

India, Russia ink N-deal

AP, AFP, New Delhi

India and Russia signed a civilian nuclear deal yesterday that would see Russia build four nuclear reactors for power-starved India.

The deal was inked during a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia.

"The signing of the agreement on civil nuclear cooperation with Russia marks a new milestone in the history of our cooperation with Russia in the field of nuclear energy," said Singh.

Manmohan Singh hailed a landmark nuclear deal signed with Russia on Friday as a "milestone in the history of our cooperation" after meeting here with Medvedev.

The allies also finalised an accord that could see New Delhi send a man and eventually its own manned craft into space, with the Indian premier describing ties with Moscow as a "vital anchor of our foreign policy."

"It is a relationship that has stood the test of time, a relationship based on strong mutual trust," Singh said alongside Medvedev after the signing ceremonies.

Medvedev praised the agreements as opening a "new page" in relations. He was to leave New Delhi later Friday, earlier than scheduled, to join the mourning for the death of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, his spokeswoman said.

The nuclear deal was the third such agreement India has signed after a decision in September by the Nuclear Suppliers Group to waive its ban on trade of atomic technology with New Delhi.

The United States and France are the other powers to have signed agreements with New Delhi but Russia remains so far the only state actively involved in building reactors in the country.

The nuclear deal will see the building of four new nuclear energy reactors in Kudankulam in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The deal follows the conclusion of a landmark nuclear deal between the United States and India earlier this year, which opened the way for nuclear trade between India and other nations.

India has faced a nuclear trade ban since its first atomic test in 1974 amid its refusal to sign international treaties designed to limit the illicit spread of such materials.

The Indo-Russian deal to build four reactors in southern India had been agreed on in January, but could not be ratified until the international Nuclear Supplier Group agreed to lift the atomic ban.

The two countries have close ties dating back to the Cold War. Russia has traditionally been India's largest arms supplier and has built several reactors for India in the past.

This was Medvedev's first visit to India as president.

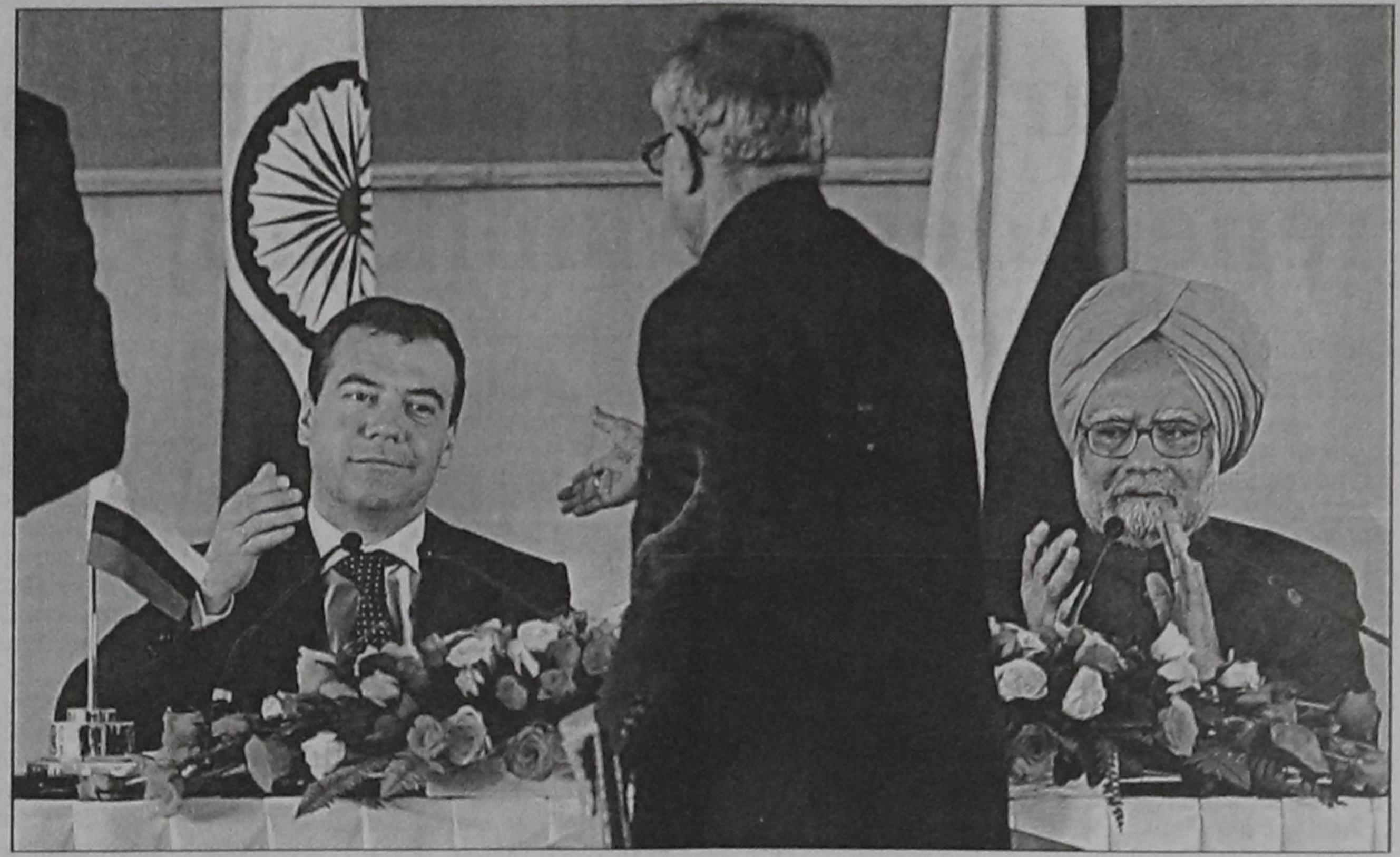
India is eager to expand its nuclear energy sector to help fuel its rapidly growing but energy-starved economy.

