

# Pak issues formal invite for PM visit

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, July 27:** Pakistan on Friday delivered the formal letter inviting Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to visit Islamabad for a dialogue.

Pakistani high commissioner in New Delhi Ashraf Jehangir Qazi met foreign secretary Chokila Iyer to hand over the formal invitation letter from President Pervez Musharraf. Islamabad has also sent the invitation to external affairs minister Jaswant Singh. The invite to Mr Singh was sent earlier this week.

The formal invite came after a confusion about the whole issue. The Pakistani newspapers had claimed on Monday that invite had been sent to the Indian government, a fact which was denied by New Delhi.

Pakistan had made informal invitation during to PM and external affairs minister during the Agra summit. The invite was accepted by the Indian side. The leaders from the two leaders are expected to meet later this year. There have been talks about the possible venues. The issue will also figure in the talks between Indian and Pakistan foreign secretaries in Colombo on August 9 and 10. The two senior officials will be in Sri Lankan capital to attend the standing committee meeting of Saarc and they were expected to have a bilateral interaction.

THE ASIAN AGE

# Vajpayee SIH gets 28/7 Musharraf's invitation

Quar Pak  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 27. — A formal invitation to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee by General Pervez Musharraf to visit Pakistan was delivered today.

The Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, handed over the invitation to the foreign secretary, Mrs Chokila Iyer, this afternoon.

The foreign minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, has already received the invitation from his Pakistani counterpart, Mr Abdul Sattar, a few days back. It is expected that Mr Singh will visit Pakistan in September, before the proposed meeting between Mr Vajpayee and Gen Musharraf in New York.

Even after newsmen sought clarifications on the delivery of the invitation, the foreign ministry refused to divulge the information.

The only information that was given was about the Pakistani High Commissioner's meeting with the foreign secretary this afternoon. The journalists had to bank on the Pakistan High Commission for confirmation.

**'Assurance broken':** Pakistan came close to being labelled by the USA as a state sponsoring terrorism but escaped by giving assurances, which it promptly broke, a former senior US diplomat has said.

The former US ambassador, Mr Dennis Kux, has said in his new book on US-Pakistani ties that instead of stopping cross-border terrorism, Pakistan had merely moved many of the Kashmir-bound terrorists to Afghanistan, changed the ISI chief and "privatised" the cross-border terrorism with continued ISI help. Senior officials said Mr Kux's information confirmed India's stand that Pakistan has been promoting "extremism in J&K."

**Strike:** A strike called by the Hurriyat to protest against "state-terrorism" threw life out of gear in the valley today, add agencies. Security forces in northern sector foiled an infiltration attempt when they killed six armed ultras at Nowgam sector last evening. Elsewhere, five ultras were among seven people killed.

THE STATESMAN

# Reconstructing the Agra summit

By Atul Aneja

**NEW DELHI, JULY 26.** In seeking a deal on Kashmir at Agra, Pakistan counted on the "moderate elements" within the Indian leadership in the hope that the latter would eventually relent on the question of "cross-border" terrorism. While reconstructing the Agra summit, highly-placed sources in the Government pointed out that the Pakistani leadership, especially its President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, and the Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, had decided right at the outset to maximise negotiations with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh.

Pakistan's strategy of engaging India at the political rather than the official level during negotiations became evident in the run up to the summit itself. For instance, the Pakistani side, on at least four occasions, rejected India's request to let the officials of the two sides talk and fine tune an agenda for the summit.

Pakistan's game plan became transparent when Gen. Musharraf, on the evening of July 15 at Agra, sought to unsuccessfully convince Mr. Vajpayee, to get personally involved in drafting a possible joint statement.

The Pakistani draft, therefore, re-

ached the official delegations after Mr. Vajpayee declined to work on it. The text, once it reached the Indian officials, was outrightly rejected even as a starting point for talks. Instead, the Indian side put across its own draft for talks, on which the two delegations burnt the midnight oil. From the Indian side, negotiations for a "joint statement" were mainly conducted by the Foreign Secretary, Ms. Chokila Iyer, the Joint Secretary of the Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan (IPA) desk, Mr. Vivek Katju, the Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, and the Joint Secretary designate to the IPA, Mr. Arun Kumar Singh. No breakthrough was in sight till nearly 4 a.m. on July 16. The status of Jammu and Kashmir remained the bone of contention.

The meeting between Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf began on July 16 on a sombre note. The Prime Minister, by then had already met his Cabinet colleagues to consider the efforts of the officials who had worked at night. President Musharraf had also met editors of leading publications — a meeting which had been telecast, much to the resentment of the Prime Minister. Both leaders found it difficult to reconcile their positions on Kashmir.

Finally, it was decided that the draft would now be considered by

the two Foreign Ministers. Both Mr. Jaswant Singh and the Mr. Sattar covered considerable ground in reconciling their differences, raising hopes for the first time that afternoon of a possible "joint declaration." The two leaders narrowed down their differences in stating that "the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue will pave the way for the normalisation of Indo-Pak. relations." Finding a language which would link Kashmir and cross-border terrorism was, however, turning even more intractable. Mr. Sattar, when asked to commit himself on "cross-border" terrorism, sought to link it with the wider question of human rights violation in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Singh put both elements of a possible deal — the characterisation of the Kashmir issue as well as the paragraph on terrorism in square brackets, signalling that all his reservations on both counts had not been addressed. He also made personal notes on the margin of the draft.

Mr. Singh made it clear to his Pakistani counterpart that formulations on both topics could be clinched only after discussions with the Prime Minister and his other Cabinet colleagues.

Pakistan, however, interpreted the decision to forward the draft to the Cabinet with great optimism and expectations.

A meeting of the de facto Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) began after 5.30 p.m.. Prior to this, the text discussed by the Foreign Ministers had been circulated among the members of the official delegation where some of its deficiencies had already been noticed. During the CCS, the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani was the first to point out that a linkage between the centrality of the Kashmir issue and the cross-border terrorism was missing in the draft.

His views were unanimously endorsed by the rest of the members. The CCS also noted that the draft deliberately excluded any reference to the Shimla Accord and the Lahore Declaration as part of the Indo-Pak. discourse. Consequently, the text was rejected and the Pakistani side was subsequently informed about the Indian decision.

Incidentally, India, through its spokesperson later emphasised the importance of Shimla and Lahore and declared that the two agreements, in future, be the cornerstones of any negotiations with Pakistan.

The Pakistani side made a last ditch effort to rescue the summit during President Musharraf's courtesy farewell call on the Prime Minister. But Mr. Vajpayee maintained that it was "too late" for any more changes.

THE HINDU

# Core issue: Musharraf keeps PoK within line of control

Udayan Nambodiri  
New Delhi, July 26

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf likes to pay lip service to the "wishes" of the Kashmiri people.

But the manner in which he forced a puppet Prime Minister on the people of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) yesterday displayed his scant respect, not just for Kashmiri sentiments, but also democracy.

Sardar Sikandar Hayat, leader

of the All Jammu-Kashmir Muslim Conference, was Musharraf's stool pigeon in the party.

The real leader, Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan, whose wide popularity helped the Muslim Conference bag 30 of the 48 seats in the Azad Kashmir Parliament, was a proponent of the "third option" — Kashmir's independence.

And that was his undoing.

In fact, the party's thumping victory in this month's elections sent a grave message to Islam-

abad that pro-Independence feelings had begun to dominate the collective psyche in the territory and unless tackled politically, would upset Musharraf's bigger game plan against India.

