

The Hindu, 4 September 2006

Let's wait till deal is in place: Pranab

Paris, September 3: Progress would be made on the United States-India civilian nuclear deal when the countries actually clinch a final agreement, Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee told presspersons here on Sunday. Asked about the progress made and how soon the deal would be concluded, he said that "till today" India did not have access to nuclear technology and materials even for peaceful purposes. Talking to correspondents accompanying him on a six-day visit to France and Germany, Mr. Mukherjee conceded that India was getting some "little bit of support" in the civilian nuclear area from France...

The Indian Express, 4 September 2006

"Remove hitches", China keen on India coming

New Delhi, September 3: China on Monday said it wants to go in for large amount of investments in this country but was facing difficulties in this regard on account of restrictions. China particularly plans to set up a steel factory in India in view of availability of large amount of iron ore in this country, which it imports from here... He referred to a news report recently, which said that Chinese companies had been barred from participation in airport modernisation here because of "security" concerns. He asked how the firms of his country could be a security threat to India as the two countries were friends. China has large reserves of foreign exchange and intends to invest in India, Sun said, hoping the restrictions would be removed...

Hindustan Times, 4 September 2006

India, France to discuss civilian nuke cooperation: Mukherjee

Paris, September 3: The French offer of cooperation in civilian nuclear energy development is likely to figure prominently in defense dialogue with India on Monday as Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Sunday that New Delhi wanted to deepen strategic relationship with Paris...The Minister's remarks came as Indo-US agreement on civilian nuclear deal is still pending with the US Congress...

Hindustan Times, 4 September 2006

'Indo-Iran ties not dependent on Iran-US ties'

Paris, September 3: India on Sunday affirmed that its ties with Iran, which faces the West's wrath over its controversial nuclear programme, were not dependent on Tehran's relations with other countries. Asked by newsmen on his arrival in Paris what would be India's stand if the United Nations imposed sanctions on Iran for refusing to stop uranium enrichment process, Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee said "our relationship with one country is not dependent on that country's relations with others"...

The Hindu, 5 September 2006

India, France "not very far" from nuclear pact

Paris, September 4: France and India are "not very far" from reaching a broad agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation as envisaged in their February declaration on "development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes," issued during President Jacques Chirac's visit to New Delhi. The declaration and the impending agreement will give

France a head start in its bid to enter the civilian nuclear energy market in India once the Nuclear Suppliers Group relaxes restrictions on New Delhi...

Hindustan Times, 5 September 2006

India to kick up moon dust

Bangalore, September 4: India's dreams of conquering space may not exactly be turbulence-free but its ambitions remain intact. Barely two months after the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) disaster, Indian space scientists are all geared up to kick up some moon dust just as their European peers did on Sunday. The scientists are designing a 30-kg impactor that will ride onboard Chandrayaan-I " the first indigenous orbiter scheduled for launch in 2007-08" and crash into the moon to toss up a plume of soil and scientific data on minerals and water...

The Times of India, 5 September 2006

Our Man to meet Musharraf in Havana

New Delhi, September 4: It's inevitable after the chill, a thaw is on the way. When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf meet in Havana for a formal kiss-and-make-up session next week, India may indicate the end of the present diplomatic sullenness and resume the stalled composite dialogue with Pakistan. New Delhi called off foreign secretary-level talks in July after the Mumbai blasts. But a decision has now been taken in principle to restart talks with Pakistan...

The Hindu, 6 September 2006

ADB projects higher growth for Asia; India, China play key role

Manila, September 5: Economies in developing Asia are expected to expand 7.7 percent this year, higher than the 7.2 percent initially projected, thanks to booming growth in China and India, the Asian Development Bank said Wednesday. The Manila-based lending institution also called on the region's developing nations to adjust to high oil prices, pick up the pace of fiscal consolidation and stimulate investment to better cope with potential shocks to their economies. In 2005, the region _ 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific, excluding Japan _ grew 7.6 percent...

The Hindu, 6 September 2006

Sri Lankan MPs seek meeting with Manmohan

Colombo, September 5: A delegation of MPs from the pro-LTTE Tamil National alliance (TNA) is in New Delhi to seek an audience with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. They want to meet him to explain the TNA's view on the prevailing situation in the island nation. More MPs intend to join the delegation once a meeting is fixed. The party is relying more on political channels rather than the official ones for fixing up the interaction with Dr. Singh...