Russia becomes the third country to sign an atomic energy agreement with India after a decision in September by the Nuclear Suppliers Group to waive its ban on trade of nuclear technology with India.

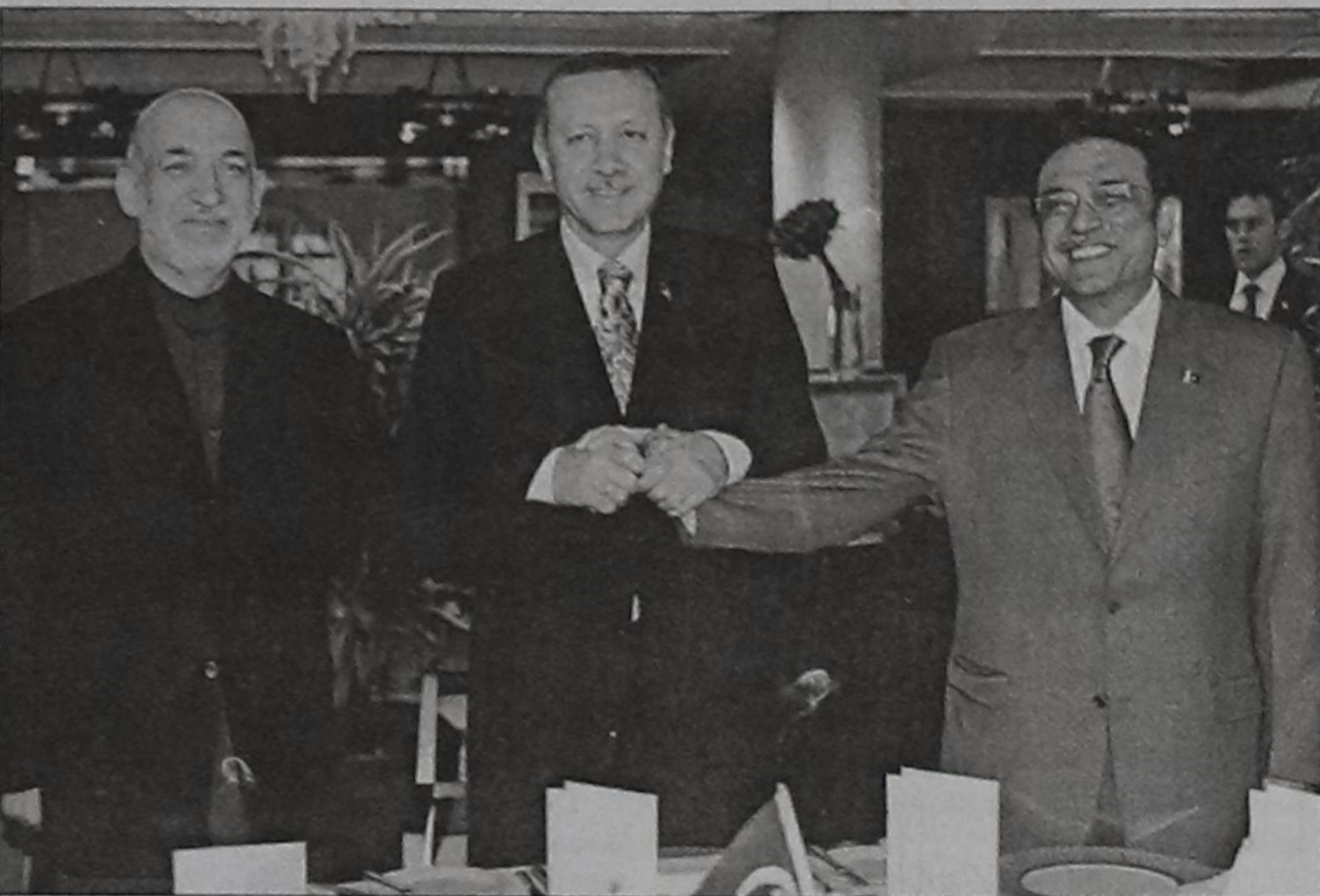
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The nuclear agreement covers the building of four atomic reactors at Kudankulam in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The value of the deal was not given.

