

imprint

*India's Foreign Affairs Magazine. International relations.
India's imprint on the world in business and culture.*

Oil improves international relations among Asian nations

Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Iran, China, India, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Qatar and Israel to cooperate and collaborate for future growth

INDIA'S economy is growing at a fast pace. Naturally it needs energy to fuel its economic growth, now that the energy demand of India is more than that of Europe's. For fulfilling its demand for energy in the future, India is now looking beyond the traditional sources of energy, such as countries in the Middle East. India is aiming for the Caspian region and Central Asia, for its crude oil demand.

Currently, the news is that Azerbaijan may soon become an important energy link for India in bring-

ing gas and crude oil, from Caspian region. Up until now, due to the absence of any major links with the exporters there, India has not been able to source any crude oil or gas from the Caspian region. In the month of June one of the major developments in this issue was that Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Iyar proposed accessing crude oil from Central Asia and Caspian using an Israeli pipeline.

While addressing the 12th international Caspian oil and Gas conference in Baku (Azerbaijan), Mr Aiyar mentioned that the 254 Km Eilat- Ashquelon pipeline could be used for transporting crude oil from the East Mediterranean to the Red sea. From here the oil will be shipped to India. Oil can also be pumped from the Caspian region into the newly commissioned 1764-km Baku (Azerbaijan) - Tbilisi (Georgia)-Ceyhan (Turkey) pipeline to reach the Mediterranean Sea. From here it can be pumped into the

Israeli pipeline for Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCC's). These VLCC's would be further picked at the Red sea for transportation into India. Israeli pipeline is an excellent option because it saves oil tankers to go via the lengthy winding route of Africa and the limits imposed on VLCC's to pass through the Suez Canal.

Mani Shankar, the oil man of India, is now also looking at the possibility of importing gas from the Caspian region. Mani Shankar's original gas pipeline project was termed as RKUTAPI (Russia-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India); now Mani Shankar has added another 'A' and 'C' to this. So now it has become ARKUTAPIC project where A is for Azerbaijan and C is for China.

Not only this, our main man Mani is also going to visit China in the month of November to discuss the possibility of extending the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline to the South of China.



India is also going to explore the possibility of purchasing the natural gas through the undersea pipe-

(Continued on pg 3)

CHECKLIST OF VISITORS

Sudan's Foreign Minister

Mustafa Osman Ismail

June 6 to 8

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs

Alexander Downer

June 7 to 10

Singapore's Prime Minister

Lee Hsien Loong

June 28 - 30

Foreign Minister of Afghanistan

Abdullah Abdullah

July 3-4

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- India-Singapore sign CECA
- Russian help revives abandoned TIFR experiment

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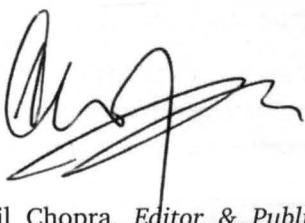
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Past perfect future tense

The fact is India is far behind China in every statistic of manufacturing, consumption, growth and development. Not so in the area of disease, poverty, crime, and tragedy of every hue. In the same month we have two stories in the US media. On China's revolution and strategy in remaking the world, one deal at a time, with patience of the strong in mind and body, and the other story of India's denial of AIDS and the prospect of 25 million patients in precisely five years, weak and diseased and dying. In this context we have to view our gravitation and friendship with the US, which has gladdened the world, since the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Initial reactions to India and the US coming closer are indeed of a climax, like the coming together of the good guys! Like a film's natural choice, of the hero who *must* win, which is India, or the wronged now understood and accepted as a worthy friend. The India US friendship is so popular as to be a matter of serious concern to the few, very few countries, which might not be too happy with this paradigm shift in the global equation. From the status quo that prevailed since India's independence since Nehru's era and continued thru the seventies and even after the emergence of Russia, thru the eighties and even thru the nineties Islamic phase of US global politics. Indeed the US has taken a long long time to realize the true hero of global democracy and with each passing pole of the path to mutual understanding India will increasingly be viewed as belonging to its new circle of influence of the US. Our diplomacy has to work that much harder already in retaining the old circle of influence and the understanding we had with the rest of the world. India in its foreign policy needs to remind itself that friendship with the rich and famous or rather powerful is not an end in itself, rather one's integrity is always under pressure in such environments. How much alert we are to these purposes of the new equation will determine our link and understanding with the rest of the world. That the US has extremely strong impulses in its quest for a position of a super or supra status, that can undermine the needs of its closest allies, is well taken even by the Euro club.

As such India with its history of non-alignment and its role of a leader for the third world must initiate dynamic diplomatic efforts in 'reaching out' to our long time admirers of the past fifty years, when India always lived up to the expectations of the world in its choice of the difficult path but true to its belief and philosophy. India *does* need to develop and overcome our failures of the past in not achieving dynamic growth and development like the other South East Asian countries. However this is not enough reason to forget the implications of being wronged consistently in the warped policy of the US against India for the past fifty years and against all the principles of democratic tradition. Even today for example it fails all reason for the US to support Pakistan *militarily*. But there you have it. China's dramatic appearance as a winner in the last few years is proof enough that nothing succeeds like success, and all sins is easily forgotten, especially by the 'West'. If in comparison India does not want to be seen as sacrificing its ideals and compromising its role, these last fifty years and more and its position of a leader, some serious thinking on the diplomatic initiatives that can achieve this is a top priority. Iraq is an area that needs India's involvement at a more deeper level and our past relations and goodwill with the Arab population now involved in insurgency can be leveraged to find a proper solution to the present chaos. India must involve itself, in Iraq and elsewhere. Only then we have a chance to prove that we remain steadfast on our principles of the past. Cheers!



Anil Chopra, Editor & Publisher

The brief for *imprint* is India's international economic relations, and India's foreign policy impacting economic development, as also the imprint of India globally, arising from the actions of our government. And of Indians in their achievements internationally.

(Continued from pg 1) line route from Quatar to Pakistan and further extending it to the Indian coast.

The need for energy is making us witness some of the worlds most unexpected partnerships. Hunger for energy is turning foes into

friends. In the month of June it emerged that India and Pakistan, the two energy hungry nations of the region might buy oil together (The Iran-Pak-India pipeline project). This is an extremely important development as a joint negotiation by the buyers will

rewrite the market rules and definitely change the energy equations in the region. As the experts on this issue quote "The 'monopsonistic powers' (one buyer in the market) of India and Pakistan will be the new bargaining chip in the energy market." We

hope that the need for energy would bring Asian nations together initially for oil. Once these nations come together with a common motive then later on it will be easier for them to use this collaboration to solve some of the other major issues in the region.

UNSC seat: India, Brazil, Germany, Japan just want to get in

THE United Nations Security council (UNSC) is going to expand and every country wants a seat in the Security Council. India has always demanded a veto powered permanent seat in the UNSC. However the month of June saw some twists and turns in India's bid for the UNSC seat. The G4 nation members (Germany, Brazil, India and Japan) when observed that there was a lot of opposition against expanding the veto power to new members, and it appeared to be a major sticking point, they changed the plan. Brazil, Germany, India and Japan made public a significant draft proposal in the month of June. In this draft proposal the four countries stated that if they are accepted as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council then they are ready to forego their veto rights. This draft proposal which was circulated by G4 countries includes expanding the council from the current 15 members to 25 with six new permanent seats, thus hoping to join the elite group. The two seats might go to African nations.

US to support a 'developing country' besides Japan

In the month of June it appeared that US might

finally tilt in favour of India. This was because as per media reports, US was to announce the criteria under which it would back candidates for the UNSC. India fits the criteria which include democracy, status of a developing country and involvement in the UN. The United States also made an important announcement this month, which said that apart from supporting Japan, it will now support a "developing country" in addition to Japan. This announcement of Japan means it would not support Germany. Anyways this was evident earlier as well, that United States won't hold up Germany.

This latest announcement regarding supporting a developing country apart from Japan was termed in the international media as a plot to split G4 nations. It was in response to this that the Foreign Ministers of G-4 nations decided to meet in Brussels to craft a joint strategy. On the other hand China did not appear to be too happy with the decision of US to include Japan. So there is now a tug of war between China and US on this issue. Even Africa which has 54 votes in the General Assembly and South America also won't digest it easily that two more countries are

going to be taken from Asia.

Regarding the issue of inclusion of Japan, the media informed that there are enough signs that backing the US is the price India will have to pay for attaining its goal of getting a UNSC seat. This was also evident when the US Under Secretary of States Nicholas Burns visited India in the month of June and gave this message that the US has set a criteria for the UNSC for which India is best qualified to meet. But for Washington to openly endorse India, New Delhi will have to commit few things. These include achieving a greater consonance with the US on issues such as peace-keeping and promotion of democracy, being on the US wavelength on issues such as non-proliferation and terrorism and most importantly a dialogue on China.

India lobbies hard

Toward the end of June Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh visited London. Our External Affairs Minister left no stone unturned lobbying for India's UNSC Seat." India's presence as a permanent member of the Security Council is the best means to authenticate and reinforce the representative characteristic of the Coun-

cil, he said while addressing a conference in London. In June, Britain also came out in support of India's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC, but without veto power.

India against consensus strategy

June also saw India coming out harshly against countries like China who advocate consensus as the only basis for expansion of Security Council. Indian Ambassador Nirupam Sen told the UN General Assembly's high level segment to consider a document on UN reforms to be presented to a September summit of world leaders for adoption." To say that there should be no vote but a consensus is to disarm them (developing nations) of their main weapon. The rhetoric of anti-privilege masks the reality of a cynical defence of entrenched privilege."

