

The Hindu, 2 September 2005

India, France begin strategic dialogue today (Vaiju Naravane)

PARIS: A particularly delicate edition of the India-France Strategic Dialogue opens here on September 2, a clear 10 days before a three-day official visit to France by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The Indian side is led by National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan while the French delegation is headed by Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, President Chirac's chief diplomatic adviser. The talks will focus on defence - several contracts for the purchase of military hardware from the French are pending - bilateral trade, cooperation in civilian nuclear energy, international terrorism, U.N. reform, climate change and development issues. The two sides are expected to exchange views on developments in their respective regions. The talks this year take place at a difficult time for France. Paris feels uncomfortable about India's increasingly closer ties with the United States. Washington's use of political pressure tactics in order to win lucrative contracts is no secret and the French are apprehensive they might lose out to the U.S. on major sales in the defence, aviation and civilian nuclear energy fields. Tensions between Washington and Paris that developed in the wake of the Iraq war have not completely vanished, and hawks in the Pentagon would be happy to stymie a contract for the purchase of Mirage fighter jets by India from France.

Hindustan Times, 3 September 2005

Manmohan to address UN on September 15

New York, September 3, 2005: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will address the UN General Assembly September 15, a day after he meets Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf who will be here at the same time to attend the Millennium Review Summit. The summit, said to be the largest gathering of world leaders in history, is expected to bring together at least 170 heads of state and government - out of a total UN membership of 191 countries - to mull over global issues of poverty and development. On top of India's agenda is the reform of the Security Council to add more permanent seats, one of which New Delhi has long coveted. Manmohan Singh arrives in New York September 13 after a day's stopover in Paris where he will have talks with French President Jacques Chirac. The UN is calling this year's meetings a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to take bold decisions in the areas of development, security, human rights and reform of the UN.

The Hindu, 4 September 2005

Iran's clearance for LNG project (Amit Baruah)

TEHERAN: India on Saturday supported Iran's peaceful nuclear energy programme in keeping with Teheran's international obligations and commitments. All sides should facilitate dialogue and resolve existing issues concerning Iran under the International Atomic Energy Agency framework, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said here. His comments came after External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh met Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaqi and top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani on Saturday. Iran conveyed to Mr. Singh that all clearances relating to giving effect to the \$21 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) deal with India had been received. Also, the spokesman stated that Iran was giving positive consideration to India's desire to increase the agreed amount of five million tonnes of LNG by another 2.5 million tonnes.

The Hindu, 7 September 2005

Pakistan to blame for 1965 war: ex-officer (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Air Marshal during the 1965 war with India, Nur Khan, has said that not only the war was forced on India by Pakistan but that it was unnecessary and completely unplanned. In startling disclosures in an interview to the English daily, Dawn, Air Marshal (retd.) Khan has said barring a few top generals in the Army, the war plan was not shared with other wings of the armed forces, which forced him to contemplate resignation in protest. Air Marshal (retd.) Asghar Khan, while handing over the command to Nur Khan had not briefed him about any impending war because he was not aware of it himself. So, in order to double check, Nur Khan called on the then Commander-in-Chief, General Musa Khan. When questioned, Gen. Musa admitted that something was afoot. A still highly sceptical Nur Khan was then asked to meet Lt. Gen. Akhtar Hasan Malik, GOC Kashmir, the man in charge of "Operation Gibraltar," for further details.

The Hindu, 7 September 2005

India-E.U. Summit begins today

NEW DELHI: European Council President Tony Blair, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and European Union High Representative Javier Solana arrived here late on Tuesday to attend the sixth India-European Union summit on Wednesday. A detailed action plan and a political declaration signalling the commitment of the E.U. and India to enhance engagement on all issues of mutual concern is scheduled to be issued at the meeting. "Joint values" In a statement before arrival, President Barroso said, "The European Union and India know and show that they matter to each other more than ever before. With our ambitious action plan, we will be able to jointly work against terrorism and build up a security dialogue. We will be able to meet common environmental challenges and strengthen our two-way trade and investment. Based on our joint values, on our shared commitment to freedom and democracy, we will forge an ever closer relationship and make the strategic partnership a huge success."

The Indian Express, 8 Sept 2005

EU backs India's entry into select n-fusion, tech club (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

NEW DELHI, SEPT 7: Chances of India joining the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project brightened today with the European Union (EU) backing India's bid. It also opened the doors for Indian participation in the EU-led Galileo project, Europe's own global navigation satellite system. Before European Council president and British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh addressed the India-EU summit, Benita Ferrero Waldner, EU Commissioner for External Affairs, said that these steps were being taken in recognition of India's proven scientific capabilities in these areas. She, however, made it clear that EU supports the Non-Proliferation Treaty and would like all countries to become a part of it.

