are being trained in Bangladesh, he added. The allegation came as the US suggested that the three countries "discuss the issue (terrorism) to fight terrorism in South Asia" and a team led by home secretary Dharendra Singh readied to leave for two-day talks in Dhaka. Indications are that India, which is seeking the custody of militant leaders operating out of Bangladesh and the closure of 195 insurgent camps, does not expect a breakthrough in the joint working group discussions. US deputy assistant secretary for South Asia Torkel L. Patterson, who was in Dhaka today, expressed concern over the seizure of a large cache of arms in Chittagong this April, which India suspects was meant for militant groups operating in the country, including Ulfa. The 1975 guidelines, which bar erection of defensive structures within 150 yards of the zero line, are likely to come up for discussion. Delhi would like Dhaka to agree to fencing within the 150-yard mark in some villages and allow 31 development projects, including minor irrigation schemes, village roads and schools, near the zero line.

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

**Nepal Communists' charge against India**  
(Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15. As India and Nepal strengthen their cooperation against extremism and terrorism, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched a scathing attack against India during a recent central committee meeting of the party. In a press statement, posted on the party's website ([www.cpnm.org](http://www.cpnm.org)), the CPN(M) chairman, Prachanda, said "Indian expansionism," backed by U.S. imperialism, was directly impinging on the "people's war" launched by the Maoists in Nepal. This, the statement claimed, had been displayed by the recent arrest of several party functionaries, including Kiran, a senior leader. The Indian approach, it said, was to try and "Bhutanise" or "Sikkimise" Nepal. "The chieftains of the old state of Nepal, in a daydream of lengthening the period of [the] reactionary state, have been committing a heinous crime of mocking over [sic] the

independent existence and self-respect of the Nepalese people by kneeling down in front of Indian expansionism." The statement called on all self-respecting and patriotic Nepalese people to stand united against the "national capitulationism" of the old state, Indian expansionist intervention and the danger of "nearing" military attacks. In what was described as a new approach, the document stressed the need to guard against "national capitulation" and Indian "intervention" in the ideological, political and military fields.

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

**Indian, Japanese warships conduct joint exercises** (Sandeep Dikshit)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 15. India has opened a new chapter in defence cooperation with three of its naval ships conducting joint exercises with two Japanese naval ships off the Mumbai coast early this month. Both sides have kept the exercise under wraps. India is wary of upsetting China while Japan has a huge domestic constituency opposed to its "Self-Defence Force," adopting an aggressive posture. Senior officials of both the countries have confirmed the development. The 'Pass-Ex' or passing exercise on September 2 is seen as the first step towards developing harmony between the two naval forces before undertaking more complex manoeuvres involving all the three naval dimensions — surface, sub-surface and air. It also marks a turning point in ties with Japan that soured after the nuclear tests India conducted in 1998. The significance of the present exercise lies in the fact that India has the largest navy among all countries between the two commercial straits of Hormuz and Malacca. "This exercise is a recognition of our importance in the Indian Ocean," said a naval officer, pointing out that the Malaysian naval chief recently visited India to discuss steps to counter piracy. Soon after the September 11, 2001 attacks, a worried U.S. drafted India for patrolling in the Malacca Straits. A combined invitation for joint patrolling with Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore is now pending with the Government.

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

**'Let us now strive for freedom from poverty'** (Vinay Kumar)

CAPE TOWN, SEPT. 15. Lauding the people of South Africa for the peaceful conduct of the

third general elections and a smooth transition to the new government, the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, today said the two countries should now embark on a new mission of attaining freedom from poverty. In his address to the South African Parliament, Mr. Kalam said: "We, the people of India, are willing to walk with you — a long walk to freedom from poverty." Mr. Kalam dwelled at length on his favourite topics — economics, development, technology, business and education. He also touched upon the commonalities of the civilisational heritage of the two countries. "Now that our banners of freedom are unfurled by the sacrifice of our political leaders and people, we should contribute towards happiness and peace in the world," he said, wondering that with so many of commonalities why India and South Africa did not get much closer together earlier. Elaborating on the common values of the two nations, Mr. Kalam said Mahatma Gandhi's 'Ahimsa Dharma' was started from South Africa which he later took to India and the same soil gave birth to Nelson Mandela who stands out as a beacon light for the world. "You have a higher per capita income than India. I would like to learn more of your vision and thoughts, as it will enrich us," he said. Describing the recently launched India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Forum among the three nations connecting Asia, South America and Africa as a "valuable tool to further shape our friendship for development of our nations," he said the India-South Africa partnership was crucial to the IBSA as it was also nearer to India geographically.

The Hindu, 16 September 2004

**Natwar visit gives thrust to Euro-Indian dialogue** (Batak Gathani)

BRUSSELS, SEPT. 15. The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, today concluded his visit to the European Commission here. He had a dinner with Zavier Solana, High Representative of the European Council and the European Union's pan-European Foreign and Defence policy co-coordinator. Mr. Singh's visit has aroused wider expectations on current political, strategic and economic relationship between India and the European Union. The Euro-Indian dialogue will receive special importance at the proposed E.U.-India Summit at The Hague in Holland on October 14. The summit will be hosted by Holland,

which is holding the six-monthly rotating Presidency of the European Union. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, will attend the summit. Mr. Natwar Singh's two-day visit here is seen "paving the way" for successful outcome of the summit at which new parameters of the India-E.U. "Strategic Dialogue" will be defined and agreed upon. The E. U. is India's second largest trading and investment partner after the United States. Mr. Natwar Singh called on Chris Patten, Commissioner (Minister) for External Relations. Mr. Patten highlighted the European Union's ambition to put their relations with India at a "higher strategic level" and stated that the European Commission was pleased with the "very positive and constructive" Indian response to the European Commission's communication entitled "An E.U.-India Strategic Partnership." Mr. Patten referred to the "huge scope" for further development of trade and investment between India and the European Union. The Indian observers note that current trade and investment flows have substantially increased and trade could cross the Euro 30 billion mark, accounting for nearly 30 per cent of India's imports and exports.

Indian Express, 16 September 2004

**PM trip: Indo-UK eye economy pact** (Pranab Dhal Samantha)

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 15: India and the United Kingdom are pushing through last-minute negotiations to hammer out a joint declaration during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's stopover at London on Monday on his way to the UN General Assembly session at New York. The declaration will focus on firming up a mechanism for financial dialogue between the two countries. Singh's main thrust on his trip to the UK and US will be on economic issues. His close associate and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who will accompany him, is slated to interact with British CEOs and hold talks with New York Stock Exchange officials. While the details of the joint declaration are being worked out, sources said the two sides were likely to agree on setting up a joint economic commission and a mechanism for continuous financial dialogue at different levels. Singh and his British counterpart Tony Blair, sources said, will look to build on the New Delhi declaration between

Blair and former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee in January 2002. That declaration stressed on fighting terrorism and checking proliferation of WMDs. Britain's follow-up on the declaration, however, called for strong economic content to cement a strategic partnership between the two countries. While there was a lull in the exchange during Lok Sabha elections, sources said, discussions revived following External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh's visit to London in June when he had lengthy discussions with his British counterpart Jack Straw. A paper brought out by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office in December last year outlined eight strategic priorities of which India figured in six including promoting British economic interests in an open and expanding global economy.

Indian Express, 16 September 2004

**Manmohan to flag off India-ASEAN rally in Nov**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 15: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will flag off the first India-ASEAN car rally from Guwahati on November 22. The rally, which will see the participation of Indian and ASEAN member-countries, will traverse 8,000 km through Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, finally ending at Batam in Indonesia on December 11. At Guwahati, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) would hold a conference on "North East: India's Gateway to ASEAN" which would be attended by chief ministers of the seven northeastern states along with ministerial representatives from ASEAN nations and the ASEAN Secretariat. Each ASEAN country would be allowed to enter three teams with the stipulation that the cars to be driven would be of India make. A National Advisory Committee is being set up in each of the countries to coordinate the activities of the rally, including cultural events, corporate meetings and seminars at each of the pit-stops to assess business opportunities. The motor race is being organised by the CII, Ministry of External Affairs, ASEAN Secretariat and the Federation of Motor Sports Council of India. It was proposed by former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in Bali last October to draw attention to ASEAN nations' geographical proximity, and to promote tourism and economic cooperation.