Moscow is already building two 1,000-megawatt light water reactors at the site.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) applauds as Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee (C) greets Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (L) following a signing ceremony for several agreements in New Delhi yesterday. Russia signed landmark accords with its traditional ally India on issues ranging from nuclear energy to space as Medvedev met Indian leaders in a bid to bolster ties.



President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai (L), Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan (C) and Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari (R) pose for media before a meeting of trilateral summit yesterday. Turkey hosts the three-way talks with the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan in an effort to bring the two troubled neighbours closer.

Diamond thieves pull off \$100m Paris heist

AFP, Paris

Armed robbers pulled off one of the world's biggest jewellery heists at a famed Paris store, making off with diamonds and valuables worth 80 million euros (102 million dollars), investigators said Friday.

The four robbers on Thursday stole nearly all the jewellery on display at Harry Winston jewellers on the Avenue Montaigne, which attracts a wealthy international clientele just off the Champs-Elysees.

The heist was well-planned, a source from the investigating team told AFP. The men knew the names of some of the shop's employees and the location of some hidden storage cases for jewels.

14 insurgents killed in Afghanistan: US

Eight killed in Afghan prison protests

AP, AFP, Kabul/Copenhagen

US-led troops killed 14 militants in two days of clashes in southern Afghanistan, US military statements said yesterday.

Ten militants were killed by mortar fire following an insurgent attack on a military base in Helmand province's Nar Surkh district on Wednesday, a statement said.

Troops killed another four militants in the same district on Thursday, after the insurgents fired on a joint US-Afghan patrol, a second statement said.

There were no US casualties in the clashes, military said.

Southern Afghanistan is the centre of a Taliban-led insurgency and the world's largest opium-producing area.

Earlier two Danish soldiers serving with Nato's force in Afghanistan were killed Thursday in the southern part of the country, the Danish military said in a statement.

The soldiers were killed when clashes erupted with enemy forces while they were on patrol about eight kilometers (five miles) south of the town of Gereshk in Helmand province, the statement said.

The foot patrol came under attack around 9:00 am (0430 GMT) when a mine exploded and then gunfire erupted. The blast killed a Danish soldier, while a later explosion killed a second Dane who had arrived to help carry away his compatriot.

Meanwhile, eight people were killed and 17 wounded when prisoners in Kabul's main jail went on the rampage, setting fire to their beds and taking guards hostage, an Afghan minister said Friday.