Hayat is a well-known pro-Pakistan activist. To prop him up, the Pakistan Government threatened to reopen old cases against Qayoom which are pending in the National Accountability Bureau.

Qayoom was reportedly offered Presidentship of the ter-

ritory and his son, a senior berth in the Hayat Government. However, till yesterday, when Hayat was sworn in, there was no evidence of such a trade-off.

Though the Pakistani Constitution gives "Azad Kashmir" a fair amount of autonomy and its own Constitution, it also debars from political life all those who don't swear by Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

To please his political masters in Islamabad, a grateful Hayat announced yesterday that his

Government would "continue to help the freedom struggle in Indian Kashmir".

For India this means upset calculations. One of the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) announced by New Delhi ahead of the Agra Summit was about facilitating the movement of Kashmiris over the Line of Control (LOC).

To make this operational India had included in the unilateral announcement its plan to open some check posts along the

LoC. Kashmiris of POK, who are theoretically Indian citizens, could move into India by just showing their travel documents.

But Pakistan saw in it a public relations ploy. Now, with a puppet regime in Muzaffarabad, it can ensure that at least this particular CBM is stillborn.

For, without the co-operation of the Government in POK, India cannot hope to carry out joint surveys and take other steps which would be necessary before throwing open its gates.



GENERAL PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Impasse at Agra

By Rajeev Dhavan

*It really does not matter who won or lost the summit. There remains an unfinished agenda on which the happiness of the peoples of South Asia depends.*

**H**E CAME, he saw, he left. He did not conquer. But, he claimed a victory. This was predictable; and, indeed, inevitable. Whether the Agra summit was a success or failure is irrelevant. It collapsed. We need to know why.

First, we need to begin by examining the position of the negotiating parties before we examine the subject matter of the negotiations. Amidst 'summit' euphoria, this elementary insight seems to have eluded India's approach. Pakistan is a military regime backed by military generals with an unequivocally unified policy on its relationship with India. Pakistan's military policy, foreign policy and domestic policy are pointed in the same unipolar direction: fighting a war in Kashmir on communal grounds. India had no basis for assuming that, somehow, Pakistan's foreign policy would be different from its military policy or its domestic policy. A military regime committed to a war cannot turn its back on its military policy in summit negotiations. By contrast, India's military, foreign and domestic policies are necessarily different. India's military policy is defensive in nature: to defend its borders, but not to covet territorial expansion. Its foreign policy is pointedly founded on peace. Its domestic policy is based on secularism within a federal framework of which Kashmir is a part. India approached the Agra summit with the expanded horizons of its foreign policy of peace. There was no reason whatsoever for India to believe that Pakistan's President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, would somehow break up the unity of his military, foreign and domestic policies so as to abandon Pakistan's military policy and point his foreign policy in a direction different from his military and domestic policies. A policy of peace cannot grow out of a military policy single-mindedly devoted to a terrorist supported war.

Second, let us turn to the subject matter. India needs to make clear that Kashmir is available for discussion and not decision. No Prime Minister can negotiate away the territory and status of Kashmir. In the Berubari case (1960) where certain enclaves were handed over

to the then East Pakistan, the Supreme Court gave a timely warning that India's territory could not simply be handed over to Pakistan; or, for that matter, anyone else. This was reiterated in the Rann of Kutch case (1969) which permitted clarifying a border, but not ceding Indian territory. This exercise would require a constitutional amendment. Likewise, the status of Kashmir is a part of Article 370. It cannot be bargained away through treaty negotiations. If Pakistan has a bottom line on Kashmir arising out of its unified foreign, military and domestic policy, India's constitutional democracy founded on the rule of law circumscribes what can be discussed and what can be decided at summits on Kashmir.

Third, Pakistan needs to make its policy on Kashmir clear. If Pakistan's policy is to annex Kashmir, this should be clearly stated — especially to the people of Kashmir, including those of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). To be part of Pakistan is not an option favoured by anyone, including most Kashmiris. Pakistan is wholly unsuited to absorb Jammu, Ladakh and other parts of Kashmir. Muslim groups fighting in Kashmir are wary about a Kashmir within Pakistan — and should make their position clear to Pakistan. The suggestion from some quarters in Pakistan that there should be a district-by-district plebiscite in all its territories invites an abhorrent balkanisation of this regime. This is simply unacceptable. Once it becomes clear that Pakistan does not wish to annex Kashmir and, that Kashmiris do not want to be part of Pakistan, many things will fall in place. What will remain is whether Kashmir will be autonomously located within or without India. At present, Kashmir has an autonomous status within Article 370. This is consistent with India's secular federalism which devises special provisions for other States (Article 371A-H). What defeats discussion is Pakistan's lack

of clarity on its plans to annex Kashmir by hiding behind a possible divisive plebiscite which can never be an excuse for not stating its position clearly.

Fourth, the issue of cross border terrorism is real. Unfortunately, words like 'cross border terrorism' obscure meanings. What is at issue is that Pakistan has waged an undeclared war through direct and indirect terrorist means. This 'war' is being fought ruthlessly, with crippling social and economic effects for both countries and all affected people. To ask Pakistan to state its position on its 'war' with India is very much an issue. Peace talks require a cessation of this war as a prelude to understanding and, perforce, discussion.

Fifth, India's civil liberties record in Kashmir leaves a lot to be desired. It is no comfort to read reports that Pakistan's record in PoK is as bad, if not worse. No constitutional democracy can allow arbitrary infringements and travesties even in a war situation. This requires immediate attention. There are some doubts on the applicability of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to Kashmir. Incidents such as Bijbehara have defied effective investigation. A special institutional mechanism is necessary, with the armed forces showing willingness not to have their record tainted. This is a priority.

Sixth, the nuclear issues. This is a threat to the region. Apart from false price and misplaced jingoism, the stability of this region and the anxiety of the whole world cannot be set at rest unless this is worked out. The possibility of even an accidental nuclear strike in South Asia is ghastly. Such an issue cannot be linked to Kashmir or the military objectives of any country. It has to be de-linked as a priority issue and resolved now.

Seventh, this is a need to be brought about possibilities of interaction be-

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tween the people of Pakistan and India. There are many issues to be examined here which can only be insufficiently symbolised by Mr. Vajpayee's famous bus ride to Lahore. Exchanges and equities have to be worked out at many levels for people, prisoners, communications and trade. Suspicions need to be allayed. If Europe can come together, in the distance future there has to be an South Asian Union which does not challenge the integrity of the constituent nation states, but draws them together. A foundation for this can only laid on the basis of an "agenda of peace, trade, communication and people".

The summit became all the more difficult because of Gen. Musharraf's own regime compulsions and untimely senior BJP voices. Pakistan's military regime is backed by military generals, answerable to political fundamentalists in a society, which is retreating into expressions of feudalism in many areas, without durable democratic traditions. But, there are many brilliant and quiet voices in Pakistani society in favour of the peace process. Many Pakistanis want peace and progress like many Indians. India has strong and democratic traditions. But, the BJP's rise to power, the wanton destruction of the Babri Masjid supported by the BJP's White Paper, the fact that the BJP leads the national coalition in power in Delhi, increased assaults on minorities, the move to abolish Article 370 and the emergence of state policies dedicated to propagating some version of Hinduism give rise to suspicions. Senior BJP leaders are ill advised to speak discordantly when talks are going on. As Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee speaks for a secular nation, not for the BJP.