Indian Express, 16 September 2004

**Dhaka dialogue: WB talks security**

KOLKATA: With the West Bengal Home Secretary joining the bilateral discussion at the secretary-level talks in Dhaka, the state administration will try to prove its worries about growing ISI-backed extremist activities in Bangladesh. While Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya informed the media that state Home Secretary A.K. Deb will attend the bilateral discussion, he didn't elaborate. Bhattacharya, who is meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on September 17, is expected to raise the state government's threat perception in border districts due to ISI activities and the Dhaka regime's non-cooperation. Sources in the Chief Minister's Office say the state government would also give inputs from the state intelligence report on infiltration and ISI-backed terrorist camps in Bangladesh. Though the Chief Minister didn't elaborate, a senior state government official said: "Besides the issues of infiltration and Indian extremists, like North Bengal Kamtapuris (some of whom, state government believes are in Bangladesh), the issue of fake currency notes — from Rs 100, Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 making inroads into Eastern India — would also come up for discussion."

The Hindu, 17 September 2004

**Birth control not un-Islamic, says Bangladesh Minister (Aarti Dhar)**

Begum khurshld NEW DELHI, SEPT. 16. While Muslims in India are debating whether Islam permits family planning or not, in neighbouring Bangladesh, religion plays no role in deciding the size of the family. Little wonder then that the population growth rate there has dropped to less than 1.5 per cent from 1.75 per cent in the past five years. "In fact, the Population Control Programme is a major success story of Bangladesh and we have gone a step further by demanding total reproductive freedom for women," Begum Khurshid Haque, Bangladesh Minister of Women and Children Affairs, said here today. "Since the Constitution grants equality to men and women, we now want that women's reproductive rights should be recognised and she be allowed to decide on the number of children. This, of course, is being done through awareness programmes," Begum Khurshid told The Hindu. Reacting to the

controversy in India over the use of contraceptives by Muslims, she blamed men for creating the controversy. "The number of children is a personal choice and there is nothing un-Islamic about it," she said. Begum Khurshid is here to participate in the Regional Ministerial Consultation on Maternal and Child Nutrition in Asian Countries. She said Bangladesh did not see maternal and child nutrition issues just as a health crisis but as a major component of women's and children's rights.

The Hindu, 17 September 2004

**Satellite network to link African Union**  
(Vinay Kumar)

JOHANNESBURG, SEPT. 16 . India today proposed an ambitious \$50 million programme to connect all the 53 nations of the African Union by a satellite fibre optic network. India's offer of a "connectivity mission" among the African nations was unveiled by the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, in his landmark address to the Pan African Parliament, the first by a non-African head of State. The Pan African Parliament is holding its second session in Johannesburg, the commercial capital of South Africa. Mr. Kalam told the Parliament that the proposed network would give rural connectivity to the entire Pan African Union to use technology to provide democratic access and empowerment. As the subject of rural connectivity and technology missions is known to be close to his heart, the President disclosed that he had discussed with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, yesterday to apprise him of India's commitment in health-care, education and other sectors for the African nations. "Our Government has decided to provide seamless and integrated satellite, fibre optics and wireless network connecting 53 African countries for tele-education, tele-medicine and e-services. This will connect five universities, 53 leading centres, 10 super-speciality hospitals and 53 patient-end locations in rural areas," Mr. Kalam announced amid applause. Mr. Kalam said that "Focus Africa" programme was one of the highest priority items for India and the Government had pledged \$200 millions in the form of credit line as part of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) scheme.

The Hindu, 17 September 2004

**"India solidly behind Sri Lanka's integrity"**  
(V.S.Sambandan)

COLOMBO, SEPT. 16 . The Chief of the Naval Staff, Arun Prakash, said today India was "solidly behind" Sri Lanka's integrity and sovereignty and it was the country's stated policy that it "would like to underwrite the integrity" of the island-nation. Concluding a five-day visit to Sri Lanka, Admiral Prakash told the correspondents from Indian newspapers based in Colombo: "I felt the situation warranted us to come [on] a first hand assessment." Since his arrival here on Sunday, he met the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, the Prime Minister, Mahinda Rajapakse, and visited the Trincomalee port in the east. Asked for his views on the threat potential to the Trincomalee harbour from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Admiral Prakash said the Indian interest was because Indian Oil had acquired the oil tank farm. The Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project would be "very advantageous to coastal shipping," Admiral Prakash said. On Sri Lankan concerns that traffic to Colombo port would be affected, he said "I think there is enough traffic for all of us. We can come to an understanding." Moreover, as the canal would have limitation on the size of the ship, it would "be a parallel route, whereas the larger ships will continue to go around Sri Lanka." The Sri Lankan authorities, he said, "did not raise" the issue.

The Hindu, 17 September 2004

**Delhi, Dhaka discuss cross-border terrorism**  
(Haroon Habib)

DHAKA, SEPT. 16. With the water sharing talks ending without any tangible results, the Home Secretaries of India and Bangladesh began their two-day deliberations today on issues, including cross-border terrorism, that the two neighbours face. The 14-member Indian delegation is being led by the Home Secretary, Dharendra Singh, while the 15-member Bangladesh team is led by its Home Secretary, Omar Farooq. Informed official sources said the talks began on a constructive note as the two sides had agreed to an "action plan" to deal with the issues. Observers say the talks are important for two reasons: First, they are being held in the backdrop of the strained relations in the wake of the tough remarks recently made by the Bangladesh Foreign Minister, Morshed Khan, about India. Last

week, Delhi summoned the Bangladesh High Commissioner in Delhi to record its disapproval of Mr. Khan's comments. Second, the talks, being held for the first time in four years, will cover vital issues of "national security" including allegations and counter-allegations on providing sanctuary to Indian insurgents in Bangladesh and the alleged harbouring of "Bangladesh criminals" in India. While India is likely to press harder on the allegation of the existence of camps of Indian insurgents in Bangladesh — a list of 195 such camps was earlier handed over to Bangladesh — Dhaka is likely to ask for steps to rein in what it calls the "anti-Bangladesh elements" and other criminals allegedly taking refuge in India. India may also demand the repatriation of 15 insurgent leaders "sheltered" in Bangladesh.

Indian Express, 17 September 2004

**Controversy over turban issue over: French envoy**

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 16: French envoy to India, Dominique Girard, today said the row between the Sikh community and the French government over the ban on students wearing turbans to schools has been resolved. In his letter to Tarlochan Singh, chairman of the National Commission for Minorities, Girard says majority of the Sikh students had returned to school "without any difficulty". It adds that barring three cases, Sikh students had been offered alternatives to the pagri and they had expressed their satisfaction over it. The envoy said the government was trying to pursue the "path of dialogue to settle the cases of the three students who are apparently unhappy with the ban". The letter adds: "Whatever the outcome of this dialogue, you can be assured that those students would be offered solutions to continue their studies within the French education system."

The Pioneer, 17 September 2004

**Singh-Pervez meet may add punch to CBMs: India (IANS)**

Islamabad. The meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New York next week could give the necessary momentum to the talks on confidence building measures, Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Shivshankar Menon has said. Hopes were pinned on the meeting between the two leaders on the

sidelines of the UN General Assembly on September 24, Mr Menon told reporters Wednesday after a meeting with the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, at the latter's residence, Dawn newspaper reported. Mr Menon said talks on CBMs were likely to gain momentum after the meeting between the two leaders. He said the Composite Dialogue the two countries initiated early this year to normalise relations was progressing "very well" and agreed, in response to a question, that Kashmir is one of the important issues to be resolved. He said he discussed with Rehman ways of taking the dialogue process forward and seeking solution of all problems, including the Kashmir issue. He said both of them agreed on the need for involving religious leadership of the two countries in the process. They were keen to find a settlement of all issues, particularly the Kashmir dispute, he added. He said the dialogue process had helped strengthen confidence and trust between the two countries.