Hindustan Times, 6 September 2006

French muscle for India's missiles

Paris, September 5: France has agreed in principle to provide technology for Cruise missiles to India but neither side was willing to spell out their range. Describing the development as a major boost to Indo-French "strategic relationship," Defence Minister

Pranab Mukherjee told journalists that a "decision has been taken to develop the Cruise missiles. But it has to be worked out what type they will be."...

The Times of India, 6 September 2006

Now, sugarcane for fuel

New Delhi, September 5: Oilfields and coal mines are passe. India is now poised to make a go at acquiring sugarcane acreages overseas in search of energy security. The idea is to put in place an assured supply of ethanol, a byproduct of the sugar industry that is mixed with petrol to produce swadeshi fuel or 'gasohol'. Progressive use of this fuel will reduce the country's oil bill by reducing dependance on imported crude...

The Indian Express, 6 September 2006

India plans port at Great Nicobar

New Delhi, September 5: As part of the post-tsunami port infrastructure building exercise, the Andaman & Nicobar administration is exploring the possibility of setting up a trans-shipment port in Great Nicobar Island, the southernmost landmass in the Indian Ocean. A government official said a feasibility survey would soon be carried out on South Bay northeast of Indira Point, India's lowest landmark that submerged after tsunami tidal waves hit the archipelago in December 2004...

The Hindu, 7 September 2006

Manmohan calls up Ahmadinejad

New Delhi, September 6: Hoping to remove some of the bitterness that has crept into the India-Iran relationship over the past year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke to each other on the telephone on Wednesday evening. According to the Prime Minister's media adviser, the telephone call, which lasted 15 minutes, was initiated by Dr. Singh. Both leaders agreed that a strong and vibrant relationship is of strategic importance, and would be beneficial for peace and prosperity of the entire region, the Prime Minister's Office said in a brief statement...

Hindustan Times, 7 September 2006

India may soon allow FDI in education

New Delhi, September 6: India may allow foreign direct investment in colleges by top global universities to ease the pressure on students going abroad to pursue studies, a senior government official said on Wednesday. The government aims to draw up a draft paper soon and then invite public comment, he said...

The Indian Express, 7 September 2006

Indian forces won't disarm Hizbollah

New Delhi, September 6: With the United Nations revising its mandate to broaden the scope of operations of the UN force in Lebanon, India has made it clear to the UN that its troops will not carry out any exercise to disarm the Hizbollah or interdict arms supplies. While there is a strong opinion growing in New Delhi that India must pull out its 700-plus troops, currently deployed as part of the UN peacekeeping force in Southern Lebanon, sources said the Government has put the decision under "constant review" after Beirut made a specific request to India not to pull out its troops now...

The Times of India, 7 September 2006

India a difficult place to do business

New Delhi, September 6: Despite being amongst the positive reformers, India is one of the most difficult places to do business, according to the International Finance Corporation's 'Doing Business 2007' report. India moved up four notches since last year and is ranked 134th among 175 countries with only Bhutan (138) and Afghanistan (162) placed lower in south Asia...

The Indian Express, 8 September 2006

India, China sign MoU on technology cooperation

Beijing, September 7: The warming of relations between India and China was reflected in the first-ever ministerial-level science accord signed here today by the science ministers of the two nations. India likely to hurry Hu on boundary row Cabinet nod for better roads along China border To tackle China on science, Mashelkar for more IISERs "India losing scientific edge to China" Grey Area Minister of Science and Technology Kapil Sibal inked a Memorandum of Understanding with his Chinese counterpart Xu Guanhua which paves the way for setting up of a joint "Steering Committee" to be chaired jointly by the two ministers to "guide, coordinate and facilitate" science cooperation between the two countries...

Hindustan Times, 8 September 2006

India's exports may surpass target of \$126 bn in 2006-07

New Delhi, September 7: India's merchandise exports are likely to surpass the target of \$126 billion during 2006-07 if the first quarter growth is sustained, Commerce Minister Kamal Nath said. The target of \$126 billion exports will be exceeded going by the 40 per cent growth momentum seen in the first quarter of this fiscal, Nath said at a meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Commerce Ministry...