The Hindu, 9 Sept 2005

India, E.U. favour 'effective multilateralism'

NEW DELHI: India and the European Union have agreed to promote a policy of "effective multilateralism," in which the United Nations will play a central role, as the best way of addressing global challenges. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, European Council chief Tony Blair and European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso, who held high-level interactions during the sixth India-E.U. summit here on Wednesday, also agreed to consult each other on "thematic issues" ahead of the U.N. General Assembly session. Addressing a joint press conference on Wednesday, Dr. Singh hailed the framework agreement on Indian participation in the Galileo satellite navigation system and European support for New Delhi's entry into the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). In a joint action plan, the two sides agreed to establish an India-E.U. security dialogue at the level of senior officials, which will include regular consultations on global and regional security issues, disarmament and non-proliferation to increase mutual understanding and identify possible areas of cooperation.

The Hindu, 9 Sept 2005

India, U.K. to cooperate on civilian nuclear energy front (Amit Baruah)

NEW DELHI: India and Britain will cooperate in civilian nuclear energy, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Thursday after talks with his British counterpart, Tony Blair, in Udaipur. "The United Kingdom recognises the need for a supportive international environment for meeting our pressing energy requirements. We have also agreed that our collective efforts to ensure energy security will be accorded priority," he said at a joint press conference with Mr. Blair at Hyderabad House here. Dr. Singh said Mr. Blair was supportive of India's atomic energy requirements. India had pointed to the need for changes in the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for the country to meet its civil atomic energy needs. A reference was made during the discussions to the recent Indo-U.S. nuclear deal. The two leaders described their talks as successful. They were said to have spent more than an hour at a one-to-one meeting. They agreed fully on the need to battle terrorism, which has taken on a new meaning for the U.K. after the July blasts in London.

The Asian Age, 10 Sept 2005

U.S. turns Iran screw on India (By Seema Mustafa)

New Delhi, Sept. 9: External affairs minister Natwar Singh has drawn the India-US civilian nuclear energy

agreement into the direct line of fire from the US Congress with his one visit to Iran. US administration officials R. Nicholas Burns and Robert G. Joseph, who appeared before the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations in a bid to sell the US-India agreement on civilian nuclear energy to the US Congress, were countered by influential Congressmen wondering about New Delhi's support for Iran's nuclear programme. India, meanwhile, has been served a time notice by the United States which expects it to begin delivering on its side of the civilian nuclear pact agreed to by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W. Bush. New Delhi has also been told in no uncertain words that, one, the first key commitment should be the separation of military and civilian nuclear installations; and two, this should be done in a manner that meets with US approval. The two senior officials made it clear that India was now expected to move to keep its end of the bargain.

The Asian Age, 10 Sept 2005

PM invites Pervez to NY dinner

New Delhi, Sept. 9: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has invited Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to a dinner meeting in New York on September 14. He will address the United Nations General Assembly the same day. Dr Singh will fly in to New York from Paris where he is to hold talks with French President Jacques Chirac. His two-day visit to France, from September 11 to 13, will be the first by an Indian Prime Minister in seven years. The trilateral meeting of India, China and Russia will also take place in New York where all sides will review energy security and cooperation and discuss matters of global and regional interest. Besides Mr Musharraf, Dr Singh will have bilateral meetings with US President George W. Bush, Chinese President Hu Jintao, Russian President Vladimir Putin and South African President Thabo Mbeki. Dr Singh also co-host the launch of the Democracy Fund in New York along with President Bush and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and participate in the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) meet and a NAM meeting.

The Hindu, 11 Sept 2005

Musharraf to meet Manmohan (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf leaves for New York on Sunday in connection with the 60th session of the U.N. General Assembly. His engagements include a meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and an address to the American Jewish Congress, the first-ever by a Pakistani leader. Gen. Musharraf is scheduled to speak at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on September 13. He will hold talks with Dr. Singh on September 14 on the sidelines of the U.N. meeting to review the India-Pakistan dialogue process. The Pakistan delegation will include the Foreign Minister, the Adviser to the Prime Minister for Women Development, the Chairman of the National Commission for Human Development and the Secretary of the National Security Council, an official statement here said.