The Hindu, 18 September 2004

**Manmohan to meet Bush, Musharraf**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will meet United States President George W. Bush and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf during his weeklong stay in New York to attend the 59th session of the United Nations' General Assembly. Dr. Singh, who leaves for London on Sunday afternoon, will have a working lunch with British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Monday, the Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Rajiv Sikri, told presspersons here. Dr. Singh addresses the General Assembly on September 23 and he meets Mr. Bush on September 21. No date has been fixed for the Musharraf-Manmohan meeting. The Prime Minister will meet the leaders of Japan, Germany and Brazil in a group to further India's case to enter the U.N. Security Council as a permanent member. Already, India and these nations have offered reciprocal support to one another for a permanent seat. When Mr. Sikri was asked about the meeting, he said Japan had proposed the four-way meeting. Asked whether an agreement would be announced in technology cooperation between India and the U.S. during the Manmohan-Bush meeting, he said the Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, was

discussing with officials in Washington. India hoped to reaffirm its "strategic partnership" with the U.S. during the meeting between Dr. Singh and Mr. Bush, Mr. Sikri maintained.

The Hindu, 18 September 2004

**India urges removal of siege on Arafat** By Atul Aneja

MANAMA, SEPT. 17. India today strongly advocated its support for Palestinian independence and called for urgent measures to lift the siege imposed by Israel around the headquarters of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. In the first visit by a high-level representative of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government, the Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, today urged the removal of "restrictions of movement" imposed on Mr. Arafat. Israel has confined the Palestinian Authority (PA) President to his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah. In a statement issued after meeting the Palestinian leader, Mr. Ahamed said that Mr. Arafat's confinement only "compounds difficulties" and "would not help the cause of peace." Mr. Ahamed's visit is being widely seen as part of a fresh effort by the Government to reinforce its bonds with the Palestinian people and its leaders. Mr. Arafat is the legitimate elected leader of the Palestinian people, Mr. Ahamed said. The Palestinian leader "represents the authority of the Palestinian people and subjecting him to this treatment is an affront to the Palestinian people." Analysts point out that Mr. Ahamed's remarks demonstrate New Delhi's opposition to the policy of the United States and Israel of isolating Mr. Arafat and keeping him out of negotiations related to the West Asia peace talks.

The Hindu, 18 September 2004

**Remarks have not affected ties: Morshed Khan** (Haroon Habib)

DHAKA, SEPT. 17. The Bangladesh Foreign Minister, M. Morshed Khan, has said that his recent remarks about India have not created any adverse impact on bilateral ties. "What I have said is nothing about the relations. I have only listed the issues between the two countries. Dhaka-Delhi relations keep on increasing not decreasing," he told presspersons on Thursday. The meetings of the Bangladesh-India Home Ministries and the Joint Committee of Experts on water-sharing

here testified to "where the relations currently stand." Mr. Khan said he expected to meet the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, in New York during the SAARC Foreign Ministers' meeting. Asked about his "blame-game" theory, he said: "The blame-game has turned into a habit of politicians on both sides, but people want something concrete. The onus lies with the politicians to avoid blame games."

The Telegraph, 19 September 2004

**Delhi eases Pak visa rules** (Pranay Sharma)

New Delhi, Sept. 18: India today announced steps to further relax visa rules for Pakistanis and make it easier for mediapersons, academics, doctors, professionals and senior citizens to travel to the country. Any visitor from Pakistan can now travel to 12 cities in India, instead of limiting their visit to only three. The decision to ease visa rules was unilateral. The announcement, made on the eve of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to New York, where he is scheduled to meet George W. Bush and Pervez Musharraf, shows that building people-to-people contact with Pakistan is India's main plank to ease tension and normalise relations. Delhi has been stressing on people-to-people contact but Islamabad has argued that unless the Kashmir dispute is resolved, there can be no meaningful improvement in ties. Today foreign ministry spokesperson Navtej Sarna gave details of the changes, which will come into immediate effect. According to the new rules, accredited journalists with minimum three years' experience with an international or national media organisation of repute can be issued "multiple entry" visas without a prior reference to headquarters. They will also be exempt from reporting to police on arrival. Academics and those invited by a reputed university or any other institution in India, doctors accompanying patients for treatment in a reputed Indian hospital and senior citizens above the age of 65 will get the same facilities.

The Hindu, 20 September 2004

**Terror must be checked for talks with Pakistan: Manmohan** (UNI)

LONDON, SEPT. 19. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today asserted that terrorism must firmly remain under control as a precondition for the success of the composite

dialogue process with Pakistan and declared that India's commitment to the reforms process remained unchanged. "If terrorism remains firmly under control, I look forward to a fruitful discussion with Pakistan, covering all issues," he told reporters on board the special flight to London. Dr. Singh who is on a visit to the United Kingdom and the United States said he would tell Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf at their meeting in New York on September 24, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly meet, that "both of us have been patient because we are dealing with complex issues."

The Hindu, 21 September 2004

**India, Britain to combat terrorism in 'all its forms'** (Harish Khare)

LONDON, SEPT. 20. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and his British counterpart, Tony Blair, today signed a Joint Declaration, defining "a comprehensive strategic partnership" and avowing to "take our relationship to a new level." Building on the 2002 New Delhi Declaration, the Blair-Manmohan Singh statement talks of the two countries working for "a safer and more prosperous world." It notes that "the United Kingdom will continue to work for India's Permanent Membership of the United Nations Security Council." Reflecting the convergence on the issue of terrorism, the Declaration commits the two countries "to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations." The two countries "will work together to try to ensure that the global norms against terrorism are upheld by all countries." There is an agreement to cooperate "to counter money-laundering and terrorist financing..." The two countries expressed a "shared interest in combating key global challenges — terrorism, poverty, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, climate-change, drugs, international crime, illegal migration and trafficking in our people." On economic issues, India and Britain agreed to "work closely together for a successful conclusion to the World Trade Organisation's Doha Round" of multilateral trade negotiations. There is also a desire to expand cooperation in "the fields of civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programme, and high technology trade, in accordance with their international obligations." The two leaders committed themselves to holding annual summit

meetings, in London and New Delhi, and agreed to "continue the high-level dialogue established through our Personal Envoys."

The Hindu, 21 September 2004

**Bangladesh business community for stronger ties with India**

CHENNAI, SEPT. 20 . The heads of 15 chambers of commerce and industry in Bangladesh today called upon governments, business forums, the press, electronic media and all others concerned in the SAARC countries to demonstrate their commitment to carry forward the idea of cooperation in all sectors, including trade and investments, in the region. In a statement here, they said: "The Bangladesh business community is deeply concerned over the deplorable propaganda by a section of the Indian media against Bangladesh. One Indian English Daily has made two editorial comments last month on the August 21 unfortunate episode which are venomous and apparently intended to instigate political instability. And the Daily even made an outrageous suggestion to the Indian Government to "firmly deal" with, what it described, the activities of the incumbent Government of Bangladesh. Another leading Daily in an Article suggested "India might have no option but to develop a pro-active policy to encourage internal political change within the sub-continent" (Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives) and talked about the need for "external intervention to restore at least minimum freedom." Quite naturally, such imprudent suggestions and calls have shocked and devastated every citizen of Bangladesh. "The Bangladesh businesses have always stressed the need for confidence-building measures between our two neighbourly countries so as to make ways for cooperation in all areas, including trade and industry. The history of economic cooperation in South Asia has been a victim of political and other sensitivities amongst the countries in the region. We strongly feel that the media, and for that matter, all sections of the society should refrain from any move which can fan up increasing misunderstandings that will destabilise political relationship and economic cooperation.

The Hindu, 21 September 2004

**The logic of unilateral concessions** (Siddharth Varadarajan)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 20. Six years ago, it took a meeting between Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif in New York to get the India-Pakistan composite dialogue process off the ground. Two rounds — mostly unproductive — have been held since then, the last one earlier this month. There have also been one war and one near war during this period. When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and General Pervez Musharraf meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session on Friday, both men will face the difficult challenge of ensuring that the next round produces some tangible outcome. The last round may have been fruitless but it allowed New Delhi and Islamabad to demonstrate to their people that they had not compromised the "national interest" in any way. Pakistan promised to study India's famous "72 proposals" — which cleverly ranged from expanded travel and trade links to the holding of philatelic exhibitions and the "exchange of slides" — but did not respond in the absence of forward movement on Kashmir. Going by the easing of visa norms for certain categories of Pakistani visitors announced by the Ministry of External Affairs on Saturday, it seems the Indian side has come around to the view that unilateral concessions are a good thing. Rigid reciprocity had allowed Pakistan to implement its 'progress on Kashmir first' approach. India now realises it has a stake in "normalising" relations with Pakistani civil society — journalists, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, students — and will benefit enormously even from a one-sided relaxation of visa rules. The same is true for trade in many categories of goods, and especially energy. The main point is that the unilateral gestures must be followed through and not regarded as mere propaganda points.