The inmates of the notorious Pul-e-Charkhi prison were protesting late Thursday against a move to search their cells for phones, knives and other weapons, deputy justice minister Mohammad Qasim Hashimzay told AFP.

'Scientists get closer to creating artificial life'

AFP, Chicago

Scientists have discovered a more efficient way of building a synthetic genome that could one day enable them to create artificial life, according to a study released Wednesday.

The method is already being used to help develop next generation biofuels and biochemicals in the labs of controversial celebrity US scientist Craig Venter.

Venter has hailed artificial life forms as a potential remedy to illness and global warming, but the prospect is highly controversial and arouses heated debate over its potential ramifications and the ethics of engineering artificial life.

India has 'proof' of ISI role in Mumbai attacks

AFP, New Delhi

India claims it has proof that Pakistan's powerful military intelligence agency was involved in last week's attacks in Mumbai, Indian newspapers reported yesterday.

Several newspapers cited sources as saying intelligence pooled with the United States suggested the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had played an active role in training the gunmen who carried out the attack.

Investigators now have "the names of the handlers and trainers, (and) the locations where the training was held," The Hindu quoted the unidentified sources as saying.

The Indian Express said intercepts between the gunmen and their handlers showed the use of communication pathways often used by the ISI.

India says that the 10 gunmen involved in last week's assault that left 172 people dead,

including 26 foreigners, all came from Pakistan. "We are one hundred percent convinced that the Inter-Services Intelligence is involved," the India Abroad News Service quoted a highly placed intelligence source as saying.

"We are zeroing in on the names of these ISI handlers and will present a fool-proof case (to Pakistan) soon," the source told the agency.

The Hindustan Times said Indian officials wanted Washington to hand over any evidence, believing that it would put Islamabad under greater pressure.

"We will leave that to the Americans," the Times quoted one official as saying.

Suspicion for the attacks has fallen on Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based militant group which has fought Indian control of divided Kashmir and which attacked the Indian parliament in 2001, nearly pushing the two nations to another war.

Lanka moves to take key highway inside rebel territory

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan troops leading a heavy offensive against Tamil separatists have secured parts of a key highway running through rebel-held territory, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Security forces cleared a stretch of 21 kilometres (13 miles) of the main A-9 highway in an area that had been in no-man's land after the latest military thrust, defence officials said.

With troops securing the

town of Kankarayankulam, the de-facto frontier post shifted deeper into rebel-held areas, the ministry said.

Government forces are on a major offensive to capture the Tamil Tiger political capital of Kilinochchi and have opened several fronts to mount pressure on the guerrillas.

The ministry said last week the fall of Kilinochchi, 330 kilometres (200 miles) north of Colombo, was imminent, but government troops have since been slowed down by monsoon rains and flooding.

Indians angry as 'never before' over attacks: PM

AFP, Mumbai

India has been angered "as never before" by the attacks in Mumbai, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said yesterday, as his new home minister hinted at growing evidence of Pakistani involvement.

"We have told the world that the people of India have felt a sense of hurt and anger as never before due to the Mumbai terror strikes," Singh said following talks here with visiting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

The attacks by Islamist gunmen against multiple targets in India's financial

capital nine days ago killed 163 people, including 26 foreigners. Nine militants were killed, while one was captured alive.

"It is the obligation of all concerned that perpetrators of this horrible crime are brought to book," Singh said.