The Times of India, 11 Sept 2005

US plays Iran card before India (Chidanand Rajghatta)

TIMES NEWS NETWORK, WASHINGTON: First Iraq, now Iran. The Bush administration will press India to join a US-led effort to curb Iran's nuclear program when the two sides meet in New York this coming week on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session. The hot-button issue -- for US -- of Iran's nuclear program has suddenly been placed squarely on the agenda for US-India talks, with indications that it could be a significant hurdle in the energy dialogue between Washington and New Delhi. At a state department conference on Friday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Washington looked forward to leadership, not just from the three European Union countries negotiating with Iran on the nuclear issue, but also from Russia, China and India.

The Hindu, 12 Sept 2005

I can do business with the General: Manmohan (Harish Khare)

ON BOARD THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPECIAL FL: Three days before his scheduled dinner with President Pervez Musharraf in New York, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday declared that he continued to "trust" the Pakistani leader and he believed that he could do "business" with the General. "I have not changed my views" (since his last meeting on New York), he said. Dr. Singh was answering to

questions from the media travelling with him on his plane en route to Paris. Asked about his Independence Day's observation that Pakistan's efforts to curb terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir were "half hearted," the Prime Minister noted that Pakistan had taken "some steps" and it was "too early for me to say" [whether promises made have been kept]. Dr. Singh said the agenda for the discussion over dinner with President Musharraf would emanate from the April 12, 2005 joint agreement signed in New Delhi. He noted that the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service was a major breakthrough. "We will see what further can be done," he added. Also, the Prime Minister repeated his earlier formulations that "we cannot change borders but we can work to make borders irrelevant."

The Hindu, 12 Sept 2005

India for stepping up ties with France: Manmohan

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Sunday that India was committed to further strengthening the "privileged relations of strategic partnership" with France. In a statement here before leaving for Paris en route to New York, Dr. Singh said: "It is our intention to further expand cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, defence, space, civilian nuclear energy, advanced science and technology as well as cultural and civilisational ties." Dr. Singh will have wide-ranging discussions with French President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister Dominique Villepin, and other leaders on Monday. During his stay in Paris, he will also have meetings with the chief executive officers of some major French companies to apprise them of the emerging opportunities for trade and investment in India. "I will also be meeting academics from French institutions which have a long tradition of scholarships on India," Dr. Singh said.

The Hindu, 12 Sept 2005

Musharraf for a "way forward" (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has said he expected to discuss with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh a "way forward" towards the resolution of Kashmir. The two leaders are scheduled to meet on September 14 on the sidelines of the 60th session of United Nations General Assembly. Talking to mediapersons on Sunday before leaving for New York, Gen. Musharraf said, "I have to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. I want to promote the cause of peace and resolution of disputes, especially the Kashmir dispute. When we talk about dispute, the basic focus ought to be on Kashmir." He said, "I have no doubt in my mind [that] with other issues [we] do make progress at [the] Secretary or Minister level, but when two leaders meet they ought to discuss issues that cannot make progress at [a] lower level."

The Asian Age, 12 Sept 2005

Indian works on UK silent jet

London, Sept. 11: An Indian engineer is working on a project to create silent aircraft by the year 2025. A £2.3-million project has come up with plans for a radical aircraft, with four engines on top of a wing-shaped fuselage, which should be so quiet that no noise would be heard outside an airport. Anurag Agarwal, an engineer on the project, said that the engine noise would be shielded by the fuselage. "If you think of light waves coming out of the forward section of the engines, then these rays would bounce off the upper surface of the wing and it would leave a shadow region underneath," he told the British Association festival of science in Dublin. "The same thing happens with sound." In addition, the jet engines are wider, so that the air travels through them more slowly and less noisily. The extra length means acoustic mufflers can be added on to the ends. The current design would seat 250 people and travel 4,000 miles, and is comparable in size to a Boeing 767. Mr Agarwal said that the design could be easily scaled up to fit 800 people.

The Hindu, 13 Sept 2005

France to help India in nuclear field (Harish Khare)

PARIS: France has promised to leave "no stone unturned" to enable India to meet its civilian nuclear needs, a euphemism for a gradual dismantling of the restrictive Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). This

"commitment" came during an "extremely warm" meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace here on Monday. Scorpene deal :But before the "commitment" was made Mr. Chirac put on record that Dr. Singh "is confirming today the decision to buy six Scorpene submarines and 43 Airbus aircraft which is of course a token of confidence, friendship and cooperation we are of course sensible to." Both sides avoided any suggestion of a quid pro quo. In fact, the Indian side stopped short of suggesting that a nuclear "deal" was clinched. India also hinted that it was ready to buy French nuclear reactors and a feasibility study was already being undertaken.