The Telegraph, 21 September 2004

**Indian migrants stuck in Africa** (Pranay Sharma)

New Delhi, Sept. 20: Nearly 70 Indians have been left stranded in the no-man's land bordering Mauritania and south-western Algeria while trying to cross over illegally, in a fresh headache for the government after the recent Iraq hostage crisis. Reports about the group stranded in northwestern Africa for over a month so far have been kept a closely guarded secret by the government. Fortunately, there are no hostage takers this

time and no deadlines to get the Indians out of the area. They are still in the custody of the International Organisation of Migration in camps near Mauritania, waiting for the government to make arrangements to take them back home. The stranded Indians, in two groups of 23 and 44, landed in north-western Africa some time in August, but South Block claims it got to know about them only in early September. As Delhi does not have a mission in Mauritania and its ambassador in Senegal, Balakrishna Shetty, looks after India's affairs in the neighbouring country. Sources said the Indians, predominantly from Punjab, appeared to have landed in the remote African country on their way to Spain. They said the group must have been brought there by unscrupulous travel agents with the promise of lucrative jobs in Europe. South Block officials said steps were being taken to bring the Indians back. But before that officials from the embassy in Dakar will have to reach Mauritania to ascertain whether all of them are Indians. Once their identity and nationality are established, they will be given travel documents and air tickets to return home.

The Hindu, 22 September 2004

**Government reverses foreign aid policy**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21. The Government has reversed the existing foreign aid policy and has decided to accept bilateral development assistance from all G-8 countries — the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Canada and the Russian Federation, as well as the European Commission. In June, the then Government had decided not to accept official bilateral assistance from any country. In case of countries of the European Union who are not in the G-8, the new decision is to accept bilateral development co-operation from those countries which provide a minimum bilateral aid package of \$25 million a year. Other countries not covered by the above policy could consider providing bilateral aid directly to autonomous institutions, universities, NGOs, etc. as before. Last year, the Vajpayee administration had decided that bilateral aid inflows would be restricted to bring India's repayment commitments to the minimum. It was therefore decided that the Government would no longer seek bilateral assistance and these could be passed on directly to institutions, projects and non-governmental

organisations. The Government would appraise the proposals from the perspective of India's security concerns and overall developmental priorities and thereafter, the bilateral partner would be free to interact with the beneficiaries. It had also been emphasised that aid flows should normally be in the form of grants rather than loans so that the Government's commitment to repay would be the minimum.

The Hindu, 22 September 2004

**India, Bangladesh border talks fail** (Marcus Dam)

KOLKATA, SEPT. 21. India and Bangladesh continue to differ on the border fencing issue. Stalemate also persists over India's charge about the presence of insurgent camps in Bangladesh. At the recent two-day bilateral talks in Dhaka, India's intentions to construct the fence within 150 yards of the Zero Line separating the two countries so that villages with high population densities adjoining the border are kept on the Indian side was reportedly unacceptable to Bangladesh, a member of the Indian delegation told The Hindu here on Monday. "There are several Indian villages located right up to the Zero Line at different points for a total stretch of nearly 250 km along the Indo-Bangladesh border," the official said. "The Indian Government's intentions to construct the fencing closer to the Zero Line in such areas," was pointed out at the talks. An earlier understanding to erect the fencing beyond 150 yards of the Zero Line would mean that a large number of Indian villages would fall either on the other side of the fencing or would be divided. A major breakthrough achieved in the talks, however, is the move that is expected to pave the way for granting double-entry visas to Indians by the Bangladesh Government. "So far it was only India which had been granting such visas to Bangladeshis wanting to visit India but now the benefit would be extended to Indians visiting that country," the official said. The two sides also agreed to co-operate on matters related to bilateral security and prevention of infiltration.

The Hindu, 22 September 2004

**Britain for more cooperation with India in legal services** (J.Venkatesan)

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 21. The British Minister for Constitutional Affairs, David Lammy, has

called for greater cooperation with India in the legal profession in the context of globalisation and internationalisation of services. Talking to The Hindu here today, he said "the British Government is committed to the promotion of the internationalisation of legal services." As a result now Indian lawyers could set up law firms in the United Kingdom but could not practise advocacy in courts. He said foreign lawyers had set up firms in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, China and Thailand. The dramatic growth of India's economy had led to a significant demand from international businesses, including from law firms in U.K., to have partnership and cooperation with Indian law firms. He made it clear that "they don't want advocacy in courts but only joint venture for corporate work". When it was brought to his notice that the Bar Council of India had opposed the entry of foreign law firms, he said, "the mood is now changing." At a time when the Indian and British Prime Ministers had signed an understanding for greater cooperation, it was essential that the legal service sector was also opened up for the international community. "If international trade and business is to expand to everyone's benefit, including India's, businesses must be confident of their ability to source high quality professional services wherever in the world they seek to operate. What we are seeking is better access to global markets for our lawyers to enable them to provide services to international business and investors in any country where there is a demand for them," he said.

The Hindu, 23 September 2004

**U.N. reform should be broad-based: Manmohan** (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

UNITED NATIONS, SEPT. 22. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has told the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, that the reform of the world organisation should be broad in character and should strengthen the General Assembly, the Security Council, the functional agencies and the Secretariat. At his meeting with Mr. Annan, Dr. Singh reiterated India's strong commitment to the U.N. and effective multilateralism. He complimented Mr. Annan on his speech at the General Assembly on Tuesday where he stressed the importance of the rule of law in international relations. India fully endorsed this, Dr. Singh told Mr. Annan.

On the high-level panel looking into threats and challenges, Dr. Singh is reported to have told Mr. Annan that India rejected any new category of rotational or semi-permanent members in the Security Council and that the recommendations of the panel would have to be subjected to the U.N.'s decision-making processes. Mr. Annan said the panel would submit its recommendations in December and there would be the fullest possible debate. Mr. Annan is said to have referred to the challenges faced by the U.N. in Iraq and remarked that if the security situation in Iraq was a matter of concern, the U.N. would give every support to the electoral process planned in that country.

The Hindu, 23 September 2004

**Delhi, Dhaka to work out modalities for joint patrolling**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22. India and Bangladesh have decided to work out the modalities for joint patrolling by their security forces in their own territories in a bid to prevent trafficking and illegal movements across the border. Briefing reporters on his three-day visit to Dhaka from September 15, the Union Home Secretary, Dhirendra Singh, said here today that all issues relating to security concerns, activities of Indian insurgents and training camps in Bangladesh and its lack of cooperation in tracking them, use of Bangladesh territory as a transit for smuggling of arms, drug, and human trafficking and settlement of boundary dispute were discussed. Mr. Singh, who led the Indian delegation at the Home Secretary level talks with Bangladesh which were held after four years, said the two sides agreed that it was time to sit together and resolve all issues amicably. Dhaka had agreed to hold the next round of Home Secretary level talks in January-February next year, realising that the gap of four years was too much, he said. One of the major issues of concern was the long and porous India-Bangladesh border, which has been only partly fenced by India because of the difficult terrain and riverine areas. He said that it was "unacceptable to us also to erect the fence between our own territory and villages." India has fenced about 1,500 km of the 4,000 km-long border that passes through five States. The Centre had fixed 2006 as the deadline for completing the fencing. "About

six km of the border is still to be demarcated," Mr. Singh said.