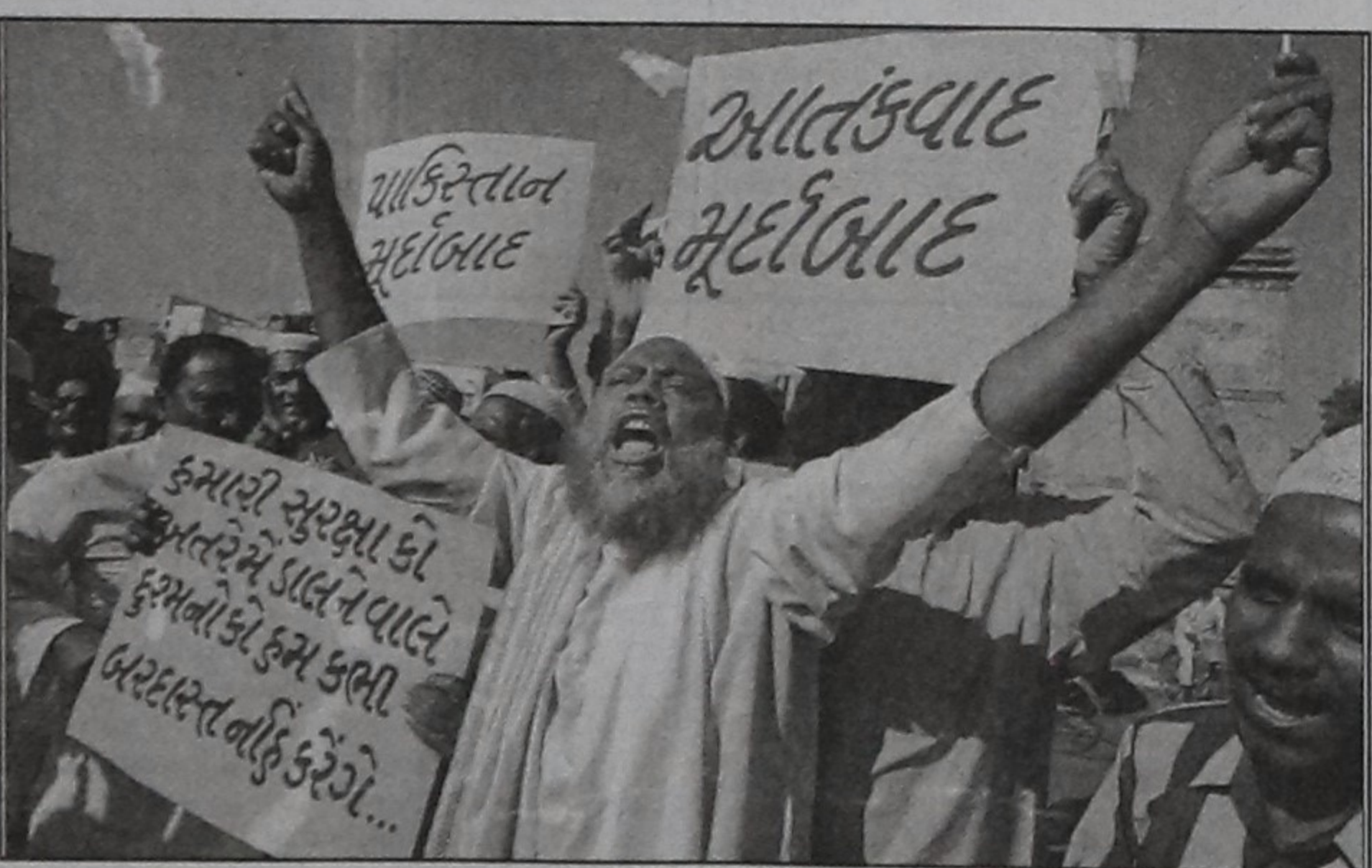
India says all 10 gunmen involved in the assault came from Pakistan, and has handed Islamabad a list of 20 terror suspects, with demands for their arrest and extradition.

Suspicion has focused on Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based militant group which has fought Indian control of

divided Kashmir. Lashkar was blamed for an attack on the Indian parliament in 2001, which pushed the two nations to the brink of war.

Earlier Friday, Indian Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram clearly had Pakistani groups in mind when he spoke of proof that elements outside the country were responsible.

"There is ample evidence to show that the source of the terrorist attack was clearly linked to organisations which have in the past been identified as being behind terrorist attacks in India," Chidambaram said.



Indian Muslims hold Indian National Flags and placards saying "Down with Pakistan" while shouting anti-Pakistan slogans during a protest rally in Ahmedabad yesterday. India's new interior minister Palaniappan Chidambaram admitted to intelligence and security lapses ahead of the November 26 Mumbai attacks as Islamabad vowed to take "strong action" if any Pakistanis were involved.