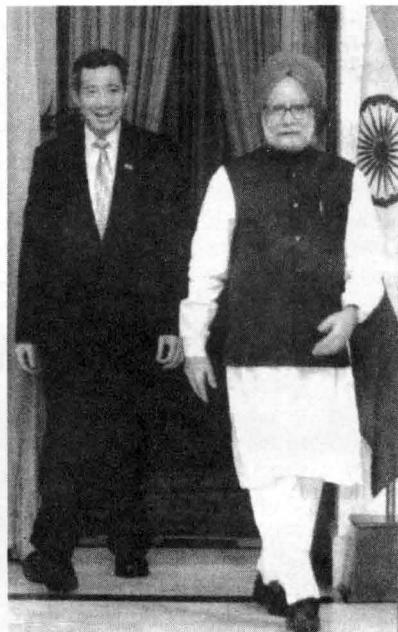
At the moment India seems to be the flavour of the season, many countries seem to give their verbal support but it is in September only that India will come to know as how many of these verbal supporters turn into votes and whether India will become UNSC member with veto or will it be vetoed out!





▲ Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse(r), shakes hands with former Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral during their meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Thursday, June 23, 2005. Gujral is in Sri Lanka on a three-day visit.

Taking a step ahead: Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Lee Hsien Loong visited India in the end of June. The two countries inked the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement.



▲ Cambridge felicitates Natwar: External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh(r) is being congratulated by Professor Haroon Ahmed, the Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University. Natwar Singh was awarded the honorary Fellowship by Corpus Christi College in the end of June.



▲ India welcomes the largest ever \$12 billion FDI: Executive vice President of Posco, Soungh Sik Cho and Orissa Steel and Mines Secretary Bhaskar Chatterjee sign a MOU for a 12 million-tonnes-per annum integrated steel plant. The steel Plant will be situated at Paradeep in Orissa Bhubaneswar.



▲ Support without veto power: Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in London

Will Sonia's visit to a hermitage in Russia help India accomplish its global aspirations? Indian External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh and Congress Chief, Sonia Gandhi during their visit to a Hermitage in St. Petersburg. The Congress Chief visited Russia in mid of June.

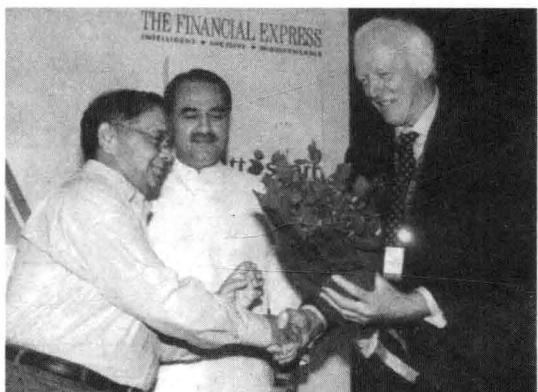


DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES



► Indian sky beacons the world: Jacques Chirac, the French President visits the Indian booth at the Paris Air Show in Le Bourget. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited displayed three of its flagship products in the Paris Air Show which happened from 13-19 June 2005.

► Discussion on the defence treaty: Pranab Mukherjee with Codoleezza Rice in Washington. The Indian Defence Minister visited Washington in the end of June.



► Airport modernisation is the need of the day: Peter Harbison(r), MD Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation shake hands with Civil Aviation Secretary, Ajay Prasad. On the centre is Union Civil Aviation Minister, Praful Patel.



► Maximum visas to Bangladeshis but illegal entry can not be tolerated: Indian Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, with his Bangladeshi counterpart Mohd Hemayatudin. Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary visited India in the end of June for a two day meeting.



► Indian Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee with US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld during a visit to Pentagon. Pranab Mukherjee visited US in the end of June 05.

► Indian Finance Minister P Chidambaram, meets Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong. The Prime Minister of Singapore in the month of June.





When will be their final step towards peace: Separatist leaders Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik transverse the Peace Bridge towards Kashmir, in the mid of June.



India arrives at the Defence power centre: Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee during his visit to Pentagon, US in the end of June. India and US signed a ten years relationship agreement.



Self-reliance not writing off debt will solve Africa's Problems: India's Finance Minister P Chidambaram (r) leaves Lancaster House with Trevor Manuel, South Africa's Finance Minister. Both were there to attend the Pre-G8 Summit Finance Minister's meeting in London.

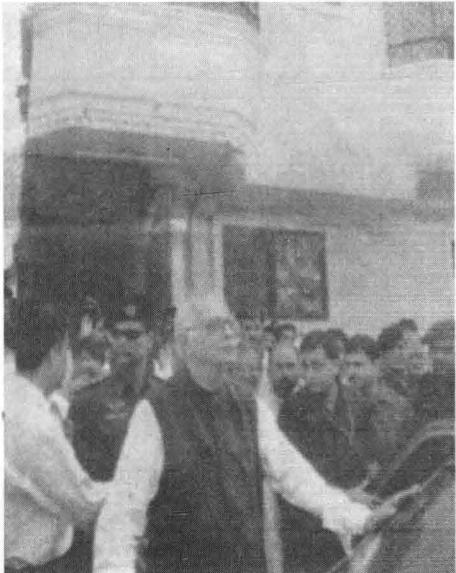


Sonia Gandhi, Congress President with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg, Russia in the mid of June 05.



Concerned towards Security: Prime Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh with Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah. Afghan Foreign Minister visited India in the beginning of July. The two countries discussed the security situation in Afghanistan.

Oh, I've landed in a soup: Lal Krishna Advani visits Parsi Colony of Karachi. The place was Advani's home before partition. Advani visited Pakistan in the beginning of June

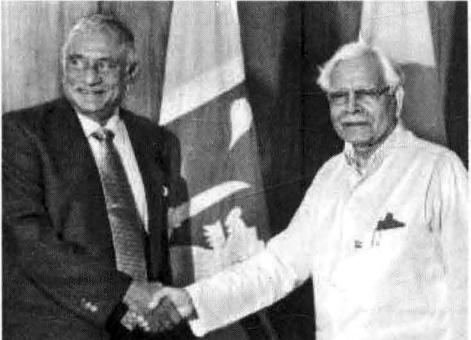


DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES



Mani Shankar Aiyar, the Indian Petroleum Minister and his Pakistani counterpart, Amanullah Khan Jadoon. Mani Shankar visited Pakistan from June 3-7 to discuss the \$4.16 billion Iran- India gas pipeline project

▲ Strengthening ties for energy and Hydrocarbon: Foreign Minister of Sudan Mustafa Usman Ismail met up with the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 7th of June in New Delhi. There were talks regarding hydrocarbon sector and a landmark strategic cooperation of the two countries in this field.



◀ We respect the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan Society: Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh with Sri Lankan Foreign Affairs Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar in Colombo. Natwar Singh visited Sri Lanka in the beginning of June 05.



▲ Sonia shines at the international political scene: Sonia Gandhi, received by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Saltanov at the Moscow airport. The Congress President paid a three day visit to Russia in June.

Efforts needed to resolve the situation: Former Prime Minister of Nepal Girija Prasad Koirala with the Congress President and Chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance Sonia Gandhi. Koirala visited India in the second week of June.



◀ Building up support to strengthen UN: The Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Esrar Ahmed attended the meeting of Ministers of foreign Affairs in Doha, Quatar. The meeting was on 13th June 2005.

Defence purchases: Shooting at the target

THE defence procurement procedure in India is going for a change. According to the defence procurement procedure manual released by the Defence Minister

penditure of more than Rs 34,000 crore would be fully utilized. He also appeared to be extremely positive regarding speeding up of the modernization process.



INS Vikramaditya

Pranab Mukherjee- From now on for all foreign arms companies winning contracts more than Rs 300 crore (Rs 3 billion), it will be compulsory to invest 30% of the amount in the country as direct offsets. Besides this, foreign arms companies will also have to sign an integrity pact to ensure that no "unfair and unethical" means are employed in winning the deal.



F-16's

The revised manual also carries a standard contract document to make the procurement speedy. As per the Defence Minister, this year's capital outlay ex-

Pranab Mukherjee states "We may have to ask for supplementary grants under this head as we want to speed up modernisation.

The Defence Minister disclosed that the decision makers in the defence Ministry and service headquarters have been given a definite period for armament acquisitions. The revised procurement manual also sets out joint qualitative requirements for the purchase of weapon systems common to the three services.

This defence procurement manual has taken into account the suggestions by central vigilance commission, CAG, manufacturers and most importantly the users.

monsters are capable of trudging scattered Himalayan paths and will allow the army to fire at enemy positions and scoot to more than a kilometre, even before the shell lands.

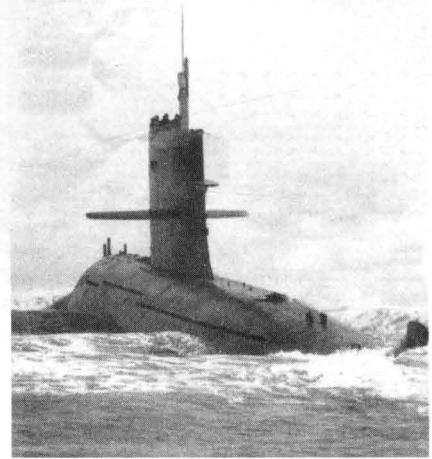
In India the defence purchases had become a game of politicians and middleman. Now the government is trying to rectify the situation. The quality of arms we purchase now will define the strength of our armed forces in future. Let us now take a glimpse of some of the weapons Indian defence forces need planning to buy in near future or the up gradations that are going to be done in some of the existing weaponry and what is the Indian government's stand on these:

If we start from Navy, first is Scorpene Submarines. These are built to attack ships. Besides this, Scorpene can keep its crew of 31 members out in the sea for 45 days. Navy needs these but Indian government has not yet given an approval for buying these.