The Hindu, 8 September 2006

India rejects Sri Lankan Minister's charge

New Delhi, September 7: Reacting to the accusation of Indian interference made by Sri Lankan Tourism Minister Anura Bandaranaike, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday defended the conduct of its High Commissioner in Colombo and said her contribution to the strengthening of bilateral ties "is well appreciated by the host Government." Speaking on the floor of the Sri Lankan Parliament on Wednesday, Mr. Bandaranaike accused Nirupama Rao, Indian High Commissioner, of interfering in his country's internal affairs...

Hindustan Times, 9 September 2006

Lanka Govt lauds work of Indian envoy

Colombo, September 8: The Sri Lankan government officially stated on Friday, that Tourism Minister Anura Bandaranaike's remarks against the Indian High Commissioner Nirupama Rao did not reflect its views and that it was "deeply appreciative" of the envoy's "pro-active" role in promoting Sri Lanka-India ties...

The Hindu, 9 September 2006

Indian hand in Baloch unrest, says Pakistan

Islamabad, September 8: At least five persons were killed and several injured in a bomb explosion on Friday in Pakistan's Balochistan province. In the capital, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Muhammed Ali Durrani once again insinuated an Indian hand in the Balochistan unrest. The situation in the province has been tense in the two weeks since the killing of the tribal leader Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti in a military operation. Reports said the bomb went off near a hospital in Rakhni, about 300 km north of Quetta, the provincial capital. Many of the wounded were in critical condition after the blast...

Hindustan Times, 9 September 2006

PM's Cuba visit has a Left connection

New Delhi, September 8: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's decision to go to Havana for the non-aligned movement (NAM) summit was based more on domestic political compulsions than foreign policy initiatives, a senior South Block official said. The visit to Cuba would ease the concerns of the allies of the government from the Left parties that India was getting too close to the United States. The throwback to traditional foreign policy affiliations, like NAM, would also assuage concerns of the country's large Islamic population...

The Hindu, 11 September 2006

Showpiece of an independent foreign policy

Brasilia, September 10: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's nine-day trip to Brasilia and Havana is expected to serve as a showpiece of an independent foreign policy, according to officials accompanying him. The United Progressive Alliance has in the last two years engaged with the United States, the European Union, Russia, the ASEAN and China. Yet, the bilateral talks with Brazil and the three-nation India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) summit in Brasilia as well as the non-aligned summit in Havana would be an engagement of a different type...

The Indian Express,, 11 September 2006

India Inc upbeat on business in US

India Inc Enthusiastic! New Delhi, September 10: Indian companies seem to be bullish on investing in the US with the regulatory authorities approving direct investments worth \$225 million in the April 2005 to January 2006 period, a survey said. Majority of the Indian investments abroad are in the US and home-grown companies have invested close to \$2,159 million in the last decade, followed by Russia with investments to the tune of \$1,763 million, Mauritius \$1,038 million and Sudan \$964 million, according to a survey conducted by Industry body Ficci and Ernst and Young...

The Hindu, 11 September 2006

Joint patrolling of Andaman Sea

Singapore, September 10: The Indian Navy and its Indonesian counterpart are engaged in a three-week patrolling of the Andaman Sea to counter piracy, smuggling and other trans-national crimes. The latest round of patrolling is part of the maritime operations that

began in September 2002 following the signing of a navy-level bilateral protocol. Scheduled to conclude ceremonially at Port Blair later this month, the current patrolling is also punctuated by a joint naval exercise aimed at improving "interoperability" between the two forces. Two Indian Navy vessels, a landing ship and a fast-attack craft, as also an Indonesian corvette were pressed into service...

The Times of India, 11 September 2006

PM will have to do deft diplomacy at NAM meet

New Delhi, September 10: The Havana summit is shaping up to be one of the most challenging non-aligned summits ever for Indian diplomacy. On one level, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will have to contend with demands for strongly worded statements on Iran, Lebanon and Palestine. But on another level, New Delhi must face the fact that the 116-nation NAM's agenda is increasingly being set by a new international alliance of Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and neo-Socialists...