The Pioneer, 23 September 2004

**India & Israel to hold first joint military exercise**

New Delhi. The first ever joint military exercise between India and Israel is likely to take place in India next year with helicopter squadrons of both the countries performing offensive and defensive manoeuvres. While the decision in principle to hold such training exercises was approved by the earlier NDA Government, the possibility to stage an exercise was explored when Air Chief Marshal S Krishnaswamy recently visited Israel. It was learnt here on Wednesday that a team of Air Force observers was likely to visit each other's country soon to discuss the feasibility and magnitude of the drill, types of aircraft and the venue besides the schedule and duration of the exercise. Since the two countries would be engaging in this endeavour for the first time after diplomatic relations were established between the two more than a decade back the scale of the exercise was likely to be on a low key, sources said here. The scale of the engagements would be upgraded in an orderly manner in the subsequent exercises where the fighter jets would streak past in the Indian skies, they said. The venue for the first ever exercise was most likely to be India as Israel is a small country with virtually no air space available to conduct an exercise, it was learnt. Explaining the rationale for going in for a helicopter exercise, they said when India and the US decided to hold joint exercises a team of observers visited each other's country and decided to begin with transport planes three years back. Israel had emerged as the second biggest exporter of arms to India after Russia in the last few years and most of the tie-ups were in the field of hi-tech weaponry, avionics and electronic warfare systems.

The Pioneer, 23 September 2004

**India assures more aid to war-torn Afghanistan**

New York. Forthcoming presidential polls in Afghanistan and the war-torn country's reconstruction needs figured prominently during the meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai here. Singh, who met Karzai on Tuesday on the sidelines of the un General

Assembly session, assured Afghanistan of further assistance in various fields to rebuild the nation, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told reporters here. He described the meeting between two leaders as "warm" and "friendly". "The Prime Minister told Karzai that India was committed to contribute to the stabilisation and reconstruction of Afghanistan," Saran said. Singh told Karzai that he was free to indicate in what other ways India could support the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Karzai expressed appreciation of Singh's offer and said there was a lot more that he would like India to do in virtually every field. No specifics were mentioned during the meeting but Saran said if there were any other areas which are identified by Afghanistan, "I am sure we will respond positively".

The Hindu, 24 September 2004

**We will carry forward composite dialogue, says Manmohan** (Harish Khare)

UNITED NATIONS, SEPT. 23. India is determined "to carry forward [the India-Pakistan composite] dialogue to a purposeful and mutually acceptable conclusion," the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has assured the international community. Addressing the 59th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Dr. Singh devoted only a short paragraph in his speech to India-Pakistan relationship. The restrained reference stands out in sharp contrast to the lengthy rebuttal in recent years by Indian Prime Ministers to Pakistan's provocative references to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The major thrust of Dr. Singh's speech was that the approach to tackling global problems such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, economic globalisation, pandemics like HIV/AIDS must be genuinely global. Dr. Singh also made a low-key pitch for India's membership of the Security Council, contexting India's claim as a world's democracy that must find its voice in a global order promoting democracy across the world: "An overwhelming majority of the world's population cannot be excluded from an institution that legislates on an increasingly number of issues, with an ever-widening impact..." Dr. Singh's speech, according to Indian officials, was "extremely well-received" and he was complimented by a very large number of diplomats.

The Hindu, 24 September 2004

**'Pakistan positive on opening of road'**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, SEPT. 23. The Pakistan High Commissioner to India, Aziz Ahmed Khan, said here today that Islamabad had no objection to opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road provided it is meant exclusively for Kashmiris. On a visit to Kerala, Mr. Khan told The Hindu that Pakistan was clear that the road should be meant for use only by Kashmiris living on the two sides of the border. "We would not, however, accept passports and visas as these are meant for travel across international borders." Mr. Khan said the Indian fishermen stranded in Pakistan would be allowed to travel back after their boats were repaired and their seaworthiness was confirmed. "The Government of Pakistan has already communicated to the Indian Government its readiness to send the fishermen back." On the proposal to relax the visa norms for journalists and professionals, he said any firm decision on the issue could be taken only after consulting the officials concerned. There could not be any instant answers to such questions. The decision to issue group visas for tourists should result in a more healthy interaction between the people of the two countries. Referring to the threat of deportation being faced by Pakistanis living in Malappuram district of Kerala, Mr. Khan felt that as these people were very old and wished to spend their last days with their near and dear ones, their case should be considered sympathetically.

The Hindu, 24 September 2004

**India 'encouraged' by Musharraf's remarks** (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

UNITED NATIONS, SEPT. 23. India is encouraged that Pakistan remains committed to the ongoing dialogue process and it is consistent in its view that all outstanding issues between the two countries could be sorted out through peaceful bilateral dialogue. "We have seen Musharraf's remarks on India-Pakistan relations and are encouraged that Pakistan remains committed to the ongoing dialogue process with India. It has been our consistent position that all outstanding issues between the two countries, including Jammu and Kashmir, can be resolved through peaceful bilateral dialogue," the spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs, Navtej Sarna, said. Asked about a remark by Gen. Musharraf

during the course of his address to the United Nations General Assembly that Pakistan was giving bilateralism "a final chance," Mr. Sarba said: "We are engaged in a well considered and sustained process from which we would not be deflected by this or that remark from whatever quarter. "The fulfilment of Pakistan's assurance to end all cross-border terrorism from any territory under its control is of great importance."

The Hindu, 24 September 2004

### **G-3 plans dialogue with European Union** (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

NEW YORK, SEPT. 23. The Foreign Ministers of the Group of Three — India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) — have decided that the character of the group should be maintained and that it can have a dialogue with the European Union "at a suitable occasion." The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, hosted a breakfast meeting of the group. Briefing mediapersons, the Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, said that the Ministers also decided that there should be more regular interaction on political, economic, trade and global issues. It was decided that the permanent representatives of the three countries in New York would have monthly meetings. Senior officials would meet before the second meeting of the Trilateral in the first quarter of 2005 in South Africa. The G-3 is seeking to focus on areas in which each country has strengths such as in information technology, science and technology and tourism combined with transportation. Brazil, for instance, has apparently proposed that on the sidelines of the next year's World Tourism Organisation meeting there, the Tourism Ministers of G-3 could have a meeting on the sidelines. Mr. Saran pointed out that the essential thrust of IBSA was on things that the three countries could do "together" for the South — development for the other developing countries. The G-3 was strong in the realm of development and India and Brazil are aspirants for permanent membership in the Security Council.

Indian Express, 24 September 2004

### **Indians don't need visas, says Mauritius**

KOLKATA, SEPTEMBER 23: Mauritius has scrapped the visa system for Indian tourists from next month to give a fillip to tourism. "We have taken this very important decision

to abolish the visa system for all bonafide Indian nationals willing to visit Mauritius and this law will be effective from October," Mauritius Tourism and Leisure Minister Anil K. Gayan told reporters here on Wednesday. Gayan, who was here to inaugurate the Mauritian Food Festival, said his country held India "in high esteem". "Abolishing visas for Indian tourists, will go a long way not only in further promoting tourism but also strengthening bilateral ties with New Delhi," the Minister said, adding that tourism fetches most revenue for the island country. Acknowledging Indian assistance to Mauritius in its development process, Gayan said: "We are grateful to India for what it has done to us." The Minister said the Mauritius Government was keen to further promote relations with India, adding "our cordial ties with New Delhi will remain unchanged even with the change of government". Meanwhile, Gayan met West Bengal Tourism Minister Dinesh Dakua in Writers' Buildings on Thursday and informed him that his government wanted a direct flight from Kolkata as Bengal and Mauritius had historical links.

The Pioneer, 24 September 2004

### **World Bank approves \$400 mn for India's rural roads project**

Washington. The World Bank has approved a \$400-million package of assistance for the development of rural roads in India. The 'Rural Roads Project', which is the first in a series of credits/loans to India to support the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), was approved on Thursday. "An estimated 200 million people are without all-weather road access in India," Piers Vickers, World Bank's Senior Transport Specialist, said. The funds will be in addition to existing transfers from Indian Government to fund construction and maintenance of the rural road network in over half of the districts in four states — Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, said a World Bank statement. Vickers said the current project's scope can be expanded to cover additional states, like Bihar, for instance. "This project is being proposed as the first in a series of credits and loans to support the government's programme of total rural connectivity over the next five to seven years, with the subsequent operation to be prepared

in a sector-wide approach where feasible," Michael Carter, World Bank Country Director for India, said. This first operation consists of a \$100 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and a \$300 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA), the Bank's concessionary lending arm. The IBRD loan carries a variable spread loan, 20-year maturity, and a grace period of five years. The IDA credit has 35-years maturity and 10 years of grace period.