But, agendas for summits are not made in heaven. India's naive assumption that Pakistan would evolve a foreign policy of peace in the face of its military policy of war was misguided. India's Kashmir position need to be stated. Pakistan needs to be drawn out to clarify its stance on Kashmir. It really does not matter who won or lost the summit. There remains an unfinished agenda on which the happiness of the peoples of South Asia depends.

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

27 JUL 2001

# Confidence building steps to continue: India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE & AGENCIES

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NEW DELHI, July 26. — India today said it was going ahead with implementing the confidence-building measures (CBMs), an external affairs ministry spokesperson said. These include easing of visa restrictions unilaterally announced by New Delhi before General Pervez Musharraf's visit.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today criticised Pakistan for saying that Indian hardliners had ensured that the Agra summit failed. "There was no member in the delegation who wanted terrorists to be called freedom fighters. There was no one who wanted cross-border terrorism to be ignored," Mr Vajpayee said. The Prime Minister questioned Islamabad's claim that there was no Indian prisoner of war in Pakistani jails.

"We have information that there are 54 PoWs in Pakistan. We will collect all information about them and hand it over to Pakistan," he said.

India today said it has not received any official intimation from the Pakistan authorities about the decision to release 31 Indian prisoners held in its jails for illegally entering Baluchistan province.

**Foreign ministry's assertion:** On the eve of the arrival of the newly-appointed US ambassador to India Mr Robert D Blackwill, the foreign ministry said India's views on Kashmir "need not, may not and do not" coincide with the USA's. India also preferred to ignore President George W Bush's statement linking Kosovo to Kashmir.

Mrs Rocca, during her recent visit to New Delhi, had clarified that the Bush administration was not taking a position on the agenda of discussions between India and Pakistan.

The USA would also not involve itself in negotiations unless asked by the two sides, she said.

Asked about her remarks that Kashmir issue should be resolved between India and Pakistan "taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people," a foreign ministry spokesperson said New Delhi's position had been outlined by Mr Vajpayee in his statement in Parliament on Tuesday.

**Pak stand:** On the eve of US assistant secretary of state Mrs Christina B Rocca's visit to Islamabad, Pakistan said it would shortly respond on "merit" to the pre-Agra summit CBMs announced by India, PTI adds from Islamabad.

Pakistan has now officially received communications about CBMs announced by India before the summit.

"We will respond to them on merit," Pakistan foreign office spokesman Mr Riaz Mohammad Khan told reporters.

Gen Musharraf had not insisted at the Agra summit on progress on the Kashmir issue as a prerequisite for normalisation of relations with India, the spokesman said.

**High alert:** Security has been further tightened in Srinagar and rest of J&K a day ahead of strike called by the All-Party Hurriyat Conference in protest against what it called "government sponsored terrorism" across the valley.

Meanwhile the Hizbul Mujahideen leadership has announced a one-month operation across the valley.

**Protection for Jaswant son:** Following a kidnap threat by the pro-Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami, security has been tightened for Bhoopender Singh, son of Mr Jaswant Singh, police today said.

## Belated Kargil awards

Two years after the Kargil war, the Prime Minister today announced that the armed forces and paramilitary forces would be awarded campaign medals for their role in the war. Mr Vajpayee was speaking at a function at Ashoka Hotel on the occasion of Kargil Diwas.

THE STATESMAN

THE STATESMAN

# Asean meet a chance to explain summit failure

Saurabh Shukla  
New Delhi, July 26

INDIA IS making the most of the opportunity to explain the Agra summit to other countries at the ongoing eighth ministerial meeting of the 26 Asean Regional Forum (ARF) countries in Hanoi.

Leading the Indian side is K C Pant, who has replaced External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh because of his preoccupation with Parliament's special debate on the summit.

The Hanoi meeting is considered strategically important for India because of the presence of the US, Russia and China, besides the Asean countries.

Jaswant Singh would have been the best choice, say officials of the External Affairs Ministry. But the Government needed him in Parliament to answer the Opposition criticism about the summit.

The Ministry approached Pant after deciding that he could help



KC PANT

clear some of the confusion created by Pakistan on Kashmir after the summit. According to insiders, Pant's mission is to provide an overview of the ground situation in Kashmir besides talking about India's position on issues like cross-border terrorism.

Ministry officials say he has briefed some of the foreign ministers on New Delhi's

efforts to get militant groups to a dialogue table.

He is also working to elicit the support of ARF ministers against global terrorism. Pant will draw their attention to Pakistan's encouragement to militant groups to step up violence in an attempt to derail the peace process.

Diplomatic observers say Pant's mission may not suffice at a diplomatic level. Notwithstanding Pant's one-to-one with the foreign ministers of ARF and Asean countries, New Delhi may have to look for a high level engagement at a later stage. Such an exercise by Jaswant Singh will help India thrash out important issues such as Beijing's proposed entry to the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation.

India has also offered to co-chair with Vietnam, the ARF Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures for 2001-2002, which will hold a meeting in New Delhi in October.

# Indian rift spoiled summit: Pervez

Mubashir Zaidi & PTI  
Islamabad, July 26

IN A belated news report, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf is said to have told his Cabinet and the National Security Council (NSC) that India and Pakistan could not sign a joint declaration at the Agra summit due to a "split" in the "ranks of the Indian Government".

"It was apparent that there was a split in their ranks," the English daily *Dawn* today quoted him as saying a day after the Agra summit.

"Prime Minister Vajpayee was keen at continuing the talks," Musharraf said.

Musharraf is reported to have said: "Both sides had come close to signing the Agra declaration but the Indians, particularly the hardliners, were not ready to give peace a chance."

Interestingly, at his July 20 press conference, Musharraf had not named "Indian hardliners" for thwarting the peace

process. He had merely appealed to the "moderates" on both sides to play their role for peace and stability.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan foreign office called its first press conference today to discuss the confidence building measures announced by the Indian Government and to give a low down on the talks.

Foreign office spokesman Riaz Mohammad Khan clarified that there was a "misleading impression" that Pakistan had made the settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute "a precondition for normalisation of relations between the two countries".

"The President had emphasised that movement towards settlement of the dispute in accordance with the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir would allow progress towards normalisation of relations," Khan said.

He said the Pakistan Government had "noted with satisfaction" the Indian Government's

## INDIA TO GO AHEAD WITH CBMs

INDIA ON Thursday said it would go ahead with the implementation of confidence-building measures, including easing of visa restrictions, unilaterally announced by it prior to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's visit, even as it is awaiting Islamabad's response.

"Our proposals remain on the table. We are going ahead with their implementation. Pakistan's response (to the Indian measures) is awaited," an MEA spokesperson said.

The spokesperson maintained that there was no discordance or dissonance on the issue, she said New Delhi was looking at the best possible arrangement for easy people-to-people contacts.

On the decision to open up additional check points along the LoC and the international border for easier access from both sides, she said: "Let us see. There is no official response."

PTI, New Delhi

desire to continue the dialogue process.

In fact, *The Dawn* quoted "authentic Cabinet sources" that Musharraf had found Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh "flexible in their approach".

According to the newspaper, Musharraf said Vajpayee "definitely wanted the peace process

to go". The hardliners, however, thwarted the signing of declaration, though "eight out of nine items in the draft joint declaration" had been agreed upon.

Khan said there was the possibility of a meeting of the foreign secretaries of the two countries during the SAARC official-level conference in Colombo.

Replying to a question, he said the Pakistan Government had

not received any formal news from India regarding withdrawal of troops from Jammu and Kashmir. Musharraf today briefed his service chiefs about the Agra summit at the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by Admiral Abdul Aziz Mirza, Air Chief Marshal Mushaf Ali Mir and the deputy chief of army staff, Lt Gen Muzaffar Hussain Armani.