INS Virat is going to retire in 2008; to replace this INS Vikramaditya has been bought in. Vikramaditya will carry out the Navy's far-out air

defence activities till 2012. INS Vikramaditya has been complemented with 16 MiG -29K deck based fighters.

The Indian Army is looking at buying Automated Wheeled Artillery, around 600 in number. These



Scorpene Submarines

Next are F-16's, about this a lot has already written in the media. These F-16 when they start arriving by the end of the decade, would definitely make our Indian army one of the strongest.

China ready to open more border points

AT present India and China are witnessing one of the best periods in their relationship. Businessmen interested in trade across the border, please gear up, now there is news that China might open some more border points for trade with India.

"If the Indian side agrees we are ready to open more border points," said Wei Dawei, Vice Minister in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This news

was disclosed by him while speaking to an Indian delegation on the multitude of issues. During this interaction the boundary issue between India and China was also discussed. Even though the border dispute between the two countries needs to be handled more carefully, China has expressed its readiness to open some more border points. Opening of more border trade points by China will defi-

nately be a positive step towards promoting bilateral trade.

While replying to a question about the trade promotion between Ladakh region in Jammu and Kashmir and Western Tibet in China, Wu said that he has not conducted any serious study on it and added that if the need arises the study will be conducted. This statement of the Chinese Vice-Minister shows that at present China has no con-



crete plan for opening this trade route.

Wu also stated that signing of the agreement by India and China during the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's latest visit to India has provided a 'critical guidance' for settlement of the problem. According to him the two countries should proceed smoothly in addressing the boundary issue.

Siachen talks fail

Pakistan wants withdrawal of troops from Siachen to the pre-1984 positions without authentication

DEMILITARISATION of the Siachen glacier still appears to be a distant dream as India and Pakistan have once again failed to reach any agreement on this contentious issue, but the good news is that the two countries have decided to continue talks in future to resolve the Siachen issue.

According to a joint press release released after the ninth round of Indo-Pak Defence secretary level talks regarding the glacier, the two sides agreed "to continue with their discussions to resolve the Siachen issue in a peaceful manner." "The

two sides held frank and constructive discussions with a view of taking the process forward. They expressed satisfaction at the ceasefire currently in place since November 2003 and agreed to its continuation, the report said. The two-day talks were held between the Indian Defence Secretary Ajai Vikram Singh and his Pakistani counterpart general (retd) Tariq Waseem Ghazi at Pakistan armies headquarter in Rawalpindi.

On the first day of the talks the two sides discussed some proposals relating to certain confidence

building measures on the key issue of demilitarization of Siachen. During the talks the two sides disagreed mainly because Pakistan argued on the withdrawal of troops from Siachen to the Pre-1984 positions without authentication of the positions held by both sides as demanded by India.

In the talks, India did convey to Pakistan that it wants authentication of the existing positions held on the Saltoro Ridge commanding axis to the 72 kms-long Siachen glacier but was flexible on the methodology to be used for verification and monitoring once disengagement takes place," some top Defence ministry officials disclosed.

be adopted for verification of the proposed demilitarized zone to be set up, "We want to map coordinates on the Saltoro Ridge but we are open on the methodology to be used for verification and monitoring once disengagement takes place," some top Defence ministry officials disclosed.

As it has been decided that India and Pakistan will continue their talks in the future, some concrete efforts are now needed so that the next round of talks doesn't again end up as a get together of Indo-Pak officials.

G-20 nation's trade ministers to meet in Pakistan

Top on the agenda will be a discussion on the modalities for agriculture negotiations, G-20 members are likely to opt for at the ministerial meeting of WTO in Hong Kong later this year

LAST time when G-20 nation members met in New Delhi for Inter-ministerial talks, they could not arrive to a decision regarding a tariff formula to bring down agricultural tariffs. But now there is a hope, when these Trade Ministers meet in

Islamabad in September this year, they will develop consensus regarding this issue.

This consensus will help them consolidate their position in agriculture in the sixth ministerial meeting for the World Trade Organiza-

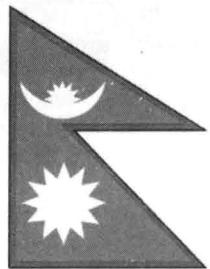
tion (WTO) in December. The G-20 group consists of India, China, Brazil, Uruguay, Egypt, Argentina and South Africa.

In the New Delhi ministerial meet earlier this year, the G-20 nations had arrived at a broad agreement

on tackling both domestic and export subsidies. Now it is to see whether these ministers will be able to decide a tariff formula which will decide the fate of many agriculture sector workers of developing countries across the globe.

Kathmandu: Weather still unfavourable

THERE is a strain in the Delhi-Kathmandu relations and the tension is clearly visible in the recent decision by the Indian authorities to restrict the military supplies to the Himalayan country. Love thy neighbours is an extremely popular proverb and we Indians firmly believe in it, but the hue of relations depend a lot on the reciprocation from the other side. Since time immemorial, India and Nepal have lived as two peaceful and mutually respecting neighbours whose relations were based on mutual trust. Majority of the population of both countries follow the same religion and culture and have many things in common. There are countless matters which have kept the beautiful Himalayan kingdom and the world's largest democracy close since ages. Till recently, Nepal was the most preferred tourist destination for an average middle class Indian. These touring Indians in Nepal also made a vital contribution to the existence of the Nepalese economy. India has never acted as a bully or shown its supremacy to Nepal, neither has it ever interfered in Nepal's internal matters. Instead, India has always been a step ahead in providing support to Nepal, in terms of military aid, medical aid and support for building roads or bridges in the Himalayan country. Then what went wrong? Let us have a look at



the history of Indo-Nepal relations since 1960, when the first ever-established parliamentary system in Nepal was terminated on December 15th.

At that time, India's Prime Minister, Nehru had criticized King Mahendra's coup and termed it as a 'setback to democracy'. However, Nepal took this statement as 'interference' in Nepal's internal affairs. Later when Lal Bahadur Shashtri became Prime Minister, India made adjustment in its Nepal policy.

India always follows the reconciliation path

Despite India's policy of reconciliation with the royal regime, democracy continued to preoccupy the Indo-Nepal relations. Anti-Indian sentiments were encouraged by political, strategic and economic issues. The issues of trade and transit, liberalization of political system, and the decline of Pakistan as a counterweight to India, following the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation in 1971, and the changing Chinese attitude towards India along with the end of the Cold War politics did change the power patterns in South Asia.

Now some incidents have brought tension into the Indo-Nepal relations. In the month of May 2005 there were some reports of Maoists in Nepal having connection with the Naxalites in Andhra

Pradesh. According to intelligence reports a 150 strong group of Nepali Maoists had sneaked into Andhra Pradesh and this group was involved in the attack which killed three tribal villagers and destroyed four *gram panchayat* offices. As if this was not enough to sour relations between the two, when Nepal's King Gyanendra was criticising India for its continued indulgence with Maoists at the same time Baburam Bhattarai, one of the top Maoist leaders of Nepal was being escorted by the Indian intelligence agencies. Naturally it did not go well with Nepal and the country sent an *aide memoir* to New Delhi and asked India not to interfere in Nepal's internal matters.

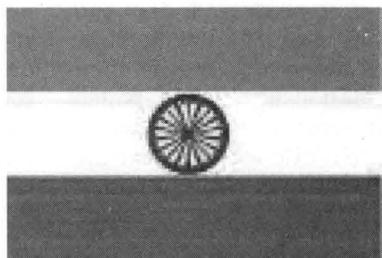
To worsen the situation around the 25th of May, a tape was released by the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) which showed that Maoists have Indian connections. RNA argued that the tape was released to expose the doublespeak by Prachanda, a Maoist leader and not to malign India. India doesn't know whether this exposed tape was Prachanda's doublespeak or was it a lesson for India to come out of a fool's paradise of excellent relations with Nepal. India has raised serious objections to this incident and as a result of this, India has restricted the military supplies to the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). In the future India has decided to provide only non-lethal supplies

such as bullet proof jackets, night vision goggles and jeeps to Nepal. Either way, these provisions are commercially accessible. However, Nepal continues to desire to receive ammunition for its Insas rifles.

Pakistan supports restriction of fundamental rights in Nepal

Interestingly, our western neighbour, Pakistan, flatteringly endorses the suspension of multi-party democracy in Nepal. Pakistan also supports the restrictions on democratic freedom in Nepal and exclaims that these restrictions are justified for battling insurgency. Musharraf might be doing so to indirectly justify his dictatorship in the homeland. Pakistan is definitely fishing in the troubled waters and has lost no time in wooing Nepal. In the present scenario of the Maoists problem and not-so-good relations between India and Nepal, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence ISI might make use of this opportunity for making its base in Nepal.

Meanwhile the ex-Prime Minister of Nepal, Girija Prasad Koirala came to India on a week-long visit in the first week of June. ▶



This call galvanised the pro-democracy Nepali leaders camping in New Delhi. In Nepal, Koirala was arrested almost immediately after the imposition of emergency. He was freed a few days after King Gyanendra, under tremendous pressure from India and the international community, lifted the state of emergency. New Delhi hailed the release of the veteran Nepali leader and had urged the king to remove all curbs on civil liberties and fundamental rights and to lift media censorship and restriction on movement.