The Hindu, 25 September 2004

**India, Pakistan to explore possible options on Kashmir issue** (Harish Khare)

NEW YORK, SEPT. 24. After an hour-long meeting between the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, India and Pakistan said today that they had agreed to strive "to restore normalcy and cooperation" in the spirit of the January 6, 2004 statement signed by the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, with Gen. Musharraf in Islamabad. Dr. Singh described the meeting as a successful "essay in mutual comprehension" and called it a "historic day." The declaration came at an unscripted joint press appearance at Hotel Roosevelt, where Gen. Musharraf was staying. Dressed in a grey suit, the General stood next to a relaxed Dr. Singh as he read out what he called "an agreement." Gen. Musharraf said that Dr. Singh had done him an "honour" by letting him read out the statement and observed that this "augurs well for India-Pakistan relations." The two leaders appeared quite relaxed, suggesting that the interaction, which included a one-on-one between them, had gone on rather well. The original idea was that they would meet for 15 minutes before the delegations joined them; however, it appears that the two leaders hit it off rather well and their interaction got extended to an hour-long "essay in mutual comprehension." Though the joint statement is full of generalities, it does reveal a willingness on the part of both sides not to remain stuck in the traditionally-stated positions.

The Hindu, 25 September 2004

**India, Brazil, South Africa call for U.N. revamp** (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

NEW YORK, SEPT. 24. The Foreign Ministers of India, Brazil and South Africa

have stressed the need to revamp the United Nations. "The General Assembly must be revitalised. The role of the ECOSOC must be strengthened. The Security Council must be expanded to reflect the realities of the international community in the 21st century," the IBSA Dialogue Forum said in a press release after a meeting on Thursday. It said the Security Council must be "representative, legitimate and effective and its decisions should serve the interests of the global community." The Group is looking forward to the release of the report of the 'High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change' and hoped that it would provide an important contribution to the ongoing discussions on the issue. The Ministers recalled the funding facility set up by India, Brazil and South Africa on the margins of the last General Assembly and "announced with satisfaction" the launching of the first project to be financed by the IBSA Fund in support of agriculture and livestock development of Guinea-Bissau. They "emphasised the importance of generating greater awareness within the international community about the IBSA facility and its role in enhancing South-South cooperation."

The Hindu, 25 September 2004

**India donates medicines for Beslan victims** (Vladimir Radyuhin)

MOSCOW, SEPT. 24. India today strongly supported Russia in its fight against terrorism and denounced Western attempts to lecture Moscow on this score. "There should be no attempt to give any lectures to Russia as to how it should fight terrorism," the Indian Ambassador to Russia, Kanwal Sibal, said at a ceremony to donate medicines worth \$50,000 from India for victims of the Beslan school hostage drama in North Ossetia. "We are entirely in agreement with whatever measures the Russian Government may take to deal with terrorism and prevent the recurrence of the Beslan tragedy," Mr. Sibal told Vladimir Gukaev, representative of the Republic of North Ossetia in Moscow. A number of private Indian companies, including Ranbaxy, Intercare and M/s Garware Polyester Limited, also made donations of aid and cheques to the Beslan victims ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each.

Indian Express, 25 September 2004

### **Maoists burn bridge linking India, Nepal in Uttaranchal**

DEHRA DUN, SEPTEMBER 24: Nepalese insurgents today burnt a wooden bridge connecting India and Nepal in Pitthoragarh district of Uttaranchal even as the three states of Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh decided to prepare a joint strategy to check Maoist violence from spilling over to the Indian side, police said. Meanwhile, senior police officials of the three states and officials of intelligence agencies, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Special Security Bureau (SSB), which is manning the Indo-Nepal border, met here yesterday to take stock of the situation. District officials of Udham Singh Nagar district and officials from Nepal had also met recently at Khatima to discuss the situation arising out of the violence in the Himalayan country. Both sides agreed to share information and intelligence about Maoists at the meeting. The Union Home Ministry has also taken note of the threat by Maoist rebels to send human bombs to India after New Delhi extended support to the Nepal government in its fight against insurgency.

The Pioneer, 25 September 2004

### **'Indo-Israeli ties to be strengthened further' (UNI)**

New York. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has expressed India's commitment to strengthening relations with Israel. At a meeting here with leaders of major American Jewish organisations here, he emphasised the importance of dialogue among civilisations with a view to ensuring a better understanding among different communities. Dr Singh praised the role of the Jewish community in the development of science, education and businesses in the US and invited them to participate in India's modernisation and development. The 15-member delegation was led by Nissim Reuben, Indian-American Jewish leader of the American-Jewish Committee and included some prominent personalities of the vibrant community.

The Hindu, 26 September 2004

### **Issue of terrorism did come up during talks: Manmohan (Sridhar Krishnaswami)**

NEW YORK, SEPT. 25. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, has described his meeting with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, as a "significant step forward" and one that

was "historic in more than one way." At a press conference here today, Dr. Singh said: "I think it is a significant step forward. In many ways it represents a new beginning. It commits our two countries to advance beyond what was agreed to in the January 6 statement both in terms of discussing confidence-building measures as well as moving to discuss complex issues relating to the State of Jammu and Kashmir." "It is historic in more than one way. For the first time we have a statement which lists, which conveys our determination to move forward in a purposeful manner and resolve all outstanding issues ... the composite dialogue will be taken to its constructive conclusion. This is a good commitment," Dr. Singh said. "We are committed to discuss all elements that figures in the composite dialogue. It is our hope and expectation that we will be making progress in all these matters," he said. Dr. Singh fielded questions not only on his meeting with Gen. Musharraf, but also on his impressions of the Pakistan leader, relations between India and the United States, criticism in India that he was being a "salesman" and on India's political problems.

The Hindu, 26 September 2004

### **Gas fuels warmth in India-Pakistan ties (Siddharth Varadarajan)**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 25. From being a taboo subject as far as the Indian Government was concerned, the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline appears to have moved centre stage in the ongoing efforts to give relations between Islamabad and Delhi a new momentum and depth. In Friday's joint statement read out by the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, after his meeting in New York with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, the pipeline was the only concrete issue — apart from Kashmir — which found mention. While this does not mean a pipeline deal is imminent, it is indicative of the conceptual leap made by the two sides, particularly India. The erstwhile Vajpayee Government had tended to link the pipeline — which Pakistan has always been keen on — to certain economic concessions it wanted Islamabad to make first. When the UPA Government was elected, however, the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, indicated almost immediately that New Delhi now had an open mind, even if no quid pro quo were forthcoming. Friday's statement is

clearly the product of this new openness. If the pipeline eventually materialises, it will not only help transform the nature of relations between India and Pakistan but will also have a major impact on the geopolitics of south-west Asia and the future evolution of energy routes in the wider Asian region.

The Pioneer, 26 September 2004

**Turban controversy in France sorted out: PM (PTI)**

New York. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday indicated that the turban controversy in France has been addressed with school students being allowed to wear a particular type of headgear in place of the turban. Asked about the restrictions placed by French schools on wearing of turban, Singh said when National Security Adviser JN Dixit had recently visited France, he had been instructed to take up the issue at the highest level with French authorities. Singh said he has reports that an agreement has been reached for a particular type of headgear. Sikhs in France, numbering over 5,000, had vehemently protested at the new move, which French authorities claimed was not discriminatory.

The Hindu, 26 September 2004

**Indian observers witness Chinese military exercise (PTI)**

BEIJING, SEPT. 25. For the first time, officials and observers from 16 countries, including India, today witnessed a major military exercise by China in Henan Province. The exercise — code-named "Iron Fist-2004" — showcased China's military muscle and was carried out by a reinforced mechanised infantry division in the mountains in the training base of the Jinan Military Area Command of the People's Liberation Army, Xinhua news agency reported.