India has offered to send its Director General of Military Operations to Pakistan for talks on reducing tensions along the Line of Control and nuclear risk reduction.

Pakistan had said it would respond to these Confidence Building Measures after the Agra summit. So, it seems the first round of CBMs will start soon.

On the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State, Christina Rocca later this week, Khan said the Pakistan Government would raise the issue of lifting of US sanctions during the talks.



# Atal puts Pakistan on future-talks notice

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, July 26:** Rubbishing allegations that "hardliners" within the Indian government had sabotaged the Agra Summit, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today said such utterances could pose problems for future talks between the two countries.

Talking to reporters at a function to mark India's victory in the Kargil war, Vajpayee said: "This kind of talk can create difficulties in future talks between the two countries."

A section of the Pakistani establishment was quoted as saying that India and Pakistan could not sign a joint declaration at the Agra summit due to a "split in the ranks of the Indian government" and blaming "hardliners"

for the failure.

The Prime Minister said the Indian delegation was "fully united" while taking decisions during the summit. Vajpayee said no member in "our delegation" wanted terrorists to be called "freedom fighters", nor was there anyone in the team who wanted to ignore the existence of cross-border terrorism.

Asserting that the talk about presence of "hardliners" had no basis, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that "there were no differences in our delegation".

Reiterating that there were 54 Indian Prisoners of War languishing in Pakistani jails, Vajpayee said: "We will have to find out the details and send them to Pakistan."

The Prime Minister announced that the government was

preparing a detailed scheme to extend affordable medical facilities to all ex-servicemen, while a high-level defence ministry committee has been asked to formulate a national welfare policy for former armed forces personnel by the year-end.

"I have asked defence minister Jaswant Singh to examine all the issues raised by ex-servicemen's organisations and to make concrete suggestions by the end of this year," he said.

The Prime Minister also announced institution of two awards — "Operation Vijay Star" and "Operation Vijay Medal" — in appreciation of the services rendered by military and paramilitary forces during the Indian campaign to oust Pakistani armed forces who had intruded into Indian territory.

THE TELEGRAPH

## NO MIDDLE GROUND

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**T**he whole truth that the law wants to elicit from those who appear in court is, in real life, elusive. Human beings, for their own survival and their sanity, cling to a particular version of the truth. Indians would like to believe that what the prime minister is telling the Lok Sabha is not entirely a figment of his imagination. It is not — and for obvious reasons it cannot be — the whole truth but it is a cogent and abbreviated version of events. Nobody can blame Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee for being brief in his statement to the Lok Sabha about the Agra summit. He did not have very much to tell members of parliament. He admitted that the quest for a joint declaration in Agra proved elusive because of Pakistan's intransigence. According to the prime minister, the Pakistan delegation was not willing to broach the subject of cross-border terrorism which was one of India's principal concerns. The Pakistan side asserted that relations between the two countries could not be normalized till the issue of Jammu and Kashmir was settled. Not surprisingly, the Indian side could not yield to either of these two demands. There is no reason to doubt this official version not because it comes from the prime minister but because it appears logical. The summit obviously failed because no common ground could be found on the two crucial issues affecting India and Pakistan.

Mr Vajpayee, however, completely glossed over a very important implication of the Agra summit. If the Pakistan president, Mr Pervez Musharraf, and his team were so assertive on Kashmir and so unyielding on cross-border terrorism, then the search for a middle ground will prove to be even more elusive than an anodyne joint declaration expected from the Agra summit. It is clear that an enormous amount of detritus from the past needs to be cleared before India and Pakistan can begin to fashion a new and peaceful future. This means that officials and bureaucrats of the two countries have to work overtime to pave the way for a second meeting between the prime minister of India and the president of Pakistan. Under the circumstances, Mr Vajpayee's decision to accept Mr Musharraf's invitation to go to Islamabad has been too hasty and premature. There can be no point in the two leaders meeting for a second round and then announcing that they agree to disagree on the fundamental issues.

This is not to suggest that India-Pakistan relations are beyond hope. On the contrary, the lesson from Agra is that, summits need much more background work than was bargained for by both sides in Agra. Success in diplomacy is seldom, if ever, dramatic. It is always incremental. Bureaucrats from both countries have to meet at various levels to thrash out differences and arrive at positions on which dialogue is possible. This will mean that channels of communication will remain open and crackle will be eliminated when the two leaders meet. A hurried meeting will only raise expectations and provide photo opportunities. Mr Vajpayee has reiterated in the Lok Sabha that terrorism will be decisively crushed. This should be a good enough signal to Islamabad. He should not dilute the strength of the signal by agreeing to talk to Mr Musharraf before there is something substantive to talk about.

Musharraf, with his commando-style tactics, outmanoeuvred India

# Clueless in Agra

BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

HF-8  
25/7

**I**T IS a classic case of a big, blind gamble passing off as diplomacy. Behind the blame game over the collapse of the Taj Mahal diplomacy is a harsh reality New Delhi doesn't want to face, as Atal Bihari Vajpayee's short, defensive statement in Parliament showed. The summit was held at India's initiative and expense, with New Delhi coming out poorer. India closed its eyes to reality, shut its ears to the pre-summit messages from Islamabad and stayed mute to Pakistan's propaganda war.

The expectations and calculations that prompted Vajpayee and his team to make a dramatic U-turn in Pakistan policy and invite military dictator Pervez Musharraf proved wrong. New Delhi overestimated several factors and underrated others. Vajpayee's statement made no attempt to acknowledge that the gamble's premises were flawed and its promises self-deluding.

The United States, the invisible catalyst in the process, also got it wrong. It led India up the summit path without a full, hard-headed understanding of Musharraf's political constrictions, as opposed to his rhetorical readiness, to make a leap forward. Maybe Washington's aim was merely to get India and Pakistan back at the negotiating table. But the failure to accurately assess ground realities has made even the objective of ensuring a sustained, multifaceted dialogue more difficult.

The summit meeting foundered not on differences over intricate elements of any breakthrough in the works, but on the same old conceptual divergence on how to proceed even towards mending bilateral relations. When India made its famous somersault on Pakistan policy in May, it obviously did not anticipate that its summit initiative would get mired in trite, abstract questions or that it would get beaten at its own game.

From the time Vajpayee invited Musharraf to "walk the high road" with him, Pakistan virtually hijacked the Indian initiative, milking it to improve its tattered image, build international legitimacy for its military regime, and refocus global attention on Kashmir. Musharraf, practising diplomacy through the media in the style of wartime public relations, sent out, day after day, blunt messages on his summit objectives.

Musharraf, the commando by training, brought that style and substance with him to India. He dominated the media side of the summit, tried to get the better of India in the negotiations and, when India did not wilt, returned home triumphantly, having publicly set the agenda. He wanted a joint declaration only on his terms, as he did not want to meet the fate of Pakistani rulers who set in motion a process for their ouster after signing agreements with India at Tashkent, Simla and Lahore.

Risk, stealth and surprise are essential to a commando, and Musharraf personi-



SUMMIT FALLOUT?: A police officer's body who was killed in Sheshnag last week

fies those qualities. The Musharraf breakfast show, televised at the delicate halfway summit point, was the work of a commando mind. That his Indian guests at the breakfast discussion had not been told about the telecast was immaterial to Musharraf because ethics have no place in commando tactics.

New Delhi is crying foul. But when it extended its invitation, how did it expect a rogue general to play by the Marquess of Queensberry rules of diplomacy?