The Hindu, 13 Sept 2005

Former PoK President to visit India for dialogue on Kashmir (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: The former President and Prime Minister of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Sardar Abdul Qayyum, is visiting India for a week from September 17 in connection with an "intra-Kashmiri dialogue" organised by the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA). It would be the first time that a senior leader from PoK would be travelling to India on a Pakistani passport and Indian visa. Mr. Qayyum, who heads the ruling Muslim Conference in the PoK, would head the contingent for the dialogue. Though PoK is under the control of Pakistan, it is not part of Pakistan. The official position of Pakistan is that like Jammu and Kashmir, PoK is a disputed territory and the status of the whole of Jammu and Kashmir is to be determined through a plebiscite as envisaged by the 1948 United Nations Resolution.

Citizens of PoK travel on Pakistani passports but their leaders rarely travel to India. In the past the Pakistan Government has discouraged PoK citizens wanting to visit India. The very fact that Mr. Qayyum, a vocal supporter of Pakistan President Musharraf's peace dialogue with India, chose to accept the ICWA invitation is a reflection of the remarkable change brought about by the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue.

The Indian Express, 13 Sept 2005

India, US declare working group on N-issues

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 12: Taking forward the understanding on nuclear issues reached during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Washington visit in July, India and the US have finalised details of a working group that will, in a "phased manner", undertake steps to fulfill commitments in the joint statement. While Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran will head India in the group - setting up of which was agreed by Singh and US President George W Bush - the US team will be headed by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns. Sources said the first meeting between the two officials was expected after the UN General Assembly session. External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh and Saran will stay back while the Prime Minister will leave New York on September 16. The July 18 joint statement states that the working group will undertake "necessary actions". These include the all-important nuclear understanding, which requires the countries to take reciprocal steps that will open the doors of nuclear business for India.

The Hindu, 17 September 2005

Iran issue: India and Russia for consultation (Harish Khare)

New York: India and Russia have agreed that the international community should rely on consultation rather than confrontation in sorting out doubts over Iran's nuclear ambitions. The two countries will rely on dialogue and diplomacy to avert confrontation in this matter. This understanding emerged at a brief meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session on Thursday, according to Indian diplomats. NSG norms relaxation :Dr. Singh gave Mr. Putin an account of his July visit to Washington and outlined the agreement on civilian nuclear energy with the United States. He said the agreement would pave the way for "greater relaxation" in the Nuclear Supply Group (NSG), making it easier for India to gain access to nuclear technology, fuel and reactors. Mr. Putin congratulated Dr. Singh and expressed Moscow's willingness to work with New Delhi once the NSG norms were relaxed.

The Hindu, 17 September 2005

Visas hinder expansion of trade with Russia

New Delhi: Indian Ambassador to the Russian Federation Kanwal Sibal on Friday said even as there was

increasing recognition on both sides to improve the long standing relationship between India and Russia the visa problem was a major stumbling block enhancing and consolidating the economic cooperation."While the outlook for our trade and economic relationship is bright and a political recognition of the need to step up this relationship exists, our businessmen face a major problem in obtaining Russian visas. This is discouraging many companies and businessmen, the IT sector, to seriously look at opportunities in Russia," Mr. Sibal said. Speaking at the inaugural session of the "India Russia Business Partnership 2005, Redefining Horizons" organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here, Mr. Sibal said, "Our efforts to reach a business visa facilitation agreement with Russia are stalled for the time being even though drafts have been exchanged between the two governments and India is willing to sign an Agreement on Readmission."

The Hindu, 18 September, 2005

Indo-Latin American meet to be held in Goa (Prakash Kamat)

PANAJI: : Ambassadors, Charge d'affaires and High Commissioners of several prominent Latin American and Caribbean countries will attend a three-day seminar - 'Indo-Latin American and Caribbean relations' - to be held here from October 7 to 9. The seminar will debate issues of bilateral trade and economic co-operation and explore Goa's potential as a destination for tourists from Latin America, Portugal and Spain. It will also explore investment opportunities for the Indian industry there. The meet is expected to revive the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between India and these countries. The meet is to be organised under the auspices of the External Affairs Ministry in association with the Goa Government and the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Centre for Latin American Studies, Goa University, will co-ordinate the seminar, its director Prof. V. Shivkumar said. Goa Governor S. C. Jamir will inaugurate it and Minister of State for External Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh is expected to participate. Prof. Shivkumar rues the lack of awareness of the emerging opportunities in these countries, which have put behind them the "lost decade" of the '80s and are building on the "development decade" of the '90s.