Girija Prasad Koirala meets Indian politics bigwigs

The 82 year-old grand old man of Nepal politics Koirala, has come to India for a health check-up but used this opportunity to interact with a broad spec-

trum of Indian political leaders. He met with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajayee, ruling United Progressive Alliance Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar and some leftist leaders. He also met members of the Nepali Indian community who have organised themselves into an umbrella group called Jan Sampark Samiti and major political leaders who fled to India after the royal coup in the Himalayan kingdom on February 1. In his meeting he tried to convince them about the need to unite and make a fresh offensive for democracy in Nepal.

Koirala's visit provided India with an opportunity to refocus its Nepal policy and to step up its pressure on the king to keep his commitment to restore civil liberties in the country.

India endeavoured to tell Koirala to persuade other political parties to open a dialogue with the Maoists.

Soared relations with Nepal are a matter of great concern for India because of numerous reasons. At present India is riding a wave of development and is at the same moment strengthening its position amongst the global policy decision making agencies. Globally, India is also being observed as a pole of stability in the South Asian region. India does want to indulge in any kind of uneasy relationship with any of its neighbours, be it Nepal or any other country. An unpleasant relation with Nepal also means hindering trade across the border, trade which is not only important for Nepal's economy but also the bread and butter of very many residents of Indian states bordering Nepal. The

monetary strain of maintaining army at the Indo-Nepal border, in the wake of strained ties, is also an aspect which can't be ignored by India.

Indo- Nepal ties strong enough to bear the strain

At the moment we can comment that India does not want Nepal as a neighbour which is internally disturbed and does not consider us trustworthy. India is not an enemy of Nepal, the cultural ties between the two are too mature and strong to be broken. India sincerely hopes that Nepal's authorities will find an early solution to the Maoists problem and, steps would be taken to restore multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy in the kingdom and very soon we'll again pack our bags for a Kathmandu trip without any fear in our hearts.

Russian MiG gas turbine engine power plants! Indo Russian Aviation Ltd (IRAL) JV

HINDUSTAN AERONAUTICS LIMITED (HAL) is a flagship company in the field of design and manufacturing of aircrafts. Now the news is that IRAL which is a joint venture of HAL has come out with a proposal that the discarded gas turbine Engines are likely to be used for generating power for captive use. These engines will produce power for the industry. Some of the power strapped industrialists from the Nashik town of Maharashtra have already liked this idea and have visited Russia to understand how it works.

The life on a MiG air-

craft engine is six-seven years, after that they can be used for generating power after a slight modification. Initiator of this plan IRAL CEO RK Bharti says, "It could be the best possible way to generate power when the market is too demanding. It will also help us create employment at the local level."

Already Russia is making full use of this facility and as the availability of gas increases, the scheme can take off in India too. IRAL is not a fly by night operator therefore industrialists and Air force are not sceptical about this

idiosyncratic plan of using discarded gas turbine engines from the aircraft to generate power.

If we compare the prices then we see that the gas turbine generations capital cost is Rs 210 per MW whereas for producing one MW of power, coal costs Rs 550 lakh and the nuclear option costs are much higher which is Rs 900 lakh per MW. The cost of hydro generation is Rs 785 per MW. So it comes out clearly that the IRAL generated power is much more cost effective.

According to an IRAL official a discarded MiG 27 engine can generate

18-20 MW and a discarded MiG 21 can produce around 8-11 MW per day. A tiny unit with a capacity of 1MW can easily provide power to 700 houses.

With so many MiG's dropping and meeting accidents every day, maybe power generation from MiG's will put them to some better use and also save lives of some of our priceless pilots.

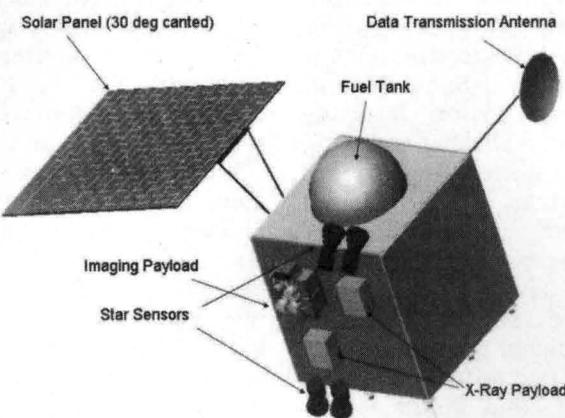
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ISRO-ESA to join hands for the moon mission

INDIA is going to launch its first unmanned mission 'Chandrayan-1' to moon in the year 2007 or early 2008. According to ISRO Chairman"

The Chandrayaan-1 will place a spacecraft weighing about 525 Kg about 100 Km orbit of moon and enable high resolution chemical, mineralogical and photo-geological mapping of lunar surface to define the process leading to the formation and chemical evolution of the moon." In simple words the spacecraft to be placed by Chandrayaan-1 would enable researchers to carry out and monitor various experiments.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is going to join hands with European Space Agency (ESA) in India's unmanned mission to the Moon. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the two agencies in the month of June. ISRO



Chairman G. Madhavan Nair and ESA Director-General Jean Jacques Dordain signed this agreement. According to this MoU, Chandrayaan would carry three European payloads. These European instruments would be included on board the Moon mission, "Chandrayaan-1," which is to be launched by India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle.

Along with this, in the next couple of months ISRO is expecting a MoU with

National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA). Once this Memorandum is signed, Chandrayaan would carry on board the moon mission MiniSar-a miniature imaging radar instrument to map the polar landscape and deposits of moon as proposed by the John Hopkins Laboratory of America. Another American payload will be the Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3), an imaging spectrometer, jointly proposed by the Jet

Propulsion Lab (JPL) and Brown University US, to assess mineral resources and characterise surface chemical composition at high spatial resolution.

There are some reports that Indian and ESA scientists would share the data from the European instruments. The European contribution would include a low energy X-ray spectrometer called the Chandrayaan Imaging X-ray spectrometer from the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, U.K., to measure elemental abundance distributed over the lunar surface. Along with this ISRO has also selected an X-ray solar monitor (XSM) to carry on Chandrayaan. RADAM-the radiation dose monitor experiment from Bulgaria is a small spectrometer, aimed at measuring the particle flux, deposited energy spectrum of primary and secondary particles in the lunar orbit.

India and Singapore sign CECA

AFTER two years of intensive negotiations India and Singapore has signed the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement (CECA). This important trade agreement between the two countries was signed on June 27. The agreement was signed during the Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loons visit to India.

On putting a glance on the statistics during the five-year period from 2000-01 to 2004-05, as a trading partner of India, Singapore accounted for, on an average, 2.6 per cent of India's

total imports and 3.0 per cent of India's total exports. India accounted for, on an average, 0.9 per cent and 2.2 per cent of Singapore's total imports and total exports, respectively, from 1999 to 2003. In 2003-2004 India was Singapore's 14th largest trading partner with the total trade estimate at \$ 6.4 billion. The balance of trade, traditionally in Singapore's favour, tilted towards India to \$1.2 billion in 2004-05.

This Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between the two

countries is a landmark initiative to further strengthen the trade ties between the two countries.

CECA, is an agreement which covers investments, trade in goods and services,

Customs, media, science and technology, e-commerce, intellectual property and education. In merchandised goods the agreement includes a list of four components, including an early harvest programme where India will eliminate immediately customs duties on 506 items and there is a phased

elimination programme for 2,202 items by July 2009.

CECA, was signed by the Indian Prime minister Manmohan Singh and his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong. This 739-page agreement is an integrated package liberalizing trade in goods and services and seeks to substantially bolster trade and investment.

The agreement has pacts for cooperation in customs, science and technology, ▶



Lee Hsien Loong

education, intellectual property and media. The two sides have also signed a 'bilateral investment protection agreement', a double taxation avoidance agreement, with additional safeguards to avoid misuse.

According to this pact, India will allow three major Singapore banks to set up wholly-owned subsidiaries in the country. The three banks - DBS holdings, Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation and United Overseas Bank - will be treated at par with Indian banks for opening branches. Indian banks already operating in Singapore will get full banking status which

means they will be allowed electronic fund transfer, clearance and use of local ATMs.

As per the media reports, The CECA has paved the way for the two countries to augment their two-way trade to over \$10 billion by the end of 2005-06 and to \$50 billion by 2010 — up from below \$8 billion at present. Currently, Singapore's cumulative investment in India is around \$3 billion which would go up to \$5 billion by 2010 and to \$10 billion by 2015. The thrust areas of Singapore's investment in India would be airports, ports and urban infrastructure.

CECA is also likely to help Indian businesses pull Singapore's strengths in finance, manufacturing and marketing and achieve greater competitiveness in IT through closer ties with its advanced electronic industry.

This landmark agreement is going to come into effect from August 1 2005, this agreement is important for India as Singapore is India's most important trading partner and is also a gateway to Asean and China. It is expected that the latest agreement will be a vital step in taking head India's Look East Policy as a result of which the trade between the two

countries has grown by five folds.

CECA has been signed after crossing many roadblocks. Initially there was disagreement between India and Singapore over 'round tripping'—foreign companies established in Singapore selling goods in India at concessional terms, there was also some disagreement on the banking issue. The issue of round tripping was resolved when the two sides agreed that the definition of an eligible entry for concession under CECA would apply to those entities that had at least 51% ownership in the hands of Singapore citizens.

India-Bangladesh: Efforts needed to ease the strain

Illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, frequent clashes between security forces and shelter to the separatist leadership by Bangladesh is the main cause of anxiety

A large number of Bangladeshis enter India every month. These people pay a petty amount to agents who arrange for their entry into India. These illegal Bangladeshis reside and work not only in the border towns of India but have managed to stay and work in the suburbs of cities like Mumbai. These people stay here for years and thanks to our corrupt officials, have now managed to get fake ration cards and other documents which show that they are of Indian nationality. This matter rather than being solved sensibly is slowly becoming a political issue in India.