The Indian Express, 12 September 2006

PM meets Lula in Brasilia today

Brasilia, September 11: With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reaching Brazil late on Monday, there was time for him for just one meeting with the Indian business delegation. But more work is slated for Tuesday. The entire day will be devoted to bilateral meetings with Brazilian President Inacio Lula da Silva and signing of agreements. PM writes to CMs on 15-point programme
How PM will walk NAM tightrope
With Left OK, PM to talk terror with Pak in Cuba
"India must be NAM bridge power"
PM discusses farm package with PCC chiefs from 4 states...

Hindustan Times, 12 September 2006

Action shifts to IAEA

New Delhi, September 11: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran has begun focusing on his next assignment, that of bringing the Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation deal to a successful closure, once he hands over charge to Shiv Shankar Menon at the end of this month. With the US Senate likely to shortly debate the issue before voting on a bill to enable nuclear commerce between the two nations, a parallel set of negotiations will focus on "India-specific safeguards" with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)...

The Times of India, 12 September 2006

Fresh hitch for N-deal

New Delhi, September 11: As government anxiously waits for an early green signal from the US lawmakers for the bilateral nuclear deal, a procedural wrangle in the US Senate is slowing down action on the India-related nuclear legislation at a time when legislative days in the present Congress are shrinking rapidly. This is Title II of the Senate Bill, S 2489, which is a law implementing the IAEA additional protocol for US nuclear facilities...

Hindustan Times, 12 September 2006, 12 September 2006

India provides Rs one billion support to Nepal

Kathmandu, September 11: India on Monday provided Rs one billion as budgetary support to Nepal's new government, which faces the huge task of rebuilding the insurgency-hit Himalayan nation. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Shiv Shanker Mukherjee handed over the check to Nepal Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat at a function in Kathmandu...

The Hindu, 14 September 2006

Support for India's nuclear deal

Brasilia, September 13: In a significant development, India has obtained the support of the three-nation India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) grouping for its efforts to open up avenues for international civilian nuclear cooperation beginning with the nuclear deal with the United States. This was indicated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his opening address to the plenary session of the first IBSA summit on Wednesday. "I appreciate the fact that IBSA has lent its support for forward looking approaches to enhance international civilian nuclear cooperation," he said...

Hindustan Times, 14 September 2006, 14 September 2006

IMF raises Indian growth forecast to 8.3 per cent in 2006

Singapore, September 13: India's fast-growing economy should expand by 8.3 per cent this year instead of 7.3 per cent as previously projected, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Thursday. Interest rates may have to be raised further to check inflation, the IMF said in its twice-yearly World Economic Outlook, predicting India and China would be twin engines driving the roaring economies of emerging Asia...

The Hindu, 14 September 2006

U.S. curbs on nuclear issue a barrier to trade: Pranab

New Delhi, September 13: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee declared on Wednesday that a "large body of restrictions" on the nuclear issue imposed by the United States formed an "invisible barrier" to trade and investment between India and the U.S. These restrictions impacted India in the areas of high-technology trade and cooperation, "so vital" to advancing the economies of the two countries, he said inaugurating an Indo-U.S. business meeting...

The Hindu, 14 September 2006

Seize opportunity for talks with LTTE, Chidambaram urges Rajapaksa

Colombo, September 13: Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Wednesday urged Sri Lanka President Mahinda Rajapaksa to seize the 'opportunity' for talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the wake of the Co-Chairs of Sri Lanka statement. After meeting the President, Mr. Chidambaram told journalists at the temporary Presidential palace that he was happy to learn about the possibility of the resumption of talks between the Sri Lanka Government and the Tamil Tigers...

The Hindu, 16 September 2006

Manmohan Singh to stress reconciling role of NAM

Havana, September 15: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's attempt at the XIV Non-aligned Summit being held here would be to get the non-aligned movement play a reconciling role in a world marked by terror and conflict. Talking to the media on board Air India 1 taking him from Brasilia to Havana, he said to him, non-alignment was a state of mind, the ability to think independently of the options to widen the development choices, and it was as relevant today as it was during the period of the Cold War...