Musharraf, who in 1971 was training Naga insurgents in the Chittagong hills, belongs to that tribe of army officers who served in East Pakistan and are sworn to avenge the dismemberment of their country. Musharraf's subsequent role in Sikh militancy, Kashmir terrorism, Kargil and the IC-814 hijacking has to be seen against that background.

Agra was testament to how the wily Musharraf outmanoeuvred and outfoxed India by blending diplomacy and commando tactics. Musharraf stole India's initiative to articulate Pakistan's case forcefully and present himself as reasonable, and personable.

The moonless diplomacy by the Taj constitutes a serious setback to Vajpayee's ability to carry on pursuing peace initiatives with Pakistan. Such was the naiveté that just the first Agra session with Musharraf was enough to shatter Vajpayee's hopes and calculations. It must embarrass Vajpayee that he again got taken for a ride, this time on his home turf by the guest he invited. For a prime minister in the twilight of his career, Agra constituted virtually a last-ditch effort to fashion a foreign-policy legacy on the ruins of his earlier initiatives.

Agra was also proof of how abrupt, personality-driven changes in foreign

policy can backfire. No professional inputs were sought before or after the U-turn was made.

Any scheme to resume talks with Pakistan should have been structured in a step-by-step framework, with a summit meeting being offered as a reward for flexibility and joint work at lower levels. However, by conceding a summit without even testing the waters, India not only squandered leverage, it also generated misperceptions in Pakistan that it was exhausted from battling *jihad* and under international pressure.

The paradox is that despite a failing economy, Pakistan has strengthened its only leverage over India — its ability to bleed its rival by cheaply sending arms and extremists into Kashmir. That is Islamabad's most powerful weapon against India. As its economic and military disparity with India widens, Pakistan will need that weapon even more. At Agra, it refused to allow even a theoretical linkage to be drawn between the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism.

Agra bared the two India-aided fallacies on which Pakistan's negotiating strategy is founded. The first is the "centrality" of the Kashmir issue that the Tashkent, Simla and Lahore agreements do not recognise but which Vajpayee's Kerala musings implicitly accepted by putting the insoluble Kashmir "problem" at the heart of Indo-Pak ties and calling ingenuously for its "lasting solution".

The second is the "will of the people" of Kashmir — a militaristic nation's odd insistence strengthened by the rise of the India-built monster, Hurriyat.

Where was the will of the Kashmiri people when Pakistan bartered away a slice of its Kashmir to China in 1963?

Musharraf acknowledged in 1999 before the coup that Kashmir was the symbol, not the cause, of conflict with India. In fact, Pakistan's proxy war began in India's Punjab, not Kashmir. Yet at Agra, according to Pakistani claims Vajpayee has not refuted, the Indian side was willing to accept in the declaration text both the centrality of the Kashmir issue and the non-mention of the Simla agreement, India's only answer to demands for implementation of the old UN resolutions.

With everything grist to his mill, Musharraf has returned home stronger from Agra, having upstaged the Indian leadership that accorded him legitimacy. The treatment he got in India was akin to the famous *poornakumbam* offered to Emperor Aurangzeb by the Delhi Brahmins. An invitation from today's political Brahmins helped Musharraf to usurp the presidency, demonstrate his skills in 'contemporary diplomacy', shed his quasi-pariah status, and put the spotlight on Kashmir.

Clearly, India miscalculated that Musharraf, chastened by his Kargil experience and burdened by a collapsing Pakistani economy, was ready to be an Anwar Sadat and cut a historic peace deal. Agra showed he was not ready even to move ahead. How did India go so wrong in its assessment? By making four serious miscalculations.

■ It overestimated Musharraf's freedom of action by undervaluing the constraints imposed by rival generals in his junta. Musharraf admitted he would need to stay at his old home in Delhi if he gave up his Kashmir agenda.

■ India overrated the external influences on him, particularly America's ability to instill flexibility. Washington sees Musharraf as Pakistan's last hope and, although disappointed over his spoiler role at Agra, is unwilling to push him beyond a point or use its economic leverage. Unlike Britain, it has balked at even labelling Lashkar-e-Tayyeba a terrorist group.

■ New Delhi erred in believing that it could seek peace with the powerful Pakistan military, the institution with the greatest vested interest in perpetuating conflict with India.

■ It misjudged that Musharraf, the risk-taking commando with a record of reckless adventurism, would turn a new leaf simply because Vajpayee was offering him a joint place in history.

A summit intended to build a cooperative and peaceful future has helped Musharraf boost his popularity at home by clinging to the bitter past. His disruptive rigidity and obduracy will carry international costs. However, India is already paying in blood the costs of Agra in Doda and Amarnath, as it did for Lahore in Kargil. But human lives come cheap in India — the secret of its resilience against terrorism and willingness to fight the proxy war on the enemy's terms.

# FULL STOP AT AGRA

## Rooted In The Flip-Flop On Kashmir

By KEITH FLORY

THE mandarins of South Block would like everyone to believe that Agra was a continuation of the bus ride to Lahore, which was itself taken in the spirit of Shimla. A less fancy though probably more realistic assessment would be that it was an extension of the convoluted policy on Jammu and Kashmir. If accepted, that theory would offer some explanation as to why a summit was held sans preparation, and why the consequent confusion that will not be easy to clear.

The trip to Agra started with the Ramzan cease-fire, or non-initiation of combat operations if the army's terminology is to be preferred. It was a laudable gesture, it did receive appreciation from the populace of J&K and it sent out global signals that India did not ignore the religious sentiments of its muslim people. No cause for quarrel with that.

Yet that cease-fire received no response from the militant groups, and the ground reality was that the public enthusiasm was at a lower key than when some weeks earlier the Hizbul Mujahedin had made its own, short-lived, cease-fire call. There was only a token response to the government's peace moves — if the death toll dropped it was because the security forces were no longer engaging the militants. Which actually facilitated the suicide-squad attacks on the camps of the forces.

### CEASEFIRE

The prevailing situation did not really warrant an extension of the ceasefire, but taking the high moral ground (akin to the high road at Agra) government decided to continue with it. But it lacked the requisite staying power and called it off because there had been no sincere response. What happened in the final phase of the ceasefire to cause that revised thinking?

If there had been no genuine cause to persist with the ceasefire after the end of the holy month of Ramzan, there was even less publicly visible reason to scrap it. When applying that closure the government sprang a surprise in simultaneously announcing that it was inviting Pervez Musharraf to the negotiating table. A turn-around from its earlier rejection of Pakistan's then mere CEO to talk to Indian leaders anytime and anywhere on the grounds that an end to the sponsorship of terrorism was a pre-requisite to talks.

There had been other flip-flops too. The offer to talk to leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference but then not issuing them — though not officially denying them — visas to visit Pakistan for consultations which they claimed were necessary to their getting involved in any peace process.

Much the same held true in respect of the chance given to K C Pant, designated the government's interlocutor. He had just about begun to break the ice, talking to seemingly irrelevant groups was a starting

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point, and there were signs that some divisions were appearing in the Hurriyat. Some of its moderate elements felt that slamming the door on Pant would be counter-productive.

Yet before that knot could be unravelled it was with Musharraf that the government decided to talk. Pant's efforts may have produced no results, but no interlocutor could have done more in the few weeks he had. Did the government really expect the Hurriyat to come

move by India was sending out that invitation.

Would it be true that his conduct came as a surprise? His track record would suggest otherwise, and surely there should have been some pre-summit assessment of his style of functioning based on intelligence and diplomatic inputs. The Agra exercise cannot be explained away as a blind date that did not work, diplomacy is not conducted in such puerile amateur fashion.