The Hindu, 19 September 2005

The LTTE shadow over India (Subramanian Swamy)

THE ASSASSINATION of Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has exposed the fault lines in India's policy towards the internationally proclaimed terrorist organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. On the one side, the Indian Government has banned the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. On the other side, despite the continuing assassinations, India does not oppose the "peace dialogue" of the Sri Lankan Government with the LTTE, talks that could end up legitimising the terrorist outfit and making the ban meaningless. Although the LTTE has officially denied any involvement in the Kadirgamar assassination, such a denial cannot be taken seriously. The organisation has always denied its involvement in terrorist activity - murder, arson, extortion, drug trafficking, and so on. The LTTE denied any part in Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. However, the Supreme Court of India, in its 400-page judgment delivered on May 12, 1999, laid bare what a huge lie that was.

The Hindu, 20 September 2005

Tariff cut not to deter Indo-Thai trade

New Delhi: Seeking to allay fears of Indian industry, Thailand on Monday said India should not get deterred by the 'aftershocks' following the tariff reduction on products under the early harvest scheme (EHS) in the Indo-Thai FTA initiated in September last year and both countries should resolve to deepen their trade engagement to optimise the FTA benefits. Spelling out this while addressing a seminar on Maximising trade and investment opportunities: India-Thai synergies after FTA, organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry here, the visiting Thai Trade Representative Prachuab Chaiyasan said the accrual of benefits to Thailand from the tariff reduction should not mean that the country stops trading. In fact, Thailand should move from 82 items under EHS to another 82 and identify products that benefit Indian trade and industry.

The Indian Express, 20 September 2005

The burden of great power (C. Raja Mohan)

As a week-long diplomatic opera opens in Vienna this week, India is being called upon to change its part from that of a bit player in the non-aligned chorus to one of the lead singers. As a consequence, India

confronts a dilemma: must it continue to enjoy the comforts of performing at the periphery or should it risk dashing to the centre-stage for greater gains? The story line of the Vienna opera is about Iran trying to acquire nuclear weapons. The dramatic tension is built around the divisions in the world community about how best to address the challenge. And the cast of characters are 35 countries which have representatives on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency. India is one of them. The Bush Administration, sceptical of Iran's willingness to give up its nuclear weapons programme, wants additional pressure on Tehran, including a condemnation of its activity by the IAEA, and reporting it to the United Nations Security Council for further action that could include sanctions and the threat of use of force. The European powers, who urged the US to hold back, are now frustrated by Tehran's decision to break the agreement on nuclear freeze it signed with them last year. They are now working with the US to draft a resolution at the IAEA that might confront Iran with a deadline and a notice: either comply with your commitments within a reasonable time frame, or face serious consequences.

The Indian express, 20 September, 2005

India wants 'non-selective' approach on combating terror

United Nations, Sept 19: Asking the United Nations to provide "cohesion" to global efforts to deal with terrorism, India today made it clear that unless there was a "non-selective, uniform and sustained" approach, the objective of the international community towards it cannot be achieved. Making a statement at the 60th session of the UN General Assembly, External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh strongly pitched for changing the composition of the UN Security Council. "One cannot argue in favour of democracy in the rest of the world and leave the UN Security Council undemocratic," Singh said and added, "If institutional reform has been faltering and many are doubtful of securing a just solution, it is because the security council does not reflect the world of today." Asserting that there can be no justification for terrorism, he said "unless there is a non-selective, uniform and sustained approach, the objective of the international community cannot be achieved."

The Hindu, 21 September 2005

Evolve consensus on Iran issue: Natwar

New York: Sticking to its stand on Iran, India on Tuesday sought intensive diplomatic consultations to evolve an international consensus on how to deal with Teheran's decision to continue its uranium enrichment programme notwithstanding American and European pressure to abandon it. The Iran issue figured prominently during a 45-minute meeting here between External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. A senior official said the talks were held in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere". The Singh-Rice meeting comes within a week of the meeting here between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W. Bush during which it was made clear that India did not want another nuclear weapon state in its neighbourhood.