The Indian Express, 16 September 2006

India, US, China agree to sign new energy pact

New Delhi, September 15: For the first time, the world's five major crude oil buyers, including India, United States and China, are likely to meet next month to sign a pact on "collective efforts" to check the recent price volatility in crude oil. The energy ministers of India, US, China, Japan and South Korea — these five nations together account for half of the world's total oil consumption — are slated to meet in Beijing between October 23-26 to sign a joint statement on "ways to promote the stability of international oil market and ensure energy security"...

The Indian Express,, 16 September 2006

Article: To catch a virus and miss the disease

The WHO recently said that India has suffered a resurgence in polio this year with 283 new cases, and is 'actively exporting' the virus to Nepal, Bangladesh and Africa. Surely, it is reason for concern. But our concerns must not stop at polio. Much else ails health in our country Many outside the health sector might have reason to think that polio has been near eradicated from our country. What with many many celebrities involved in polio vaccination endorsements and the extensive media attention given to the fight against this debilitating disease...

Hindustan Times, 16 September 2006

India ranks 47th in list of corrupt countries: WB

Singapore, September 15: China and India must move to curb corruption or else their booming economies will likely falter, a senior World Bank official said on Friday. The giant Asian neighbours are growing at annual rates of 10 per cent and 8 per cent respectively, the fastest among the world's major economies, but both score poorly on controlling corruption, according to a World Bank study on quality of governance across countries...

The Hindu, 17 September 2006

India, Pakistan to set up anti-terror mechanism

Havana, September 16: In a major breakthrough after their hour-long meeting here on Saturday, on the sidelines of the Non-aligned summit, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf decided to put in place an institutional mechanism to counter terrorism. At the end of the one-on-one talks without aides which they described as "cordial, frank and detailed," they agreed to an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives

and investigations, according to a joint statement read out by Dr. Singh at a media appearance along with General Musharraf...

The Hindu, 17 September 2006

India sees NAM's role as one of "moderation, harmony and reason"

Havana, September 16: India's role in the negotiations on the declarations and statements to be made at the end of the XIV non-aligned summit being held here has been in tune with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's call to the movement to serve as the voice of "moderation, harmony and reason," according to official sources. While it was for the declarations on the NAM's role to be true to its original mission, it had also supported the strong positions taken on Lebanon and on Iran, the sources said...

Hindustan Times, 17 September 2006

India optimistic about gas pipeline: Deora

London, September 16: India said it is optimistic about the ambitious seven billion dollar Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project taking a concrete shape. The three countries already had secretary-level and ministerial-level meetings in this connection, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Murli Deora said in London... The proposed pipeline is expected to transport 90 million standard cubic metres of gas every day from Iran's South Pars fields to India from 2009-10 onwards while Pakistan would receive 60 million standard cubic meters...

Hindustan Times, 17 September 2006

India, Brazil, SA to exploit 'new trade geography'

Brasilia, September 16: The three-way cooperation among India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) stands for "new trade geography" to use one another as gateways to push intercontinental trade and investment, said Commerce Minister Kamal Nath... Citing figures on the prospects of trade among the three countries, Kamal Nath said intra-IBSA trade was only \$ 7.7 billion in 2005, representing less than 1.5 per cent of the total trade of the three countries...

Hindustan Times, 18 September 2006

India marks turf in undersea treasure hunt

New Delhi, September 17: An Indian undersea secret has been kept so well over the past four years that even MPs who got wind of it during the monsoon session of Parliament were not allowed to ask questions. In Delhi, discussions currently on between oceanographers and diplomats, from the new Ministry of Earth Sciences and the Ministry of External Affairs, mark the last stages of an exercise that began in 2002 with secretive ocean experiments that will eventually allow India to lay claim to vast undersea reserves of oil and minerals...

Hindustan Times, 18 September 2006

Pak president gave explicit commitment on terror: PM

On Board Air India One, September 17: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that President Pervez Musharraf had assured him "Pakistan has no hand" in perpetuating recent terror acts in India and had given an "explicit commitment" to work with India "to

do all that is in their control to control the scourge". Talking to journalists accompanying him while returning from Havana, where he met Musharraf, the prime minister said the "new mechanism" between the two countries to deal with terrorism was a "new beginning" and he was "very pleased" with the outcome of the discussions...