The Hindu, 27 September 2004

**India opens up Kashmir to Pakistan scribes (Siddharth Varadarajan)**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 26. Reversing India's long-standing policy of keeping Kashmir strictly off-limits for journalists from across the border, the United Progressive Alliance Government has issued visas for Jammu, Srinagar, Anantnag and Gulmarg to 18 Pakistani scribes. The journalists, who are part of the South Asia Free Media Association

(SAFMA), will spend five days in Jammu and Kashmir and will be free to meet anyone they wish to during their stay. The unprecedented tour will begin on October 3 when the journalists enter India at Wagah and proceed to Jammu by road. They are scheduled to fly out of Srinagar on October 8. Senior officials say this will be the first-ever visit to the State by Pakistani journalists since 1948 and is a concrete expression of the glasnost New Delhi is seeking to introduce in its relations with Islamabad. Appointments for the Pakistani group in Srinagar have already been fixed up with the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the Geelani and Ansari factions of the Hurriyat. In Jammu, the visiting journalists will meet leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Panthers Party, besides the Congress and the Peoples' Democratic Party. Also scheduled is a visit to a refugee camp for Pandits forced to migrate from their homes in the Valley more than a decade ago. In Srinagar, it is possible the group will have the chance of interacting with representatives from the security forces. The team includes two correspondents from Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The Hindu, 27 September 2004

**Indian jurist's call to Pakistan legal community (B.Muralidhar Reddy)**

ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 26. The legal community in Pakistan must prepare the people of the country to accept the conversion of the Line of Control into permanent border, according to Adish C. Aggarwala, who is heading a 15-member Indian delegation of lawyers and former judges to Pakistan. He made the proposal at a news conference attended by members of the Pakistan Bar Association and the provincial Bar Councils. The remarks seem to have stirred a hornet's nest here. As journalists sought details of the proposal, other members of the Indian delegation disassociated themselves from the statement, saying it was Mr. Aggarwala's "personal view." They said they were on a "goodwill mission" and the visit did not involve any discussion on policy issues. The delegation arrived here from Lahore on Saturday. In support of his idea, Mr. Aggarwala said that despite innumerable rounds of negotiations at the Government level, India and Pakistan had not been able to arrive at a mutually-acceptable solution on

Kashmir. "Conversion of LoC is the only practical solution for both countries to move ahead. It is the responsibility of civil society in general and lawyers in particular to prepare the public for acceptance of status quo and pave way for the Governments to formalise the arrangement." The legal fraternity can play a major role in resolving disputes, including Kashmir, between the two countries.

The Hindu, 28 September 2004

**Talks with Musharraf `very good'** (PTI)  
NEW DELHI, SEPT. 27. Describing his talks with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, as "very good," the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said tonight that they agreed to carry forward the composite dialogue process which "augurs well" for bilateral ties. "I met President Musharraf and I am glad to report that talks with him were very good," Dr. Singh told reporters at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here on his return from a nine-day tour of Britain and the United States. "We agreed to carry forward the composite dialogue process. It augurs well for India-Pakistan relations," he said.

The Hindu, 28 September 2004

**'All steps to protect Sikh shrines'** (B.Muralidhar Reddy)  
ISLAMABAD, SEPT. 27. Nankana Sahib, the holy shrine of Sikhs, in the Punjab province of Pakistan has been the centre of attention for the last two days as a mob attacked it on Saturday protesting against the Government's decision to return the adjacent Government college building to the Nankana Sahib Trust. The issue figured in the provincial Assembly today. In response to concerns expressed by the Opposition, the provincial Law Minister described the incident as "unfortunate" and said the Government was determined to punish the culprits. Taking a serious note of the incident, the Punjab Chief Minister, Pervaiz Elahi, has directed the Inspector-General of Police to investigate the matter and take stern action against the attackers. The Pakistani English daily from Lahore, Daily Times in a report said the police had not registered any case so far. It appears that neither the Trust nor the college has so far approached police to register a complaint. According to local media reports, a mob attacked the shrine on Saturday protesting against a Government committee's recommendation that the Punjab Government

return the Government Guru Nanak Degree College building to the Nankana Sahib Trust to accommodate Sikh pilgrims.

The Hindu, 28 September 2004

**India may take up insurgency issue with Bangladesh**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 27. India may ask Bangladesh to take action against the Indian insurgent groups that have established hideouts and camps in the Bangladeshi territory. The Indian request is likely to be made during the Indo-Bangladesh Border Coordination Conference, which begins here tomorrow. India will also demand handing over of Indian insurgents apprehended by Bangladesh authorities to enable India to take action against them under the law of the land. The list includes Anup Chetia of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam, official sources said here. Other topics that are likely to come up for discussion include issues related directly to day-to-day management of Indo-Bangladesh border, trans-border crimes, smuggling and violation of the international border, illegal immigration of Bangladeshi nationals to India, kidnapping of Indian nationals from border areas of Tripura and steps for joint patrolling by the Border Security Force and the Bangladesh Rifles.

The Hindu, 28 September 2004

**China for consensus on Council seat for India** (ANI)

BEIJING, SEPT. 27. China has said that it will decide on extending support for India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council only after a general consensus is reached on the issue. "China would take up its position with regard to the U.N.'s reforms and expansion on the basis of general consensus," a newspaper quoted the Chinese Foreign Office spokesman, Kong Quan, as saying.

The Hindu, 28 September 2004

**Fears over export of `infected' blood to India** (Hasan Suroor)

LONDON, SEPT. 27. India is reported to be among the countries to which Britain exported blood products that could be infected with the human variant of the deadly mad cow disease, but it is not known whether it is among the five which have been warned by the British Government that they could be at risk.

According to The Times, the British Government last week contacted five countries "identified as most at risk from the imported blood products" but officials refused to disclose their names. "The five countries come from a longer list of 11 — including the Irish Republic, Russia, India and Brazil — to which Britain exported the suspect products in the late 1990s," it said. India reportedly imported more than 900 vials of albumin during that period. Asked if it was possible that the Indian Government may have been informed directly, a spokesman said: "Yes." "The Director-General of Health Services in Delhi is the nodal agency and only they can tell you anything," he said. The "warnings" followed the discovery of two cases where, it was suspected, that the patients may have been affected by vCJD (variant Cruetzfeldt-Jacob Disease) through blood transfusions.

The Hindu, 28 September 2004

**India-French network of virtual labs becoming a reality**

BANGALORE, SEPT. 27. French scientists belonging to the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) visited various academic and research establishments here today, mostly holding discussions. Bernard Larrouturou, director-general of CNRS, France's equivalent of India's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), who was leading the delegation, hoped that the dream of an India-French network of virtual labs to study climate change would finally become a reality. Mr. Bernard and the director-general of CSIR, R.A. Mashelkar, are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) tomorrow in Delhi to build the network. Two years ago, The Hindu had reported that the signing of a MoU during a visit of Gerard Megie, the then president of CNRS, had been delayed, as India's Ministry of External Affairs had not cleared the project yet.

The Pioneer, 28 September 2004

**India for UN Security Council expansion**

New York. Making a strong case for India's candidature for permanent membership in the expanded UN Security Council, External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh has said it is essential that the body be enlarged to make it more representative, effective and to give greater credibility to its decisions on peace and security. He was participating in a discussion

with the high-level panel established by the Secretary General Kofi Annan on United Nations reforms. Explaining the position of G-4, which comprises Japan, Germany, Brazil, besides India, on Monday, Singh insisted comprehensive reforms of the UN system are needed to effectively deal with contemporary threats and challenges. He said it is essential that the 15-member Council be expanded to make it more representative and effective and to give more credibility to its decisions on peace and security. In a statement issued after a meeting last Tuesday, G-4 had said that Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, based on the firmly shared recognition that they are legitimate candidates for permanent membership in an expanded Council, support each other's candidature.

The Hindu, 29 September 2004

**Indian shot dead by Nepal police (PTI)**

SILIGURI, SEPT. 28. An Indian national was shot dead by Nepal police, apparently mistaking him for a Maoist rebel at Pashupati close to India-Nepal border today, officials sources said. "The victim might have been erroneously identified as a Maoist and shot at", the sources said. The Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling, Rajiv Mishra, said the victim was identified as Pashang Nuri Sherpa. In an FIR lodged in Sukhhpokhri police station in Darjeeling, his family members said he had crossed over to Nepali side in Pashupati to collect firewood.

