

Indian Govt. to send 'strong request' for Prabhakaran? (1995, August 27). *Sunday observer*.

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From Upali Rupasinghe in New Delhi

The Indian Government may send a 'strong request' to the Sri Lankan Government within a couple of weeks seeking the extradition of the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran prime accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case according to External Affairs Ministry sources here.

There is a possibility of sending a high official to Colombo on the matter concerned' the sources said.

In a news item this morning in *The Asian*

Age a popular national daily said Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of External Affairs has charged the Sri Lankan Government with stonewalling the Indian Government's request to extradite the prime accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case along with his chief of intelligence, Pottu Amman and Akila the deputy chief of the women's intelligence wing.

According to *The Asian Age* the Minister has said that 'The ball is in their

court' confirming three formal requests with documents were handed over to the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry on June 3 by the Indian High Commission in Colombo.

He has further said the Foreign Ministry in Colombo has passed them on to the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry, as it is the nodal agency for all extradition requests. In turn the 'Defence Ministry has sought the advice of the Attorney General on the legality of the request.

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Meanwhile, Union Commerce Minister P. Chidambaram who has been entrusted with the Rajiv Gandhi assassination probe broke down in the Rajya Sabha yesterday when he was making a statement on the progress of the case. He said that all steps have been taken to complete the investigation within a time frame. Punishment is certain for the guilty' he said.

Several opposition members both in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha yesterday charged the Government in delaying the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. They said government should make all efforts to expedite the case as it is of national importance. At the end of a spirited discussion the Lok Sabha speaker Mr. Sivaraj Patel directed the Government to ensure speedier action on the proceedings of the case.

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's lament at Amathi last weekend over the slow progress of the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case

made the Parliament possible to discuss the matter at length.