Recently the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief K S Sudarshan claimed that about 1.4 crore Bangladeshis have infiltrated into India till now. He accused that Chief

Ministers of the North-East states and West Bengal are refusing to acknowledge the problem "because they want to stay in power by playing vote bank politics."

"As per United Nations reports, the population of Bangladesh grew to 11.4 crore from 1981-1991. But today, Bangladesh says its population is only 10.4 crore. Intelligence agencies like RAW in the past alerted the government, but India has done little to check the infiltration and thousands cross the border illegally into India everyday," added the RSS chief. "The country is not at all safe in the hands of politicians who can stoop at any level to stay in power," mentioned the RSS chief. S Sudarshan, while addressing the valedictory function of the month-long training programme for RSS activists, accused the govern-

ment of appeasing minorities. He said that technically, only Parsis and Jews who migrated from other countries and settled in India could be given minority status, but ironically, the two communities have declined the tag while Muslims and Christians, whose ancestors were the same as those of Hindus, are given minority status and politicians are in a race to appease them. The RSS chief asked "if our political parties care so much for the minorities, why have a majority of Muslims not prospered and have remained without facilities like education?

India and Bangladesh share a 4,000-kilometre border of which only 20 percent is fenced, and India accuses Bangladesh of pushing illegal Bangladeshi immigrants into India. India-Bangladesh border is

the scene of frequent bloody clashes between security forces from the two countries. Indian intelligence officials also say that top rebel leaders from groups in its northeast are holed up in Bangladesh, a charge denied by Dhaka. Border tensions frequently erupt in armed clashes between guards on both sides that have left scores dead over the past few years.

Now the two countries have agreed to take several measures aimed at easing tensions along their border. In the month of June the two sides decided after extensive talks to resume meetings of a boundary working group from August, as well as increase joint patrolling of waterways along the border, which has been a constant source of tension since Bangladesh's creation in 1971.

Sonia Gandhi visits Russia

THIS time it is different news, not the Indian Head of State but the ruling Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi visited Russia. UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi arrived in Russia onboard a special Russian Presiden-

rorism should be transparent and no double standards should be applied. It is noteworthy that Sonia Gandhi was accompanied by the Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh and Indian Ambassador to Russia Kanwal Sibal, during the talks

She also took a private tour of cultural sites in Moscow visiting the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, Kremlin Armoury and Diamond Fund which houses the diamond 'Bloody Shah,' the war booty which Persia's Nadir Shah took after his invasion of Delhi in the 18th century. This was Gandhi's fourth Russia visit and first after becoming UPA Chairperson. Earlier, she had visited Soviet Russia with her husband

on May 9 in Moscow. She mentioned that India and Russia had vast potential of cooperation in the fields of biotechnology, Information Technology and energy. Putin proposed to hold a 'Year of Russia' in India in 2008 and 'Year of India' in Russia in 2009 to enhance people-to-people contacts and cultural interaction between the two countries. Welcoming Putin's proposal, Gandhi said she would also involve herself in organizing those cultural events which will certainly strengthen people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Sergei Prikhodko, Kremlin Foreign Policy Advisor was also present during the talks.

the time of independence science and technology was identified as a foundation in strengthening bilateral trade & investment cooperation between India and Russia. In the Industrialization period in India (60-70's) bilateral science and technology agreement covered many areas with main focus on education. In 1987 Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP), one of the most elaborated bilateral scientific programme was initiated. Since then more than 3000 scientific exchanges have taken place. Indian and Russian Scientists have cooperated in 305 Science and Technology projects.

In the past, the thrust was on cooperation in areas relating to space, atomic energy and defence technologies whereas now the emphasis is on setting up joint research centres with the objective of transforming fundamental studies into advanced technologies to be applied in manufacturing. Already five centres have been established and five more are in the agenda.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi's Russia visit invited a lot of criticism by Indian opposition parties. The Congress as a consequence went into damage control mode as it aggressively rubbished all Opposition charges. Whether Sonia Gandhi's visit really helped India achieve something concrete in terms of foreign affairs is a matter of debate but it has definitely proven that India is liberal enough to accept a person of foreign origin like Sonia to represent the country on the global pedestal.



Sonia Gandhi on board a Reliance aircraft

tial aircraft. This was a four-day visit from 13 to 16 June. Sonia Gandhi, visited Russia at the invitation of President Putin as his personal guest. During this visit Sonia Gandhi held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov and other senior officials. She was received at the airport by Vice Governor of St Petersburg A V Prokhorenko. From the airport she drove straight to the Konstantinovsky Palace where she met Russian President Vladimir Putin and held talks with him on bilateral relations.

During her talks with Putin, Sonia Gandhi described India and Russia as partners in combating terrorism. She also added that any fight against ter-



Sonia Gandhi with Putin

late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Last time Sonia visited Moscow with Rajiv in February 1991 as personal guests of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The UPA Chairman noted that the proposal to set up a study group to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries was made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his talks with Putin

During the talks, Putin expressed satisfaction at the ongoing cooperation between India and Russia in all spheres of human activities including defense. He was quoted by an interfax news agency that bilateral ties were "developing in the best possible ways".

This is absolutely true. Indo-Russian Science and technology cooperation is attaining a new high. Since

Indian Cable TV channels: Nepal lifts the ban

RESIDENTS of Nepal can now again watch, NDTV 24X7, Aaj Tak and their favorites on Star channels as Nepal has lifted the ban on the broadcast of Indian Television news channels in the country. For four months Indian channels were banned in Nepal.

The decision to lift the ban, which was imposed soon after the February 1 royal coup, was taken up by the Council of Ministers headed by King Gyanendra in the beginning of June. These channels were banned because they were accused of running programmes showing the "monarchy in a bad light," revealed one Nepali official. It is interesting to note that other International channels including BBC, CNN and Japan's NHK were not banned.

The authorities had ordered local cable operators to stop distributing the news channels over their network after King Gyanendra seized power in February. They had justified the ban saying that the Indian news channels were distorting events in Nepal.

King Gyanendra introduced strict media restrictions after assuming direct control of the country. Under the new guidelines, criticism of the king, the government and the security forces is banned. Journalists must get all information on security issues from the army or police. Private radio stations may not air news programmes. Landline telephone, mobile and internet services were also shut down. Landline telephones and internet services were re-



stored after a week, while mobile phone services have only been partially resumed. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met

with King Gyanendra in Indonesia in the month of April, there Indian officials had requested the resumption.

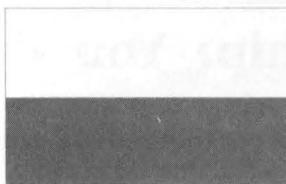
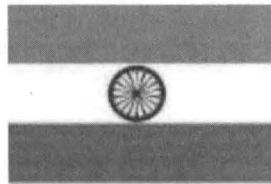
During this meeting, Manmohan Singh had pledged to restore supply of non-lethal weapons and other requirements of the Royal Nepal Army; he had been equally categorical that India wanted clear steps towards restoration of democracy, early release of detained leaders and an end to press censorship. Indian side had also demanded full resumption of Indian TV channels and The United Telecom Ltd operated communication systems.

Delhi-Warsaw to resume air flights after 14 years

Poland and India likely to witness increase in tourists and business traveller's movement

IT is the time to get on board an aircraft to travel to Poland. Why? The reason is that after a huge gap of 14 years Poland is going to resume air ties with India. In 1991, after the fall of communism in

beginning the airlines will have three flights a week starting from October." Now the trade between India and Poland is more than \$ 400 million. Last year, there was a 30% growth in the bilateral trade and 40%



Poland, Polish airline LOT stopped its flight to New Delhi because it was more interested in capturing markets in Canada and the US where around 12 million people of Indian origin live. According to Anil Wadhwa, Indian Ambassador to Poland "India has become an important destination in Asia and it cannot be overlooked any more. In the

growth in India's export to Poland.

Anil Wadhwa also added "Now that market is saturated and LOT has to find more destinations, it has selected New Delhi as its first destination in India." Sources report that it is on the per ticket basis that Air India will handle LOT's airport services. Air India has never used its bilateral

agreement to fly to Warsaw; therefore it always demands higher prices for handling charges. Earlier also, it has been the issue of price that has bogged down the talks. The respective embassies of India and Poland have played a major role in persuading the officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation to allow LOT to resume air ties between the two countries.

Resumption of air ties with Poland is significant for India because apart from being a European Union member, it is a launch pad for the larger combined European Union market. The air ties between the two countries are going to be useful as this will allow a bigger flow of holiday-makers and businessmen between the two countries and would definitely enhance the trade between the two.

Bush to talk Nuclear-ties with Manmohan

IN the recent past, we have witnessed some unusual weather patterns. In some European countries the summer season is now unusually warm, Dubai has witnessed snowfall, and there are also reports of very high rainfall and flash floods in some parts of the world. Why is this happening? Well, the reason is global warming due to burning of fossil fuel. The whole world is concerned about this and why not, after all it is a matter of the survival of human race.

Most of the countries in the world now realize the seriousness of this problem and understand that there is a need to develop alternatives to fossil fuel. In the month of June President of America George Bush gave an interview which was published in the London *Times*. Bush said, "I'm a big believer that nuclear power, the newest generation of nuclear power, ought to be a source of energy, and we ought to be sharing these technolo-

gies with developing countries. I'm going to talk to the Prime Minister of India about that when he comes to see me."