The Hindu, 21 September 2005

Progress in talks with Dhaka on rivers (Haroon Habib)

Dhaka: The Water Resources Ministers of India and Bangladesh will jointly visit the border areas after Id for a spot survey of erosion and related problems in common rivers. The decision was taken at the 36th meeting of the Joint River Commission (JRC), which ended here on Tuesday with "substantial progress" on contentious issues. Bangladesh Water Resources Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed said India also agreed on an early warning system, enhancing lead time for forecasts of floods in the Brahmaputra and the Ganga. India would provide information on floods in the rivers 66 and 67 hours in advance (now it is being done 42 and 41 hours ahead). The possibilities of extending the lead time further would be discussed in the next JRC meeting, to be held after six months, indicated Union Water Resources Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi.

The Hindu, 22 September 2005

Iran issue: India, China, Russia for consensus approach

New Delhi: The Foreign Ministers of India, China and Russia, Natwar Singh, Li Zhaoxing and Sergei Lavrov, have said they favour a "consensus approach" to the knotty issue of Iranian nuclear programme, now being discussed by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. "The Ministers reviewed the latest developments on the issue. They expressed their preference for a consensus approach, and have

agreed that their delegations in Vienna should remain in close touch and work together," an Indian statement said after the Ministers met in New York on Tuesday. The External Affairs Ministry said Mr. Singh congratulated his Chinese and Russian counterparts on the successful outcome of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue and applauded the role they played.

The Hindu, 22 September 2005

Experts to study Teesta flow to arrive at accord (Haroon Habib)

Dhaka: Bangladesh and India have signed a document on a crucial Joint Rivers Commission meeting, which discussed problems but apparently failed to make a breakthrough in sharing waters of the Teesta. The just-concluded two-day meeting here could not reach any understanding either on India's planned dam at Tipaimukh on the Barak river upstream of the Meghna basin. Addressing a joint press conference here on Wednesday, Union Water Resources Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi said the Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) would study the Teesta flow and report to the next JRC meeting, to be held in six months, to enable it to arrive at a sharing "agreement" or "arrangement" on the river waters.

The Hindu, 23 September 2005

India an excellent role model" (V.S. Sambandan)

Colombo: "India is an excellent economic model for Sri Lanka to follow," Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse said on Thursday. He was inaugurating the "Made in India" exhibition, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry in collaboration with the Indian High Commission and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. The five-day show, scheduled to conclude on September 26, is aimed at increasing awareness of Indian products in the Sri Lankan market. Reiterating his commitment to stronger bilateral economic ties, Mr. Rajapakse said the meeting of minds would usher in new thoughts and ideas. This would result in the economic integration of South Asia for the benefit of all. Towards greater integration: Nirupama Rao, High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka, said New Delhi remained committed to deepening and expanding the vibrant partnership between the two countries. There was immense scope for further expansion of bilateral trade. The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which was being negotiated, would carry forward the progress made after the bilateral Free Trade Agreement and move towards greater integration.

The Hindu, 24 September 2005

Manmohan's `advice' to Iran

New Delhi: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has advised Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to avoid a confrontation with European nations and the United States over its nuclear programme. He also suggested that Iran make "concessions" to this end. This "advice" was tendered to Mr. Ahmadinejad when he telephoned Dr. Singh. "The President raised the issue about Iran's nuclear programme in the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency]. The Prime Minister advised him that Iran should consider taking a flexible position so as to avoid a confrontation," an External Affairs Ministry statement said.

The Hindu, 24 September 2005

`Smart cards' to protect Indian workers abroad (P.S. Suryanarayana)

Singapore: India is considering issuing "smart cards" to its migrant-workers. The "e-card" would contain details ranging from the worker's employment particulars and travel record to the identity of persons to be notified in case of emergencies. This aspect of India's efforts to evolve "an e-governance solution to emigration" was emphasised in Bali on Wednesday by Prithviraj Chavan, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office. He was addressing the `Third Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia.' Mr. Chavan told The Hindu over telephone, during a brief stopover in Singapore on his way home, that he briefed the delegates about India's new initiative. The "e-cards" would not only supplement the passport but also establish "the legal status" of the migrant-workers abroad.

The Hindustan Times, 24 September 2005

India ready to play bigger role in West Asia peace

India is considering a proposal to appoint a special envoy for the West Asia peace process - a move that is likely to raise further New Delhi's strategic and economic stakes in the stability of the region. In a

meeting with External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh in New York Thursday, his Palestinian counterpart Nasser al-Kidwa requested that India appoint a special envoy for the West Asia peace process."In this regard, the extension of the charge of the special envoy to West Asia to West Asia peace process will be considered," said the external affairs ministry in a statement here. Natwar Singh also met his Afghan counterpart Abdullah Abdullah in New York and expressed India's commitment to a sovereign and stable Afghanistan. India appointed Chinmaya Gharekhan as prime minister's special envoy for the West Asia early this year.