Arguments are being advanced that Agra was not a total



rushing to embrace him?

It was against that backdrop, to say that Lahore was the inspiration would fool only a few, that the invitation was sent out. Rather than be seeing as giving in to the hardliners within when calling off the ceasefire the government sought to tell the international community — which had hailed the ceasefire — that it was going an even further mile down the road to peace. Setting a trap for itself in the process. From then on it was the crafty military dictator who called the shots.

When the External Affairs Minister was asked (at his press conference in Agra on 17 July) why no interaction at the officials level had preceded the summit his reply was that Pakistan had not responded favourably to precisely such an Indian suggestion. Now sources in South Block speak of a proposed agenda having been dispatched, but not accepted. Similar is the explanation offered to queries about the suitability of the venue, the meeting being held in the full glare of publicity and so on. As the host, India could not force its way on its guest.

### PROTOCOL

But this was no ordinary guest. Soon after accepting the invitation he assumed the office of President, ensuring that the protocol and nature of his visit would be upgraded. Thus followed the ceremonial reception and banquets, visit to Rajghat and all the trappings of a state visit. He had been invited to cut a cake, he wound up helping himself to the lion's share of it.

In the coming days stories will begin doing the rounds of how at every stage of the process Musharraf threw diplomatic norms to the winds, made a mockery of established procedures, violated accepted codes of conduct and used dubious, if not deceitful, methods to try and press his case. All these will be by way of explanation, reactions to what took place. Perhaps the only pro-active

failure in that at least some talks have taken place. The line will be sent out that in the drafts that never attained "closure" Pakistan did shift a little in that it did not insist on reference to the UN resolutions, the right of self-determination, and that Musharraf spoke of a variety of possible solutions. But it is all taken back by the position now being taken that the President attaches little importance to terminology — and his oft-demonstrated insistence that there is no point in talking about anything except Kashmir, which in fact is questioning the status of the state.

### STATECRAFT

Even as there is talk of India being committed to pick up the threads — of Agra or Lahore, it is technically unclear — there can be little argument that the meeting projected a failure of Indian statecraft. Having issued an invitation it was imperative for India to so conduct proceedings as to register a modicum of progress. Musharraf was playing for lower stakes, he had only responded to an invitation, it was the responsibility of the hosts (in sub-continental tradition) to make the party last.

There would be some tongue-in-cheek to his complaint that he went home empty-handed — he had already been gifted more than he had ever imagined would come to him. In issuing him that invitation India accorded him the recognition that had hitherto been denied by both the international community and large sections of the people of Pakistan. In fact he would now find it much easier to address his domestic audience. He will claim that his country is behind him in tackling India, and would seek to cement that by pointing out that he refused to give an inch to what is seen as the big bully.

India did well to speak out loud and clear that it will not accept Agra as a finality. Yet when the next round takes place it will have to be much better prepared. It may have now "measured" the other man in the ring, but will have to train hard to take control of the bout.

To continue the boxing analogy further, the strength in the punch comes from the legs. And so having the feet planted in a consistent policy on all aspects of Kashmir — internal as well as external dimensions — would be the best way of tightening the bootlaces.

THE STATESMAN

# PM sticks to terror track

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, July 24: India today brought the focus back on cross-border terrorism, making it clear that improvement in ties with Pakistan would depend to a large extent on how seriously Islamabad addressed the issue.

"I focused on the terrorism being promoted in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I conveyed in clear terms that India has the resolve, strength and stamina to counter terrorism and violence until it is decisively crushed. I want to reiterate this determination today on the floor of the House," Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said in a statement in both Houses of Parliament.

But Vajpayee's two-page prepared speech on the Agra summit failed to satisfy the Opposition, which termed it lacklustre. "We are deeply disappointed..." the Congress said, accusing the government of not only being under-prepared before going into the summit but also of failing to put across India's concerns forcefully.

Vajpayee said "Pakistan's insistence on the 'settlement' of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, as a precondition for normalisation of relations, and its reluctance to acknowledge and address cross-border terrorism" were the sticking points. This, he said, finally made India give up its "quest" for a joint declaration after the summit.

The Prime Minister said India cannot accept Pakistan's position that unless the Kashmir issue was resolved "according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people", there was no scope of improvement in relations. The Pakistani leadership, he said, would have to realise that relations could only move forward by progressing on other areas and re-building mutual trust and confidence.

"Our bilateral engagement with Pakistan will continue," Vajpayee said. Omitting the words "we will continue to seek dialogue and reconciliation" from the text, he said: "We will persist with our efforts to convince Pakistan that our bilateral cooperation should not be held hostage to the resolu-

tion of any one issue."

"We will further increase the areas of agreement," he added. "Obviously, India's concerns in vital areas — such as cross-border terrorism — will have to find place in any document that negotiations endeavour to conclude."

Aimed at assuring the domestic audience, Vajpayee's speech was also a clear signal to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. "We cannot accept that the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir today, with its foreign mercenaries and generous assistance from abroad, is anything but terrorism," he said. "The daily killings of innocent men, women and children can simply not be glorified as *jihad* or as any kind of political movement."

The Prime Minister also referred to the recent attacks on the Amarnath pilgrims and the militant strikes in Doda.

"That is why Pakistan's refusal to end cross-border terrorism is the main hurdle in the creation of a conducive atmosphere," he said.

THE HINDU

# 'We're willing to listen to all Kashmiri opinion'

Following is the text of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement in both Houses of Parliament on Tuesday:

Honourable members would recall my invitation to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan to visit India.

In the days and weeks before his visit, I had occasion to exchange views and perspectives — individually and collectively — with leaders of political parties, eminent personalities, media representatives and intellectuals on the future prospects for India-Pakistan relations. They endorsed, almost unanimously, our view that the visit should be used to seek avenues for durable peace and cooperative friendship with Pakistan. Building on the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, we sought, through the invitation and the consequent visit, to strengthen the broad-based framework of dialogue, so that progress could be made on all outstanding bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. We also identified the continuing cross-border terrorism as an important subject to be addressed.

To promote a congenial environment and confidence-building in advance of the visit, the government announced some significant decisions relating to peace and security, nuclear and non-nuclear CBMs, people-to-people contacts, humanitarian

issues, education, youth exchanges and trade. We believe these decisions have been well received by the people of India and Pakistan. The government remains committed to implementing them.

President Musharraf, accompanied by Begum Musharraf, was in New Delhi on July 14. He was accorded full ceremonial honours. He called on the President, who hosted a state banquet. The vice-president, the home minister, the external affairs and defence minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha called on him. I hosted a lunch in his honour. At the retreat in Agra on July 15 and 16, President Musharraf and I had extensive one-to-one talks for over five hours. We also had talks at the delegation level.

During these discussions, I emphasised the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust for progress on all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. I took up other specific issues which would help the processes of peace. These included the issue of 54 PoWs believed to be in Pakistani jails, the extradition of known terrorists and criminals who have been given sanctuary in Pakistan; the upkeep of Sikh gurdwaras and Hindu temples in Pakistan, the treatment of Indian pilgrims visiting shrines in Pakistan, and the

enhancement of mutually beneficial trade.

I focused on the terrorism being promoted in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I conveyed in clear terms that India has the resolve, strength and stamina to counter terrorism and violence until it is decisively crushed. I want to reiterate this determination today on the floor of this House.