The above statement by the President of United States is of great significance at the moment in view of the fact that although nuclear cooperation has been widely assumed to be at the top of the agenda when Manmohan Singh meets Bush at the White House on July 18, this is the first time that the President himself is keen to it in an affirmative manner.

Although the signs are positive but at the moment we can't say whether any concrete decision regarding this issue will be taken, but at least we can say that this time when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visits USA then President Bush will talk in an apposite manner regarding the Nuclear Energy issue.

This time, Bush's enthusiasm for nuclear cooperation with India stands

in stark contrast to the bureaucratic negativism in Washington on the prospects for civilian nuclear energy cooperation with India. Amidst growing concerns about global warming and rising prices of oil, President George W Bush has underlined the importance of nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels and sharing it with developing countries, especially India. Indian authorities are keeping their fingers crossed on whether President Bush will be able to lift the three decades old nuclear blockade against India when the Indian PM visits America in the month of July.

Delhi is also looking at the possibility of joining the International Thermonuclear Energy Project. The United States, a founding member of the ITER, pulled out in 1998 and re-joined in 2003. Canada withdrew in 2003. The other members are Russia, China, Japan and the European Union.

The 500-megawatt reactor could cost about US \$ 6.14 billion and take 10 years to complete. The reactor is expected to be operational for 20 years. The European Union intends to cover 40 percent of the cost and France will contribute an additional 10 percent. At the last summit between India and the European Union in Hague in November 2004, Brussels supported India's participation in the ITER project. The Indian scientific establishment, which has its own modest programme on fusion, wants to join forces with the ITER.

When Man Mohan Singh joins the summit of the G-8 industrial democracies at Gleneagles, Scotland, Man Mohan Singh might look for support for India's effort to join the ITER. It is most likely that the G-8 leaders may support nuclear energy for the first time in decades at Gleneagles as they talk about the global threat of climate change.

Dual citizenship: You don't have to wait anymore

IT seems that individuals of Indian origin who long wished to acquire a dual citizenship will not have to wait any longer. With the recent okay from the cabinet a dual citizenship appears to be a reality, not a distant dream any more.

There are reports that the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) is finalising and notifying a one page application form for the process." We expect the first application

to be processed by August 05 and dual citizenship to be granted to applicants. The documents that we will be giving to people who acquire dual citizenship include an overseas citizen card which will look like a passport and will be colour coded and a multiple entry visa sticker with hologram and photo on the passport. The visa will be valid for life," said S Krishna Kumar, secretary MOIA, in an interview to a leading

daily.

In straight-forward cases, the application will be processed in two weeks. Decision regarding the application will be taken at the consulates concerned and the passports or applicants will not need to come to India. Applicants will be charged \$275 for the entire process, Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) card holders will have to pay only \$25. Applicants will receive a \$250 refund if their appli-

cation for dual citizenship is refused.

Krishna Kumar disclosed, "We have introduced an extra document in this process, instead of just a visa sticker to make things easier for PIOs who will be acquiring dual citizenship. At a later stage, the MOIA, which has now been given the powers to notify all benefits pertaining to NRI's and PIO's, will introduce a smart card for dual citizens. This will make things even simpler."

Is it sensible to sell Bonn embassy building?

The beautiful heritage structure likely to become a victim of the Indian government's apathy

FOR 25 years Indian Tricolour flew on this building. This place was full of activity till the Indian consulate was shifted to Munich in 2001 by then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. This hundred year old heritage building of Indian Embassy in Bonn was a place of hectic activity up till recently. India opened its Embassy in Bonn, the capital of Federal Republic of Germany in 1952. Indian authorities bought this building in 1982. It was also a centre of action till the embassy was shifted to Berlin in October 1999,

after the unification of two Germanies. But ironically, this place will soon not be there with India as it is going to be sold very soon. The ads for the sale have appeared in German and English on the website of Indian Embassy in Germany. Obviously, people of Indian origin there are not happy with the news as it connected them with India.

There are various other reasons why people are raising their voice against the sale. India has consulates in Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich but these offices are in the rented

accommodation, only the Bonn building was owned by India. Mathew Jacob, President of the world Malayalee Council says, "This was the place which was issuing the maximum number of visas in Germany, even more than the Berlin office." Now this place is up for sale. "Before the closure, the Bonn office was issuing about 33,000 visas and over 800 passports a year and earning revenue of Rs 6.68 crores. This was one of the 21 profit making offices of India all over the world. But due to the whims and fancies of some

powerful individuals, the NDA government closed down the Bonn office and opened a consulate in Munich in a rented building. The rent of the building itself comes to around 2 crores a year," said Jacob.

Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh and Minister for Overseas Indians, Jagdish Tytler have received request from the German unit of the World Malayalee Council to stop the sale of this building. Now future only will tell whether this heritage building will remain with India or will it be gone.

Textile exports to EU: It is a matter of preferences

UNDER the generalized system of preferences (GSP), the European Union (EU) offers market access to developing and least developed countries (LDCs), duty-free or at reduced import duties. EU imports more than 50 billion euros worth of goods under the GSP which is about one-seventh of its total imports. India's textile export to EU in 2004 was 4.3 billion euros registering an increase of 7% over the previous year. More than half of these exports were undertaken under GSP.

The EU is now working on a new GSP scheme replacing the old one, which will be valid for the next three years. India is lobbying hard to be included in the new generalized system of preferences (GSP) scheme being worked out by the European Union, so that it can

continue to have preferential access to the textiles market of European countries.

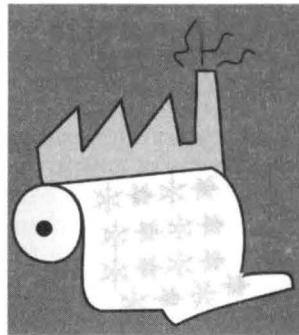
There are speculations that if the EU maintains its earlier GSP qualification criteria of including countries exporting less than 12% of the EU's total textile imports, then India will easily fall into the category of beneficiary countries and can export at one-fifth of the existing duty rates. However, if the EU reduces the threshold limit giving in to the demands of some of its members, then India could be in hitch.

Apart from this, some European countries including France and Italy are demanding that only countries exporting less than 10% of the total textiles imported by the EU should benefit from the scheme. If this is implemented, then India will not qualify as

India's textile exports to the EU is about 11% of the EU's total textiles imports. As per the reports, India was trying its best to ensure that the EU continued to extend to it tariff preferences under the new GSP Scheme. There are some EU members who do not covet India to benefit from the latest scheme. However, India is demanding through diplomatic channels to battle its case.

EU had originally planned to advance the date of implementation of the new GSP to April 1 2005 from July 1 2005 to help tsunami-affected countries. However, a lack of consensus on the subject of including India in the new scheme forced a delay.

The European Textile industry's apex association, Euratex is against extension of further GSP benefits to India. Its argument is



that since the GSP is for helping developing countries to industrialize, India does not need it. It further argued that extending GSP to India would put other developing countries at a disadvantage. It is important for Indian textile exporters to be included in this scheme as its competitors Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in this sector have already qualified for it and Indian diplomats will have to continue lobbying till India doesn't receive the benefit of GSP.

Indo-Thai FTA: Has India gained something?

EVERY year India signs a number of trade agreements with a number of countries. Now a days it appears that each country is competing with each other to sign a trade agreement with India. These trade agreements definitely promote trade between the countries which sign them, some times these agreements are signed without in depth analysis and without understanding as what is written in between the lines.

Many a times we observe that an agreement has been signed thinking that it will help India gain an edge over the other country and it will help Indian traders but slowly the reality arrives that goods are being dumped into India in the name of this agreement.

One such agreement in which we have traded losses is the trade pact with Thailand.

Recently, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), conducted a detailed study of the India-Thailand free trade agreement. This study has indicated a need to address the disabilities suffered by the Indian industries in terms of high cost of production, infrastructure, service cost, higher import duties and huge interest rate differentials as compared with Thailand.

It is depressing news that internal cost disabilities in India are eroding the competitiveness of the domestic companies as compared to Thai companies. The power cost in Thailand is Rs 5.50

per kwh. Where as in India the power cost is Rs 2.50 per kwh. The interest rates in India are also higher than that in Thailand. Cost of raw material plays an important part in deciding the final cost of a product. If the cost of the raw material is high, naturally the cost of the final product will be more. This is what is happening with the cost of many products in India. FICCI in its study found that there are many raw materials which when imported in Thailand, attract less import duty. Not only this, there are certain raw materials for which the importer in Thailand does not have to pay any import duty however, an importer in India pays 15% import duty for the same product.

Few such products are glass parts and chemicals. Why is it so?

Besides this India has an inverted duty structure, which is applicable in certain industries like colour picture tube, electric fans and transmission assembly. This inverted duty structure might lead to Indian companies sourcing products from Thailand or setting up their manufacturing bases in Thailand in the Free Trade Agreement regime.

If we want these Free Trade Agreements to really work in India's favour then Indian policy makers must understand the problems faced by the Indian industries in terms of higher import duty or raw material and necessary measures should be taken.

India-China discuss custom issues

CHINA and India had signed a pact on customs earlier this year, now in the month of June the two countries finalised the channels of communication for timely exchange of information and intelligence on customs matters. The two countries are particularly

interested in exchange of information relating to prevention, detection and investigation of customs offences.

The two-way trade between the two countries was \$13 billion last year and is growing rapidly. Although India and China

signed the customs cooperation agreement in April, the two sides held their first meeting under the agreement on Friday at the level of chairman of the Central Board of Excise and Customs, A K Singh and Vice Minister in general administration of China Customs

Ye Jian. Both sides stressed that international cooperation is essential for combatting smuggling and customs commercial frauds as crucial evidence in such cases often falls outside national boundaries. Already India has signed 12 such pacts with 36 countries.