The Hindu, 26 September 2005

M.K. Narayanan in Beijing for boundary talks (P.S. Suryanarayana)

Singapore: India's Special Representative, M.K. Narayanan, arrived in Beijing on Sunday for talks with his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo, on the boundary question. The talks, expected to last two days, will begin on Monday. The latest round will be the sixth in a series that began after the Prime Ministers of the two countries agreed in June 2003 to appoint Special Representatives to "explore the framework of a boundary settlement" by addressing the relevant issues from "a political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship." The latest round acquires importance in the context of the "political parameters" and "guiding principles," which the two countries agreed upon in April to carry forward the border parleys at the level of special representatives.

The Hindu, 26 September 2005

India spells out economic priorities to Australia (P.S. Suryanarayana)

Singapore: Deputy Chairman of the Union Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia has identified "further alleviation of poverty" as India's top economic priority for the future. During a visit to Australia this week, where he delivered a public lecture and interacted with a number of chief executives at the high-end of the corporate sector, Dr. Ahluwalia said India would focus on the "human development" aspects of the social sector and the infrastructure requirements as well. India's objective was to sustain an eight per cent annual growth rate during the 11th Five-Year Plan. Dr. Ahluwalia called on Victoria Premier Steve Bracks, among other regional interlocutors. India's High Commissioner to Australia P.P. Shukla participated in the meetings.

The Hindu, 27 September 2005

India spoke for Iran: Saran

New Delhi: Two days after triggering a domestic political storm by voting for an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution, which said Iran was not complying with the IAEA statute, India claimed that much of its diplomatic effort was made "on behalf" of Teheran. Pointing out that India was in touch with the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France and Britain as well as Iran, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told the media here on Monday that India was successful in persuading the European Union "three" not to refer Iran immediately to the United Nations Security Council and allow time for discussions. "Having got them [the EU-3] to agree to what we wanted, then to say we will only abstain on the resolution would not have been the correct position for us to take."

The Hindu, 27 September 2005

Dialogue needed to strengthen India-Bangladesh ties (Haroon Habib)

Dhaka: Political relations between Bangladesh and India remained far below potential due to the lack of a dialogue between the neighbours, Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Veena Sikri said. "The two countries need more discussion and dialogue. Government-level interaction has to be supplemented and complemented more and more by the civil societies and private-sector dialogues," she said. India's relations with other neighbours, having gone through a rough patch, were now better than ever before. In her address to foreign investors here, Ms. Sikri said there was a broad consensus among political parties, the business community and the public in India for a deeper, mutually beneficial, cooperative relationship with Bangladesh and other neighbours. "What we need now is sustained dialogue and continuous engagement to evolve mutually beneficial, win-win solutions on all issues," she said at the monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on Sunday. "Trade has to take place through much more interaction."

The Hindu, 27 September 2005

Bring Doha agenda back on track: Chidambaram

Washington: India has warned that failure to break new ground in WTO talks and the growth of protectionist tendencies in some advanced countries are impeding global trade and asked the world community to play a "pro-active" role for the success of the Hong Kong Ministerial in December. After the failure of the Cancun WTO Ministerial in 2003, the world is eagerly looking forward to the Hong Kong session for putting the Doha Development Agenda "back on track," Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said. The progress made so far was "disappointing." Speaking at the World Bank Development Committee here on Sunday night, he said it was imperative that the global community reached a consensus in Hong Kong on ambitious developmental outcomes.

The Hindu, 28 September 2005

LNG deal is off: Iran (Amit Baruah)

New Delhi: Iran has informed India that the five-million-tonne a year liquefied natural gas (LNG) export deal, with deliveries scheduled to begin in 2009 for a 25-year period, is off. This was conveyed to Indian officials in Vienna soon after the anti-Iran vote cast on Saturday by New Delhi at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) governing board meeting. Communication comes from Vienna :In a communication to the Prime Minister's Office and South Block dated September 24, India's Permanent Representative in Vienna, Sheelkant Sharma, wrote that his Iranian counterpart had told him the LNG deal, signed between the two sides in June, was off. The Iranian Ambassador in Vienna came up to Dr. Sharma after India's vote and conveyed a message from Ali Larijani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, that Teheran was no longer willing to go ahead with the \$21-billion deal.