The Hindu, 18 September 2006

NAM totally opposed to terrorism: declaration

Havana, September 17: In a strong endorsement of India's position, the 118-nation Non-aligned Movement (NAM) expressed on Sunday its total opposition to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and asked countries to combat the menace, including by prosecuting and extraditing its perpetrators. Burning midnight oil and bringing to an end months of negotiations, the two-day NAM summit adopted the Havana Declaration and the "Final Document" in the early hours of the day urging countries to refrain from extending political, diplomatic, moral or material support to terrorism under the U.N. Charter and also asking them to fulfil global obligations not to give it any support...

The Indian Express,, 18 September 2006

No concessions on farm subsidy at trade talks: Nath

Singapore, September 17: India is willing to negotiate access for industrial goods but will not offer any concessions on agriculture as world leaders seek to revive trade talks, the Union commerce minister Kamal Nath said on Sunday...Nath said a recent meeting of the G-20 nations yielded no agreements on when the trade talks will resume...

Hindustan Times, 18 September 2006

India to rework on gas pipeline project: PM

On Board PM's Special Flight, September 17: India will rework on the India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline once the report of experts on the feasibility of the project is available, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Monday. Talking to reporters on way home from Havana, he said during his meeting with Iranian President Ahmedinejad, the latter agreed the two countries must work together to strengthen bilateral relationship in every possible way...

The Times of India, 18 September 2006

Tharoor running very strong: Manmohan

On Board the Special Flight, September 17: Expressing confidence that Sashi Tharoor will "give a good account" of himself in the election for the post of UN Secretary General, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday said for the first time India had dared to tell the world that it was ready to assume a role in the management of international polity. Talking to reporters on way home from Havana, the Prime Minister said contrary to what some people in the country have been writing, "Tharoor is running very strong. In the last straw poll that was conducted he came number two."...

The Indian Express, 20 September 2006

US: India's stand on UN reforms disappointing

United Nations, September 19: Following the US statement that it was "disappointed" with India's stance on general reforms of the United Nations, the Permanent

Representative of India to the UN, Nirupam Sen, said he had "no idea" about it. Sen said that India had been very actively and positively perusing the issue of UN reforms, which has been widely accepted and acknowledged by a large number of countries - Reforms of the six-decade old UN would be one of the key issues of discussion at the 61st session of the General Assembly, which started earlier this week...

The Indian Express, 20 September 2006

Acceptable (J&K) solution is within reach: Musharraf

United Nations, September 19: Fresh from his Havana meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today told the United Nations General Assembly that "an acceptable solution of this long-standing dispute (over Jammu and Kashmir was) within reach" - Improved relations and the conducive international environment has brought "an acceptable solution of this long-standing dispute within reach," he said. This strategy, he said, envisages that apart from combating terrorism frontally, the international community must undertake resolute efforts to resolve conflicts afflicting the Islamic world...

The Times of India, 20 September 2006

Saran in US to get nuke deal past Senate

New Delhi, September 19: As the nuclear deal moves to a floor vote in the US Senate days before it stops work for elections, foreign secretary Shyam Saran gears up for a final round of diplomacy with Senate leaders and his US counterpart Nick Burns. Now all this could have happened last week, if an unexpected resignation drama in the MEA did not force Saran to postpone his visit to Washington. Neither the US nor India want a repeat of the House of Representatives vote with amendments requiring more work at the reconciliation stage...

The Times of India, 20 September 2006

Time for final push

The second straw poll for identifying the potential UN secretary-general from among the existing candidates placed Indian candidate Shashi Tharoor in second position once again, but with a wider gap between him and the frontrunner Ban Ki-moon of South Korea. However, a significant result of the second poll was that the Security Council did not embrace Zeid Al-Hussein, the Jordanian prince and diplomat, reportedly a favourite of the US and Pakistan...

The Times of India, 21 September 2006

N-deal may raise terror risk to India: Expert

Washington, September 20: As the US Congress considers the nuclear deal with India, it should also encourage cooperative nuclear security between them to counter increased threats of terrorism against Indian facilities, says an expert at a US think-tank. The two countries should not permit their improving relationship to become hostage to terrorists threats from Al-Qaeda and other militant groups and put a halt to the potential benefits of the US-India deal, says Charles D Ferguson, a fellow for science and technology at the Council on Foreign Relations...