Baglihar: Site inspection by World Bank expert

BAGLIHAR has become another matter of discontent between India and Pakistan.

Islamabad says the project violates the Indus Water Treaty, 1960.

Raymond Lafitee of Swiss Federation Institute of Tech-nology was appointed as a neutral expert after Pakistan approached the World Bank to resolve the dispute.

Now the news is that the neutral expert appointed by the World Bank to resolve differences between India and Pakistan over the 450 MW Baglihar hydro-power project in Jammu and Kashmir will undertake a site inspection.

In the month of June, Lafitee held a two-day meeting in Paris. In this meeting Pakistan was represented by Attorney Gen-

eral Makhdoom Ali Khan and from Indian side Water Resources Secretary J. Hari Narayan attended the meeting.

This meeting, in June, focussed on measures that the specialist would adopt to enable him to arrive at a determination of the differences in a fair and equitable manner".

The procedure provides the parties three chances

each to explain their positions and is in line with the practices followed by international courts and tri-bunals.

Initially India had termed Pakistan's decision to seek the involvement of the World Bank as pre-mature and said that the differences could be solved through technical level discussions between India and Pakistan.

Time to demand membership of mighty G8

THERE is a strange matter with G8 known as the Group of Eight. It describes itself as the exclusive club of world leaders and a collection of the richest countries or largest industrial democracies. It is not.

At some point of time they might have been world leaders but the scenario is changing. In the recent past, there has been a lot of pressure on G8 to open the door to new members such as China, India and South Korea. A change would reflect the fast changing global economy and maintain the strategic role for which the group was organised in the first place.

Whatever may be the reason, none of the current members seems to want to make the first move towards extension. India, the world's largest democracy, is not in G8 but it desires

to be there. Five other countries, not from the G8 club boast economies that are stronger than Russia's, these are Australia; Brazil, Mexico, South



Korea and Spain. It is not that they do not realize that the global paradigm is changing but an initial resistance to change appears to be there.

A former US ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Holbrooke, in a speech to the Asia Society in New York in June suggested that the annual G8

summit had become a complete anachronism because it includes Russia, Italy and Canada but not China or India. By 2050, the countries expected to be the top economies are US, China, India, Japan, Britain, France, Germany and South Korea. Current club members Italy and Russia would not rank in the top 10.

So is it the time to adjust the membership? "My preference would be to expand it. It's very hard to knock countries off," said Gar Hufbauer, a trade economist at the Washington-based Institute for International Economics. Perhaps, expanded to as many as 18 countries, he said, "I see it happening in stages. I don't think they can admit another country without admitting China first. And the problem then becomes, if they admit China, they will really have

to concede that democracy is not a central criteria," Hufbauer added.

There are speculations that these strains will be on display in Gleneagles, Scotland, this week when President George W Bush meets with leaders from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia for the group's 30th Annual Economic Summit.

British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, this year's summit host, has invited leaders from Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa to attend the summit. These leaders will participate in a discussion on climate change and on relieving poverty, particularly in Africa.

Now in coming three or four years there could be a change in the G8 membership, which would be a true and just representation of the changing world order.

World, Food Prize worth \$ 250,000 for Indian scientist

INDIAN economy is growing at a satisfactory rate and Indian scientists are also busy conducting research for the betterment of the mankind. Recently an Indian scientist, Dr Modadugu Vijay Gupta, has been named winner of the \$250,000 World Food Prize for his work to enhance nutrition for over one million people, mostly very poor women, through the expansion of aquaculture and fish farming in South, South East Asia, and Africa.

Dr Gupta's name was announced by the World Food Prize Foundation on 10 June at a ceremony at

the US State Department, Washington DC. While making the announcement, Ambassador Kenneth M Quinn, president of the Foundation, said that through Dr Gupta's dedicated and sustained efforts in Bangladesh, Laos and other countries in South-east Asia, he made small-scale aquaculture a viable means for over one million poor farmers and women to improve their family's nutrition and well-being. As a result of Dr Gupta's efforts, fresh water fish production has risen drastically in these countries by as much as 3-5 times. Director General, Inter-

national Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Dr William D Dar, states, "The recognition to Dr Gupta is another feather in the cap of the 15 international agricultural research institutes under the CGIAR.

As per the sources, Dr Vijay Gupta is the sixth citizen of India to receive the World Food Prize since it was established in 1986. The earlier recipients were Dr MS Swaminathan in 1987, Dr. Verghese Kurien in 1989, Dr. Gurdev Khush in 1996, Dr. B R Barwale in 1998 and Dr Surinder K Vasal in 2000. The World Food Prize will be for-

mally presented to Dr Gupta at a ceremony on October 13, 2005 in the Iowa State Capitol Building in Des Moines in US. Dr Gupta, from Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh, was before retirement the Assistant Director General at World Fish Center, Penang, Malaysia, an International Fisheries Research Institute under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

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IIFA awards 2005: Indian origin people disregarded

INDIAN cinema is recognized all over the world, this is something every second person in the Indian media talks about. Is it really true, are we really recognized world over? Well some of the recent experiences of Indian actors abroad tell us a different story.

In mid June When John Abraham visited Amsterdam to promote the world première of his latest film 'Kaal' the actor was relieved to discover that he could go out without the need of body guards. He told a Dutch newspaper, "It is great to be in Holland. I can walk around here on the streets without being recognized at all." And he was right; most people in Holland have no idea what Indian cinema is all about.

So it's great that this year the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) has selected Amsterdam to promote Hindi cinema. "So far, Holland has not been a territory for showing Indian films", the organizers, of IIFA, said this in a press conference on April 8.

But this is also a small part of the story. For several decades Hindi cinema has had a small but very committed audience in Holland. The first Indian film that was shown in 1958 was *Aan*.

Now the present young generation of Surinamese Dutch Hindustani is the driving force behind it. These young people spend their pocket money on CDs and DVDs as well as keep up with the latest gossip on their favorite Bollywood stars through magazines and cable tele-

vision.

Surinamese Hindustanis in the Netherlands are so-called 'twice migrants': they are the descendants of indentured laborers from North India, mainly Bihar and UP, who came to work on the sugar-cane and rice plantations in the former Dutch colony of Suriname in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century.

At the time of independence of Suriname in 1975, large numbers of Surinamese migrated to Holland, among them many are from Indian origin. As a result, today there are about 200,000 Hindustanis (as they are called in Dutch language) living in Holland.

About half of the Hindustani population in Holland lives in or around the city of The Hague (Den Haag), the administrative capital of the country. About 10 percent of the population in The Hague is of Surinamese Hindustani descent.

Not surprisingly, the Bollywood scene is most visible here and the city is locally known as the 'city of Hindustanis' or even 'Dollywood' (a combination of Den Haag and Bollywood) by the youngsters.

It is a sad thing that IIFA chose Amsterdam to launch its promotional campaign and not The Hague, which was regarded as a opportunity missed by the Hindustani community. The discontent grew stronger when it



Amitabh Bachchan at iifa awards

became apparent that the Surinamese Hindustani community in Holland was not seen as a potential partner or even as a major target group for the IIFA organization. Instead of working together with the Hindustani organizations, they have been mostly overlooked.

The Hindustani community has started to openly express their criticism in national and regional newspapers. The tickets are priced much higher than what is common for such events.

The cheapest tickets cost 85 Euros (Rs 4,300) and were sold out in no time, while the most expensive ones were 260 Euros each (Rs 14,000). Many youngsters can simply not afford such prices. Although they had been eagerly looking forward to seeing their Indian stars live on stage, they were unable to attend this unique event.

Not only this, the main organizers of the

Hindustani Film Festival in Holland, a major annual event of Indian films in May that attracts more than 10,000 people every year were completely ignored by the IIFA. Moreover, their members did not even get tickets for many of the 'by invitation only' events that took place during the last few days.

The workshop 'Professionals Meet Professionals', which was meant to bring Indian and Dutch people in the film industry together, was open to white Dutch journalists but not to Hindustani film distributors, even though they have played an important role in promoting Indian cinema by organizing screenings all over Holland for many years.

"They aim for the white public," said Anand Chandrika Singh, director of a Hindustani radio station, in a Dutch newspaper. Chandrika Singh tried to organize a Hindustani festival in collaboration ➤

with the events, but the IIFA organization had responded with: "Hindustanis are not important to us." They were only interested if he would pay a large sum of money.

Other spokesmen also emphasised that the Hindustani community has not been taken seriously at all by the IIFA organizers. Rabin Baldew Singh, member of the city council in The Hague, said, "The IIFA has no idea

about its audience here in Holland.

The world premiere of *Parineeta* took place in the centuries-old Pathé Tuschinski Theatre in Amsterdam, on June 8. The film by producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra was shown during a red carpet screening. Later, the crew and some of the actors, like Rekha, Saif Ali Khan, Diya Mirza and Raima Sen, were introduced to the audience.

Here also while hundreds of Surinamese Hindustani fans were waiting outside for hours just to catch a glimpse of their stars, the cast received no more than a halfhearted applause inside the Tuschinski theatre.

Besides this, the event was for invitees only. Many of the tickets had been distributed internationally; it had been easier for businessmen in Hong Kong to obtain an

invitation than for Hindustani film fans to be present. As a result, only 20 percent of the 740 chairs were occupied. On the other hand Surinamese Hindustanis in Holland who make up the largest audience of Hindi films on the European continent seem to be only welcome at this major international event of Indian cinema if they are part of the group of volunteers backstage.