The Telegraph, 29 September 2004

**Call for Pak shrine safety**

Chandigarh, Sept. 28: India today hoped Pakistan would take "necessary measures" for the protection of the Nankana Sahib gurdwara in Lahore, reports our correspondent. On Saturday, students of the state-run Guru Nanak Dev Degree College located on the gurdwara's premises had stormed it in retaliation to a government panel's recommendation to hand the college to the Nankana Sahib managing committee for use as a guesthouse for pilgrims. "We have seen reports of the incident at gurdwara Nankana Sahib. We hope that the government of Pakistan will take the necessary measures for the protection of this holy shrine," foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said in Delhi today. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee decided to send a team to inquire into the attack. "The

attack has not only hurt Sikh sentiments but could also have an adverse impact on the peace talks between the two nations,” its chief Jagir Kaur said in Amritsar. Akali Dal chief Parkash Singh Badal wrote to the President and the Prime Minister and demanded that Sikhs’ rights and their shrines’ safety be part of bilateral discussions.

Indian Express, 29 September 2004

**Defence deals: India, Russia to take fresh look**

MOSCOW, SEPTEMBER 28: Indo-Russian defence deals are going to be subjected to a little hammering out. A high-level defence contingent — including Defence Secretary Ajai Vikram Singh and naval vice-chief, Vice-Admiral Yashwant Prasad — is in Moscow to hold discussions with the Russian government on defence deals, ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to India in December. The team’s visit comes immediately after Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov sacked MiG Corporation chief Valery Toryanin and replaced him with Alexei Fyodorov, president of IRKUT Corporation which has a supply deal for Su-30MKI fighters with India. The Indian team may also attempt to make headway in the stalled talks with Russia to enter into a tripartite agreement with Israel to upgrade India’s Tu-142 maritime surveillance fleet with new avionics and maritime air defence systems. Russia delivered the fleet of Tu-142s to India in 1988. Sources said the deal ran into rough weather when Russia, which had quoted too high a price to upgrade the fleet in 2003, was indecisive about a tripartite upgradation understanding with Israel. With MiG Corporation’s huge debt jeopardising its \$700 million contract to supply 16 MiG-29K ship-borne fighters to the Indian Navy as part of the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier acquisition, the company’s head was ousted a few days ago. Under the Gorshkov deal closed in January 2003, MiG Corporation is to supply 16 MiG-29K multi-role aircraft to the Indian Navy — the Indian team will be reviewing the progress of this deal.

The Pioneer, 29 September 2004

**Indian economy not better than ours: BDR chief** (Rana Ajit)

New Delhi. Indian economy is not better than that of Bangladesh to prompt Bangladeshis

infiltrate into India for jobs. Outrageous though it might seem, Bangladesh Rifles Chief Major General Mohammed Jahangir Alam Chowdhury has no qualms about making it to refute New Delhi’s concern over continued infiltration by Bangladeshi nationals into India. While making the bizzare assertion, the BDR chief on Tuesday also mocked at the New Delhi’s list of 195 ISI-run training camps for north east ultras in Bangladesh. Indian reaction to the BDR chief’s observation on the Indian economy, however, remained restrained to dignified limit. But, while speaking to a select group of reporters at Ashoka Hotel soon after conclusion of the conference, Mr Chowdhury, in his zeal to deny the New Delhi’s charge of infiltration by Bangladeshis, went on to say, "If the Indian economy were better than those of Bangladesh, you would not have gone for work in Middle East and Arab countries." "Everytime you catch a Bangla speaking person, you dub him a Bangladeshi, forgetting that you have a lakhs of Bangla speaking people in West Bengal," asserted Mr Chowdhury. With no formal briefing from Indian officials, the confusion reigned supreme over the exact outcome of the conference on various contentious issues including pumping of fake Indian currency through the Indo-Bangla border, smuggling of narcotics and arms and other trans-border crimes like kidnapping for ransom in north east by terrorists based in Bangladesh, cattle-lifting and trafficking of women, continued illegal migration, Bangladesh obstruction to erecting of fences along the border at stretches within 150 yards of the zero line.

The Hindu, 29 September 2004

**Dhaka’s help sought for completing fencing work**

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 28. The Border Security Force (BSF) chief, Ajai Raj Sharma, said today that the decision to fence the entire India-Bangladesh border was taken to check the illegal movements and crimes on the border. Speaking at the India-Bangladesh Border Coordination Conference that began here, Mr. Sharma sought the cooperation of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) for early completion of the fencing work. The transnational capabilities acquired by terrorist organisations required that all countries come together and join hands to fight their evil designs so that terrorism was defeated in all its

manifestations, Mr. Sharma said. Field commanders of the two forces should adopt more realistic and pragmatic approach, without being influenced by parochial or other extraneous considerations, in sorting out border problems.

The Tribune, 30 September 2004

**Pak deplores attack on Gurdwara Nankana Sahib**

New Delhi, September 29. The Government of Pakistan today strongly condemned the recent attempt by some miscreants to damage property associated with Gurdwara Nankana Sahib and assured action against the culprits. In a statement here, the Pakistan High Commission said, "The miscreants would be firmly dealt with in accordance with laws. The provincial government has already taken appropriate measures in this regard and legal cases have been instituted. "The Government of Pakistan wishes to assure the Sikh Community worldwide that it is determined to protect their religious shrines and Sikh heritage in Pakistan. "Pakistan will continue to assist and facilitate the pilgrimage by Sikhs from all over the world to the Sikhs holy shrines and religious places in Pakistan."It has been Pakistan's consistent policy to protect the rights and interests as well as safeguard the places of worship of all its citizen, including the minority communities."

The Tribune, 30 September 2004

**Dixit, Aziz to meet next month (PTI)**

Islamabad, September 29. The National Security Advisers of India and Pakistan are expected to meet possibly next month to discuss the follow-up action to the meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf in New York last week, a leading daily reported today. Hectic consultations are in progress between the two countries to work out dates for the meeting between the Indian National Security Adviser J N Dixit and his Pakistani counterpart Tariq Aziz in a third country, possibly in Dubai in mid-October, The Nation quoted.As part of the back-channel diplomacy, it said, Dixit and Aziz had met in Dubai that helped in facilitating the historic summit meeting in New York.Their meeting may help both the countries to hold conclusive consultations before Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's visit to India in November as chairman of the

SAARC.He said it had been decided by the two sides to move simultaneously with a two-pronged strategy, which is to continue with the back-channel diplomacy along with the consultations between the foreign ministries as part of composite dialogue process that will be re-initiated in December.

The Tribune, 30 September 2004

**45 more Indian fishermen held in Pak (PTI)**  
Islamabad, September 29. Pakistan Maritime Security has arrested 45 more fishermen from Gujarat near Karachi for violating the country's territorial waters taking the number of Indian fishermen in Pakistan's custody to more than 500. The fishermen were held yesterday for fishing in Pakistani territorial waters, Pakistani Maritime officials said in Karachi today.With the fresh arrests, the number of Indian fishermen in Pakistan custody rose to 521.On September 20, the Pakistani authorities arrested 44 Indian fishermen for violating the country's territorial waters and less than a week later arrested 26 more on similar charges.

The Times of India, 30 September 2004

**No pact on turban, say French Sikhs (Rashmee Z Ahmed)**

SEPTEMBER 29, LONDON: France's Sikh community has tartly rejected Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh's benign assurance that their controversial plea had been heard by Paris and French Sikh schoolchildren will be allowed to wear substitute headgear in place of the recently-banned turbans. Leading members of the tiny French Sikh community said Singh's assurance in New York on Saturday was plain wrong. "No agreement has been reached with the French government, nor has there been any resolution to the French turban issue."(Sikh) students are randomly being refused as they come into school," emphasised Karmvir Singh, director of United Sikhs-France, a pro-turban campaign organisation. He indicated that PM Singh's assurance could be lumped with an earlier oblique and allegedly untrue promise of the French envoy in Delhi, Dominique Girard. Less than a fortnight ago, Girard claimed in a letter to Tarlochan Singh of the National Commission for Minorities, that the majority of France's Sikh students had returned to school "without any difficulty". Girard also claimed that Sikh schoolchildren had been offered alternatives to the turban and

expressed their satisfaction over it. But in a flat denial of Girard and PM Singh's claims, French Sikh leaders insist the authorities have reneged on their promise to offer a written confirmation of the agreed deal, which would replace the turban with "an accessory allowing (schoolchildren) to tie their hair while showing ears, face and nape of the neck".