The Indian Express, 21 September 2006

Friend of India, Shinzo Abe to be Japan's youngest PM

Tokyo, September 20: Some people in the Indian community in Tokyo like to describe Shinzo Abe, who won a landslide victory as the head of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party today, as Japan's "Rajiv Gandhi". Why? Because he will become Japan's youngest Prime Minister on September 26, when Diet, the country's parliament, officially elects him to the top post. With LDP enjoying a huge majority in Diet, Abe's election as successor to Junichiro Koizumi, the outgoing prime minister, is now a mere formality...

The Times of India, 21 September 2006

War on terror: UK seeks Indian Muslims' help

Mumbai, September 20: After monitoring Muslim immigrants in the UK to prevent radicalisation of their youth, the British government has sought the help of Indian Muslims in its fight against terrorism. Concerned at the rising anti-British feelings among Muslims here, the UK government is keen to build bridges with them. Last week, S J Qadri, media advisor and spokesperson for Britain's foreign and commonwealth office in London, along with his counterpart in New Delhi, toured Indian cities and met editors of Urdu newspapers and community leaders...

Hindustan Times, 21 September 2006

Mukherjee holds talks with world leaders

New York, September 20: India, Russia, China and Brazil who discussed a range of issues, including the situation in Middle East, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York have decided that the group would meet from time to time for coordinating positions on various issues. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, leading the Indian delegation to the United Nations, participated in the high-level discussions convened by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on Wednesday...

The Times of India, 22 September 2006

N-deal: Pranab, Rice talk shop

New York, September 21: Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have held in-depth discussions on the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal which comes up in the Senate in the next few days. During their half-an-hour meeting on Thursday night, the two leaders also exchanged views on several regional and international issues of mutual concern. Officials briefing reporters did not give any more details but said the meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere...

The Times of India, 22 September 2006

'US to object India doing biz with Iran'

New Delhi: The US will have a problem with India doing business with Iran because of Tehran's controversial nuclear programme, former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said here on Tuesday. He said in view of the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, Washington will put 'pressure' on New Delhi for support on this crucial issue...

The Times of India, 22 September 2006

PM to visit Pak if action matches promise

New Delhi, September 21: After the Havana warmth, there could be a few amber lights flashing in government with the refrain being "trust, but verify". PM Manmohan Singh's engagement with Islamabad, in particular his visit to Pakistan, is likely to hinge on whether Gen Pervez Musharraf delivers on stemming terror. While there is no word yet on the shape of the joint "anti-terror mechanism," PMO sources feel that the efficacy of the proposed formulation would have to be tested before the next step in the India-Pakistan tango is taken...

The Indian Express, 23 September 2006

On natural gas pricing, Iran keeps India out

New Delhi, September 22: Contrary to the agreement, Iran has excluded India — and likely Pakistan — from the joint exercise to work out the pricing formula for natural gas that would flow through the proposed tri-nation Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline... Tehran has kept GAIL (India) Ltd out of "coordination and finalisation" of a study by Gaffney, Cline & Associates on fixing the formula which would be the starting point for further negotiations on gas price — the main contention among the three countries...

Hindustan Times, 23 September 2006

Raise Indo-Pak dialogue to summit level: Musharraf

Washington, September 22: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf wants the India-Pakistan dialogue to be raised to the summit level and also says that terrorism should not be allowed to derail these talks. The joint statement that he and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh issued after their Havana meeting "has seeds of success and forward movement", he told students of George Washington University on Friday...

The Indian Express, 23 September 2006

Oil's well between Manmohan and Left

New Delhi, September 22: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has taken note of a positive offer from Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez of supplying oil to India at a stable price during a meeting the two leaders had in Havana, and suggested to Left leaders that relations with Iran were back on track after the IAEA vote as Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had assured him that the issue was now over. Pawar bats for UPA, party guns for CongNIFT centre: Lucknow loses out to Rae BareillyAll for Telangana: TRS chief resigns from LSIn Left push, PM emissary on his way to Dushanbe UPA stir to greet Namdhari today Chavez, who says his country has the second largest oil resources in the world, offered to provide oil at a price that would be impervious to fluctuations in the international oil market...