NATWAR'S TRAVEL DIARY

Natwar Singh's London visit



EXTERNAL Affairs Minister, K Natwar Singh on his visit to London, presented forth an India that was keen on playing a significant role in world affairs and covered India's intended foreign policy for the future.

Singh is leaving no stone unturned in trying to reach out an image of India that is democratic and secular, and not without good reason. India's image in the west is tainted by *hindutva* nationalism in the negative sense. Singh is clever to clear that accusation at any given chance. Attending a two-day conference on "India—the next decade" at the Royal Institute for International Affairs, Singh mentioned in his key-

note address that India contained the second largest Muslim and second largest Shia population in the world. Still, there was not a single Indian Muslim out of the 150 million who is a part of the terrorist group, Al-Qaeda.

British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, at a press conference with his Indian counterpart, made an announcement on Britain's decision to support India's seat to the UNSC. However, half-baked, they denied any sort of veto power to India on grounds that it might make matters difficult, if more than five nations were to share this esteemed privilege. To soothe matters further, Straw stated that the veto

power has been unused since 1989, possibly hinting that it might not be such a great addition after all. He rounded it up by summing—India's presence as a permanent member would prove to be encouraging for developing nations' confidence. India was also lauded on improving

and Muzaffarabad and the Iran-India-Pakistan gas pipeline.

Natwar sounded optimistic about India's role to be played in the coming years in the Asian scenario. Whether it was the 'look-east policy' or the coming East Asian Summit, India has a responsibility (con-



External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh and British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw in London

its ties with neighbouring Pakistan, apparent in the reinforcement of the traditional British game of cricket, the bus route that opened between Srinagar

sidering its size and strength) and there was an effort to live up to it. This century is that of Asian dynamism and India will be a major part of it.

Blair to visit India for the Sixth India-European Union Summit

COMING September, New Delhi will witness of Sixth India-European Union (EU) Summit which is going to be held there. It is a significant event in terms of India's international affairs as the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is likely to visit New Delhi to attend this summit.

Let us have a look at the India-EU relations which dates back to the early 1960s. India was among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the (then) European Economic Community (EEC). EEC was an organization established in 1958 with its aim as the eventual economic union of its member nations. In 1993 India and EU signed a Joint Political Statement which opened the way for annual ministerial meetings and a broad political dialogue. Since then, dialogues have been held at different levels and at regular intervals.

The 1994 cooperation agreement signed between EU and India took bilateral relations beyond merely trade and economic cooperation. The first India-EU Summit in Lisbon in June 2000 marked a watershed in the evolution of this relationship. A decision was taken to hold annual summits. Since then there have been four Summit-level interactions, the last being the Fifth Summit at The Hague on 8 November 2004. India-EU relations have grown exponentially from what used to be a purely trade and economic driven relationship to one covering

all areas of interaction. The 5th Summit at The Hague was a landmark Summit, for it endorsed the EU's proposal to upgrade its relationship with India to a 'Strategic Partnership'.

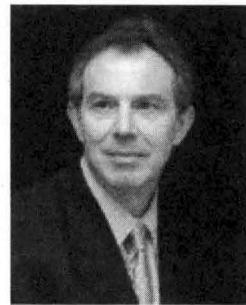
EU, which till then had strategic partnerships with only five other countries (USA, Canada, Russia, Japan and China), now started recognizing India as a "regional and global leader and started considering it in equal terms with other world powers". The frequency and intensity of India's contacts with the EU grew rapidly since 2000. In order to provide greater coherence and focus to all the various activities being undertaken as well as undertake new initiatives, the European Commission has prepared a comprehensive Communication outlining in detail, its views on various areas in which a strategic partnership could be forged with India. This document examines sector by sector how current activities can be streamlined and new actions launched. When implemented, they will be the basis of a stronger and more intensive relationship over the entire gamut of exchanges from political to multilateral, economic to science & technology, academic, cultural and civil society.

The 5th India-EU Summit was held in The Hague on 8th November 2004, under the Dutch Presidency of the European Union. Indian PM, Manmohan Singh, led the Indian delegation, which comprised

the External Affairs Minister Shri. Natwar Singh, Commerce and Industry Minister, Shri. Kamal Nath and then National Security Advisor, Late Shri JN Dixit. The EU side was headed by Dutch Prime Minister, Jan-Peter Balkenende, in his capacity as President-in-Office of the European Council, and included Mr. Romano Prodi, then President of the European Commission, Mr. Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Mr. Pascal Lamy, then European Commissioner for Trade.

This Summit was a landmark in India-EU relations, in view of the launching of the India-EU Strategic Partnership. A comprehensive Communication was presented by the European Commission in June 2004. India had submitted a preliminary but detailed response to the EC paper in August 2004, where it had welcomed the positive orientation of the EC paper and several proposals it contained, in addition to suggesting some new initiatives of our own. In order to carry forward and intensify relations in various areas on the basis of these documents, the EU and India prepared a Joint Action Plan. This Joint Action Plan will be endorsed at the 6th India-EU Summit in New Delhi this year, in the form of a Joint Political Declaration.

"We look forward to Blair's visit to Delhi in September for the 6th India-EU summit, which is especially important in our



Tony Blair

relations with the European Union (EU) for it will launch the India-EU Joint Action Plan," Natwar Singh disclosed in a gathering at the Royal Institute for International Affairs at London.

The India-EU action plan holds its significance as it will be the first such comprehensive action plan that India will have with any of its partners. The plan seeks to enhance opportunities for the India-EU partnership and seeks alliances in trade, investment and technology and fighting terrorism. The action plan is expected to give tangible profile to India's strategic partnership with the EU. This partnership was commenced at The Hague in November last year at the landmark 5th India-EU Summit.

Tony Blair's visit to India in September is an important event which is likely to be closely observed as this visit is expected to widen dialogue between India and Britain on high technology trade, civilian space and nuclear cooperation, basic and applications research and defence cooperation. Dialogue on expanding trade and economic cooperation is also going to take place during the British Premier's forthcoming visit.

Indo-US relations: A landmark defence treaty signed

IN the end of June Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld signed the 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship (NFDR)'. This is a beginning of a new era in the Indo-US relationship. This treaty is extremely significant since India is the only country to have such a broad treaty with erstwhile Cold War rivals America and Russia.

Now what is there in this much talked about treaty? Well in simple words, this ten year defence relationship agreement gives credibility to the Bush administration's pledge to help India to become major world power in the 21st century. The agreement envisages stepping up of military cooperation in various fields, including joint weapons production, technology transfer and missile defence collaboration.

As per the media reports this landmark treaty is hugely ambitious in its size and scope as it visualizes a broad range of joint activities which include cooperation in multinational operations, when it is in their common interest, enhancing capabilities to combat proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, strengthening the capabilities of the two militaries to defeat terrorism and promote security.

It was almost three weeks before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the US, the NFDR was penned down after a detailed discussion between Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. It is a well known fact that now the Indo-US defence relationship is heading towards a path of long term cooperation. In recognition to this, the two

countries have established the Procurement and Production Group and also agreed to institute a Joint Working Group (JWG) for a mid-year review of the functioning of already existing Defence Policy Group which guides the Indo-US defence ties. This is an important development as this JWG will help in monitoring the direction in which the Indo-US defence ties are headed.

This NFDR is reported to be more expansive than the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership which both the sides believed was too limited in its scope. The signed document mentions "Since then, changes in the international security environment have challenged our countries in ways unforeseen ten years ago. Today we agree on a new framework that builds on past successes, seizes new opportunities, and charts a

course for the next ten years".

The US has offered to advance the briefing on the Patriot Pac III system. This shows America's readiness to bring India at par with the latest technology. The agreement mentions that the intelligence exchange between the two countries will be increased. The agreement also talks about India and US jointly policing the world. There is also a mention about strengthening the Indian and US military so that they can respond quickly to disaster situations. As per the agreement, the two countries will train forces from each other's countries. This agreement shows that Indo-US relations have come a long way and in the future there is a great possibility that Indo-US friendship will work for solution of each other's problems.

Russian help revives abandoned TIFR experiment

Russian article SHL- The astronomy experiment was designed and developed prior to 1997 by TIFR, this now revived experiment will fly on a Russian Satellite.

THE Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) had designed and developed an Astronomy experiment prior to 1997. This was lying dormant for nearly a decade. Now there is news that this astronomy experiment will finally take off on a Russian Satellite, Photon in December 2006. A Russian team and representatives from ISRO met on 20 June to discuss this flight. This meeting was held at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

This astronomy experi-

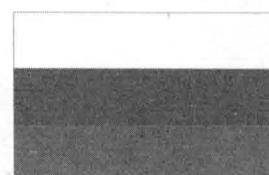
ment was sidelined in 1997. At that time Russian space programme faced severe financial crunch because of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Later on Russians expressed confidence that they had enough money to fund the project. Since the year 2002 Russians were trying hard to persuade India to revive the project.

As per the reports the TIFR package on the satellite will comprise three instruments. Before the launch the avionics group of ISRO will evaluate the

instruments developed by TIFR. The evaluation exercise will be carried out at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre near Thiruvananthapuram.

The launch will take place from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. A scientist disclosed that it is being funded by Indian Space Research Organisation and the approximate cost is around 1 crore rupees.

It is good news that this TIFR experiment has got a new lease of life due to Russian help. Indian sci-



tific fraternity and research workers know that there are a number of experiments and projects which are abandoned midway. This leads to draining away of a lot of money. Care must be taken to avoid such wastage. Scientists must also see that the results of experiments and projects are put to make life of a common man better; otherwise spending so much will be of no use.

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