Mumbai Muslims distance themselves from attacks

AFP, Mumbai

From peace marches to calls for toned-down Eid celebrations, Mumbai's Muslims are doing all they can to dissociate themselves from last week's attacks that were carried out in the name of Islam.

Even though dozens of the 172 dead were Muslim, community leaders have expressed concerns that Hindu nationalists could exploit the attacks for political gain -- or could target Muslims directly.

The city's Muslims, who make up about 15 percent of Mumbai's estimated 19-

million-strong population, were to take to the streets after Friday prayers in a peace march.

But they cancelled the event, feeling that participation in the mass rally that attracted tens of thousands of people on Wednesday night to mark one week since the attacks was already enough.

"We had already carried out a march on Wednesday and hence decided not to hold a fresh one," said Ibrahim Tai, president of the Muslim Council Trust, referring to the mass rally by the Gateway of India, opposite the Taj Mahal

hotel, which was one of the main targets of the attacks.

Leading figures in the community have called for Eid-ul-Azha celebrations to be limited only to those rituals that are strictly necessary.

Eid-ul-Azha commemorates the prophet Ibrahim's obedience to God through his willingness to sacrifice his son and is marked by the ritual slaughter of animals.

A number of Islamic organisations are also categorically refusing to have those responsible for the deadly attacks buried on Indian soil.

US calls for Zimbabwe's Mugabe to step down

AFP, Copenhagen

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday called on Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to step down, saying power-sharing talks with the opposition were a "sham process."

"It is well past time for Robert Mugabe to leave," said Rice during a brief visit to Copenhagen. "I think that is now obvious."

"If this is not evident for the international community, that it is time to stand up for what is right, I don't know what would be."

Mugabe, who has ruled the former British colony since independence in 1980, and opposition leader Morgan

Tsvangirai signed a power-sharing deal in September that has yet to be implemented amid fierce disagreements over who should control key ministries.

Rice said southern African states needed to maintain pressure on Mugabe, 84, to find a political solution to the deadlock. Otherwise, she said, "it would be very difficult" to make any progress.

"Southern African states should be the most responsible," she said.

A cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe that has claimed hundreds of lives could spur neighbouring countries to push for a much-needed political solution in the country, Rice said.

US commander spells out Iraq mission under new pact

AP, AFP, Baghdad

A top US military commander says the new security pact that sets a timetable for American troops to leave Iraq will require a shift in how the US carries out combat missions in the country.

A statement by Gen. Ray Odierno released Friday says that new rules of engagement will be issued for US troops in Iraq.

He says there will be no change in their ability to protect themselves from direct threats.

But Odierno says that under the new rules, US troops will be required to carry out all operations together with Iraqi security forces. He also says troops will be able to engage in combat operations with the approval of the Iraqi government.

The security pact states that US troops must leave Iraq by January 1, 2012.

"US forces will continue to be authorised to engage in combat operations," General Raymond Odierno, the commander of US forces in Iraq, wrote in a letter to the troops.



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES
Bangladesh Delegation
684-686 Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka 1217

Tender Notice

Request for proposal for warehouse

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation), Bangladesh Delegation together with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society is engaged in relief operations from time to time and need a warehouse in or around Dhaka having a floor area of 5,000 to 10,000 square feet for a period of 6 to 12 months for storing relief material such as food, clothing, blankets and shelter & hygiene material.

Warehouse should be on the ground floor, clean and properly ventilated with electricity and water facilities and good access for heavy vehicle. The warehouse may be with or without warehouse management services and other logistics services as described in the bidding documents.

International Federation invites sealed quotations from interested parties for the provision of warehouse and/or related services. The Bidding documents with detailed information, bidding instructions, scope of services etc. can be collected, free of cost, from Federation Office at 684-686 Bara Moghbazar between 10h00 to 16h00 up to 22nd December 2008 on working days.

Proposals, complete in every respect, in sealed envelopes should be received at the above address on working days during office hours from 10h00 to 16h00 up to 23rd December, 2008 which is the last date of submission of bids.

The International Federation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever and not bound to accept the lowest bid.

Head of Delegation
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Bangladesh Delegation
Date: 5th December, 2008