The Hindu, 28 September 2005

Canada to resume supply

Ottawa: In another step towards India's integration with the international nuclear regime, Canada has agreed to resume supply of nuclear-related "dual-use items" to Indian civilian facilities, more than three decades after halting them. A joint statement, issued after talks between visiting External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh and his Canadian counterpart, Pierre Pettigrew, here on Tuesday, said Canada agreed to "allow the supply of nuclear-related dual-use items to Indian civilian nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in accordance with the requirements of the Nuclear Suppliers Group's dual-use guidelines." - PTI

The Asian Age, 28 September 2005

India to sign Scorpene deal

New Delhi, Sept. 27: India will formally sign the contract to acquire six Scorpene submarines from France next month. The three-billion dollar deal was announced during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to France. The deal will be signed between the Indian Navy and the French company D.C.N. International. The contract will include the final delivery schedule of the submarines and other details. Under the agreement, six Scorpene submarines will be manufactured at Mazgaon docks in Mumbai under full technology transfer. The deal was cleared after prolonged deliberations on the price issue. The French company agreed to accommodate the Indian concerns about absorbing escalation of price due to delay in sealing the contract. India also wanted to incorporate the integrity pact in to the deal.

The Hindu, 29 September, 2005

Iran "not calling off" LNG deal (Amit Baruah)

New Delhi: The \$ 21 billion agreement between Iran and India for the export of five million tonnes of liquefied natural gas is "still in force and passing through ... [its] normal process," the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi stated in a press release. Meanwhile, the BBC has reported Ali Agha Mohammadi of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) as saying Iran had no plans to withdraw from the LNG export deal. Referring to Indian media reports on the possibility of the LNG export deal and the gas pipeline project being called off, the press release declared that "the agreements arrived at between the two countries are still in force and passing through their normal process." Giving some background, the Iranian Embassy quoted Ali Larijani, secretary of the SNSC, as saying the resolution passed by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency "lacks legal foundation and Iran expects the

member states to review it." As for India's vote for the resolution, Mr. Larijani added: "We did not expect India to do so. [But] I believe the friends should not be judged by a single action. Iran enjoys friendly relations with India."

The Hindu, 29 September, 2005

Black flags, stones greet Indian delegation

Kathmandu: A five-party delegation from India led by CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury was greeted with a black-flag demonstration and stone-pelting by hundreds of pro-monarchy activists upon its arrival here on Wednesday. Shouting anti-India slogans, a crowd of about 200 demonstrators threw stones at the vehicles emerging from the Tribhuvan International Airport carrying the seven-member delegation, which came to meet local political leaders and extend support to their struggle for restoration of democracy. No one was injured in the attack. "We are here to see the situation and to extend the full support of the people of India to the movement for restoration of democracy being launched by the seven-party alliance," Mr. Yechury told PTI upon arrival. "It is upto the people of Nepal to decide how they want to restore democracy and what specific structure of political system they want but we are here to extend our support and solidarity to their movement for restoration of democracy," he said.

The Hindu, 30 September 2005

Was anti-Iran commitment given in July? (R. Ramachandran)

New Delhi: India's position on the Iranian nuclear question at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) appears to have been one of the key conditions to the successful negotiation of the India-U.S. nuclear deal on July 19. The detailed transcript of the hearing of the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) on September 8, eleven days before the crucial IAEA Board of Governors (BoG) meeting, suggests this. Notwithstanding the alleged remarks by the Indian External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, in Teheran in early September - which the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) later denied - the nuclear deal seems to have been clinched only after India gave, inter alia, a "reciprocal" assurance - if not an absolute commitment - of its support at the IAEA on the Iran issue.

The Hindu, 30 September 2005

Indian leaders support Nepal pro-democracy movement

Kathmandu: The visiting political delegation from India on Thursday expressed solidarity with Nepal's seven-party alliance fighting King Gyanendra's rule. Nepal's struggle for restoration of democracy will be fought solely by the Nepalese people but they will need moral support from the international community, including India, for its success, said Girija Prasad Koirala, Nepali Congress president and a main leader of the alliance, during discussions with the five-party delegation. The Indian leaders including, CPI (M)'s Sitaram Yechury, NCP's D.P. Tripathi and CPI's D. Raja, who are here on a three-day visit, said Indian people are with Nepalese people's movement for restoration of democracy and extended solidarity to the movement. Mr. Koirala said the seven parties have been working to intensify their pro-democracy movement and it is gaining momentum, Nepali Congress central member Krishna Sitaula, one of the participants at the meeting said.