The Times of India, 25 September 2006

India responsible nuclear power: Mukherjee

New York, September 24: Expressing confidence that the Indo-US nuclear deal would be cleared by the American senate, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said the international community is prepared to cooperate with New Delhi in civilian nuclear programme as India has behaved very responsibly in this regard. The Defence Minister

expressed confidence that the Indo-US civilian deal would go through but pointed out that the relations between the two countries are not dependent on one issue and are spread across a spectrum of several areas...

The Times of India, 25 September 2006

Anti-terror pledge is Musharraf's final chance: PM

Nainital, September 24: With the Havana formulation on a joint mechanism to monitor terrorism under fire, PM Manmohan Singh said on Sunday that India's approach to terrorism was unchanged and asserted that Pakistan's president Pervez Musharraf had been given a final chance to deliver on his anti-terror pledge. Speaking to the media along with Congress president Sonia Gandhi, the PM said that "rumours" were being spread about the joint mechanism. He sought to counter the argument that the joint mechanism would be read as a sign of weakness on India's part and said there was no lack of determination in the campaign against terrorism...

The Times of India, 26 September 2006

Pervez lobs ball back in PM's court

New Delhi, September 25: Hours after PM Manmohan Singh put Pakistan on notice regarding the proposed anti-terror mechanism by saying that it was Pakistan's last chance to prove itself in the war against terror; Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf lobbed the ball back at him saying it was a test for India too... Though he described the new group as "essential" to stamp out terror in both countries, Musharraf seems determined to ensure both countries remain tarred by the same terror brush, adding fuel to the "trust deficit" that worried Manmohan Singh...

Hindustan Times, 26 September 2006

India asks Pakistan to dismantle its terrorism base

Washington, September 25: Calling Pakistan a "nursery of global terrorism", India has asked Pakistan once again to stop all cross-border terrorism as promised and dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism still intact on its soil. While the fragile political fabric of states in India's neighbourhood is a source of continuing anxiety to New Delhi, Pakistan remains a nursery of global terrorism, visiting Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said in a talk on Monday at Harvard University in Boston...

The Indian Express, 27 September 2006

Atal rejects Musharraf's claims on Agra summit

NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 26: Expressing his surprise over the remark made by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in his book In The Line of Fire that both of them felt insulted at the Agra summit, former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said here today "no one insulted the General and certainly no one insulted me"...The former prime minister attributed the failure of the Agra summit to Musharraf's position that bloodshed in J-K was "people's battle for freedom". India, on the other hand, believed there could be no normalcy in its relations with Pakistan until cross-border terrorism ended...

The Times of India, 27 September 2006

Fight terror with India, US tells Pakistan

Washington: The United States has asked Pakistan to work with India to reduce threat from Kashmiri separatist groups, many of whom were responsible for terrorist attacks in India...Commenting on Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's continuing tirade against his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai, he said the fact is that Afghanistan and Pakistan must work together militarily and diplomatically to fight terrorism...

Hindustan Times, 27 September 2006

Nuke deal: Vote unlikely this weekend

Washington, September 26: There are fresh doubts over whether the US Senate will be able to go through with the much-awaited debate and vote on the nuclear deal legislation before it adjourns this weekend for the upcoming Congressional elections. A renewed effort by Senate majority leader Bill Frist on Monday night failed to get past the Democrats, but further behind-the-scene efforts are said to still be on...

The Indian Express, 27 September 2006

Scoring high on innovation, India ahead of China in competitiveness ranking

New Delhi, September 26: Nine parameters, 125 countries and in the global race for competitiveness, India is ranked 43, up two points over the previous year. In its Global Competitiveness Report 2006-2007, released by World Economic Forum yesterday, India tops among BRIC countries — Brazil is ranked 66, Russian Federation 62 and China 54. India is also ahead of all its geographical neighbours — Sri Lanka's 79, Pakistan's 91, Bangladesh's 99, Nepal's 110. Standing right at the top, rising three ranks is Switzerland. The other big rise has come from Sweden, which rose from 7 to 3. The biggest fall in the top 10 has come in the United States, which fell from being the most competitive economy last year to No. 6 this year...