In his presentations, President Musharraf focused almost exclusively on Jammu and Kashmir. Honourable members would be familiar with all his views, since they were widely disseminated in both our electronic and print media. Despite

## TEXT OF VAJPAYEE SPEECH

the obvious differences in our perspectives, we made progress towards bridging the two approaches in a draft joint document. We sought to incorporate in the document the structure of a future dialogue process on all issues, including meetings at official, ministerial and summit levels. We made proposals for addressing the issues of peace and security including nuclear and conventional CBMs, Jammu and Kashmir and terrorism; and all other issues from the composite dialogue.

Eventually, however, we had to abandon the quest for a joint document mainly

because of Pakistan's insistence on the "settlement" of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, as a precondition for the normalisation of relations. Pakistan was also reluctant to acknowledge and address cross-border terrorism. My Cabinet colleagues and I were unanimously of the view that our basic principles cannot be sacrificed for the sake of a joint document.

Honourable members, there are strong views both in India and in Pakistan about Jammu and Kashmir. But it is our conviction that an all-round development in the relationship between India and Pakistan will have a beneficial impact on our dialogue on J&K. No worthwhile purpose would be served by a

debate on whether or not Jammu and Kashmir is a "core issue." But we cannot ignore the fact of terrorism and violence in the state, which is exported from across the border. We cannot accept that the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir today, with its foreign mercenaries and generous assistance from abroad, is anything but terrorism. The daily killing of innocent men, women and children can simply not be glorified as "jihad" or as any kind of political movement. Please reflect that, soon after the Agra summit had concluded, our pilgrims on their way to the holy shrine of Amarnath were killed. And just

two days ago another massacre of members of one community occurred at the hands of the terrorists. That is why Pakistan's refusal to end cross-border terrorism is the main hurdle in the creation of a conducive atmosphere. Pakistan has been seeking a solution to Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the wishes of the "Kashmiri people." I am certain that the primary wish of every single Kashmiri, whether from the Kashmir Valley or Jammu, Ladakh, Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, the northern areas or the Shaks-gan Valley, is to live in peace, security and freedom, so that he can make economic progress. We should constantly strive to provide him with this fundamental right. Most of the Kashmiris have their elected representatives, through whom they express their aspirations. We are also willing to listen to all other streams of Kashmiri opinion, however, small the minority they represent, as long as they abjure violence. It is in this spirit that we had offered to talk to the representatives of the All Parties' Hurriyat Conference.

Honourable members, President Musharraf has extended an invitation to me to visit Pakistan. I have accepted this invitation. The foreign minister of Pakistan has similarly invited the external affairs minister. This, too, has been accepted.

# The Agra syndrome

By V. R. Krishna Iyer

119.10  
29/7

**V**AJPAYEEJI, I salute the statesman in you for the factum of the summit meet but feel frustrated at your team's infantile ineptitude for the dire denouement! Every time a flicker of rapprochement is in sight, tragic irony extinguishes the flame of hope, some Pakistani dictator indulging in brash bravado to bury happy comity. But history also gets tired of jingoist jargon and which longing for peace hungers for a chance. Why does peace prospect perish despite Pakistan's defeat in wars and economy of both nations a shambles? Why do both go nuclear when their coffers are empty, corruption escalates and harrowing tales of people crying for basic needs are haunting and the two nations face internal struggles and political instability? The answer is Kashmir — innocent loveliness, unhappy privations and political destiny in despair. Battles have been fought, lives have been lost, development has been dashed, hatred has no ceasefire and Kashmir Valley, God's glorious, geographical gift to humanity, burns with green woods turned into graveyards, humble villages strewn with landmines, bombshells, terrorist operations and starvation aggravating for two generations. What price do India and Pakistan pay, regardless of the merits of rival claims?

Billions of dollars, brave soldiers, pathological tension and now, nuclear missiles, with no solution save macabre madness and belligerent exchanges poisoning politics and catalysing blood-thirsty religious passions! Obdurate obscurantism, whatever the faith, is insanity writ large! When statesmanship, with a higher vision, seeks to humanise and rationalise, blind fury of bigoted godism eclipses reason and judgment, and, in a gory mood, gets ready to kill and die fuelled by pseudo-jehad. Suicide squads and human bombs are bred by fanatics capable of self-sacrifice. Bernard Shaw once remarked that he who is willing to sacrifice himself is dangerous for he will not hesitate to sacrifice others.

Hubris and humiliation have been the Agra finale after the nation had been led to believe, by escalating media build-up, that the top echelons of the two nations,

*The lesson from Agra should be that on both sides people must exchange views and prepare a fertile ground for deeper level friendship and faith.*

forgetting and forgiving the bitter frost of bellicose relations and balked, broken accords, would hold friendly discussions on all issues, including Kashmir, which now sorely keep the people apart.

The media published hopeful news and everyone in both countries gullibly looked for a miracle to happen. Could it? Did it? A confidence-building process, perfunctorily performed, worked for a while, expectations escalated under an illusion for a summit joint statement producing a positive formula inaugurating a new chapter in Asian history. But truth cannot be hidden by hazy hopes. One-to-one cannot change the course of history.

Where was the common Indian or parliamentarian informed, educated on issues and asked to speak in his democratic right? Gen. Musharraf may be an adventurist military hero but where is the compromise minus people and democratic process? A Prime Minister, a Cabinet, a party cannot make or mar the course of events unless it involves the billion Indians and mobilises them into reconciliatory, radical locomotion especially when the cause calls for reversal of the dark happenings of the past. This processual part of the pilgrimage to peace was misused by both and so Agra boomeranged with a mere visit of the Pakistan dictator to the Taj Mahal, abandoning, in frustration, his pious pilgrimage to Ajmer and making a stultification. The broken anatomy of the Agra summit is the result of the unscientific handling of the socio-political odyssey, substituting it with short shrift shortcuts. No cover-up by painting the piteous collapse as a mere inconclusive gap — not a failure — will win credibility unless leaders of parties, cadres and sociologists and people generally discuss the Kashmir imbroglio and arrive at open proposals and alternatives which restore the democracy of decisions by the people.

The lesson of Agra, therefore, should be

that on both sides people must exchange views and prepare a fertile ground for deeper level friendship and faith, creative credibility measures and a nation's vocal manifesto of willingness to re-establish fraternal feeling and the alternatives in Kashmir to be proffered. Absent this dynamic, democratic methodology, process one-to-one may be one-minus-one cipher.

In the Agra summit, democracy had a holiday and TV did business. The necessary sequel was that Gen. Musharraf walked with his hidden agenda, partly fulfilled and leaving us, not with a serendipity of victory but with a stultification of flop. "Inconclusive, not a failure" means a face-saving newspeak. Before the next 'summit' proves a skulduggery, let the Prime Minister (our President too importantly matters) keep faith with the people, take them into confidence. In Agra, Mr. Vajpayee was not one but one billion people but Gen. Musharraf was one, only one, a military chief with a gun.

The Agra syndrome should not be repeated. Of course, there is some spiritual wonder in a Pakistani dictator sprinkling flowers at Rajghat as it is symbolic of people's solidarity and homage to a great soul who went on fast to compel India to pay Rs. 50 crores to Pakistan and won his cause. From that memorable event, let us re-start. I am still hopeful of many other problems being sorted out in good faith. Dealing with Gen. Musharraf has many implications. First, his credentials are military authority and governance by the gun. If he could tell his country that the Constitution hardly counts and he was the one who could rule the people how can we put trust in his word since his authority is not based on the Constitution but on a *tour de force*. The one-to-one deal, therefore, means one billion Indians through their surrogate, Mr. Vajpayee, and one military President indifferent to the democracy of his country, being in

office *ultra vires*. Fundamentals are fundamental and amnesia on the difference between democracy and dictatorship is a poor alibi.

Let us, for a moment, give pragmatic realism priority over principled constitutionalism and accept the Agra episode as a measure rooted in realism. I may concede that Mr. Vajpayee, the statesman, rightly desiderated peace with Pakistan even if it meant silencing one's constitutional soul. Whatever happens or happened would not be necessarily constitutional and may not bind. These legal thoughts apart, speaking sentimentally, I was impressed with Gen. Musharraf. His candour, pleasant manners and willingness to make a pilgrimage to Rajghat. At a personal level, he excelled in charming behaviour and outspoken expression; but, weighed in the scales of political principle, I wonder how far we can travel together on the perilous Indo-Pakistan path. What I emphasise is that reliability springs from people-to-people relations. Their cordiality will lend strength to any decisions taken by the rulers of both countries. My humble suggestion, therefore, is to make a people-to-people agenda rather than one-to-one closed door dialogue. Political secrecy may be dubious diplomacy but democratic traditions demand a transparent diction. For a while, we keep in abeyance, our criticism of the jettison of democracy in our neighbourhood. Once people come together there is a basic structure on which the edifice of Indo-Pakistan friendship can be built.

A word about the Kashmiris. One Kashmiri leader, on the other side of the LoC, told a public meeting in Canada, where I too was a speaker, that it was unjust for the Indian leaders to ignore the Kashmiri people even on the PoK side. They are not commodities but humans with their own views. We cannot dismiss J&K and PoK as goods of trade to be negotiated at prices determined by the two leaders. We may have differences with Pakistan. Therefore let us consult the people from both sides of the LoC. That will be a decisive step in democratic diplomacy.

# Dialogue without illusions

By Husain Haqqani

HO-10 29/7

THE AGRA summit marks the revival of a dialogue that could take a long time to conclude. Gen. Pervez Musharraf returned home with enhanced prestige and the credit of being able to state Pakistan's position over Kashmir without mincing words. As officials from both sides are now explaining to the world, the summit marked the beginning of a process and should be seen as inconclusive, not as a failure. The process of finding lasting solutions to intractable disputes involving nations is painstaking and time-consuming. Its success cannot be measured in terms of the ability of statesmen and diplomats to agree on the wording of a joint declaration. Even if a joint declaration had been signed at Agra, its significance would have been no more than that of a similar declaration issued at Lahore two years ago, which failed to prevent the Kargil conflict. Perhaps it is a good thing that such a declaration was not signed. Gen. Musharraf gave his Indian interlocutors a straightforward understanding of what peace with India means to Pakistanis. He told Indian editors that a deal excluding Jammu and Kashmir would be unrealistic and would amount to living in a make-believe world. Gen. Musharraf has paved the way for future negotiations between India and Pakistan, if and when the Indians are ready to tackle the core issue. His trip to New Delhi and Agra has shattered the taboos created by extremists in Pakistan about talking to the Indians. Now, the process of dialogue with India can be continued even by civilian leaders without the fear of being accused of selling out Pakistan's national interest.

Hardly anyone in Pakistan expected the Indians to give up their traditional, intransigent position on Jammu and Kashmir just for the success of a summit. The Indians, on the other hand, were living in a illusory world if they thought that the dialogue could move forward without serious discussions over the Kashmir issue. What failed at Agra was the euphoria, generated mainly by the Indian media, that differences between India and Pakistan can somehow be significantly minimised through a single summit.

At the heart of the Indian media's euphoric attitude before the summit and its

disappointment at its inconclusive end is a major misperception about the nature of the conflict between India and Pakistan. Conventional wisdom in India holds that only the Pakistani establishment, and not the Pakistani people, feels strongly about the Kashmir issue and that it is the establishment that needs to be brought round to the idea of normalisation of relations between the two countries. Based on this assessment, India continually looks for the 'right person' to deal with on behalf of the Pakistani establishment. Indian analysts repeatedly pinned their optimism about an agreement at Agra on the fact that Gen. Musharraf represented 'the hardline military constituency' and that he wields total power. The thrust of the Indian endeavour was to convince the wielder of total power in Pakistan of the value of an India-Pakistan agreement, without acknowledging the

Partition (Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto) would be the most suitable partners in peace making. But, as Gen. Musharraf rightly pointed out during his meeting with Indian editors, resolution of disputes between nations is not about their leaders charming each other and finding the right phrases for a joint statement. It is about addressing the issues that keep the nations apart in the first place. No one disputes the fact that there are no permanent enemies in international relations. Nations locked in complex cycles of bitter rivalry have resolved their disputes to become partners in peace. But the transition from enemy to partner cannot be achieved overnight. It requires gradual steps, taken in sincerity by both. Even after these steps have been taken, there is no guarantee that historic differences can be overcome. The Arab-Israeli peace process is a case in point.

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*It is time the Indians stopped looking for 'the right person' in Pakistan to deal with and started exploring options for a lasting solution in Kashmir.*

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centrality of the Kashmir issue. Several arguments were put forward to make the case that a General from Pakistan and a Hindu nationalist from India were the most suitable partners in overcoming 54 years of hostility. One of these was the success of Richard Nixon, an ardent anti-communist, in initiating U.S. relations with the People's Republic of China. Ironically, the Nixon analogy had also been cited at the time of the Lahore summit in 1999. On that occasion it had been said that a Punjabi leader from Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, was most suited as a peace-maker because most Pakistani military men are Punjabis and Punjab is the bastion of anti-India sentiment in Pakistan.

The desire in India to look for a Pakistani leader who can make peace without any concessions by New Delhi over Jammu and Kashmir is not new. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru saw Ayub Khan as a sufficiently strong leader to cut a deal. Rajiv Gandhi's Islamabad visit during the SAARC summit of 1989 was preceded by comments that two leaders unaffected by the bitterness of

In fact, those who see the potential for peace under a military leader in Pakistan and a Hindu nationalist Prime Minister in India must turn their attention to Palestine for an alternative analogy. The refusal by the Israelis to recognise the national rights of Palestinians continues to undermine peace in the Middle East. Israel has changed its leader several times but the personality of the leaders has had no effect on the resolution of the conflict, given the refusal to accept the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own.

It is time the Indians stopped looking for 'the right person' in Pakistan to deal with and started exploring options for a lasting solution in Kashmir. Nixon's opening to China is only one example in recent history where a hardliner has overcome hostility to create an enduring partnership between nations. There are far more examples of situations where ideologues and hardliners have hindered peace between historic enemies. In any case, the U.S. and China had no territorial dispute and did not have to deal with the unfinished busi-

ness of a partition. The disagreements in their case were political, which were overcome with the prospect of mutual economic gain. In the case of India and Pakistan, there are fundamental differences over what nationhood means for each country. India insists that Kashmir is at the heart of its secular identity. Pakistan, too, feels incomplete without the accession of the Kashmiri Muslim population.

India and Pakistan must both go beyond their stated positions on Kashmir to start a meaningful dialogue. There has been no indication from India about how it will shift from its stated position on the disputed State. For 50 years, Pakistan has demanded the right of self-determination for Kashmiris and India has insisted that Kashmir is its integral part and therefore a settled matter. For a meaningful dialogue to begin and for the process of shifting from stated positions to take place, surely the leaders of India and Pakistan must undertake some homework with their own constituents before hoping for a comprehensive settlement in a summit meeting.

The post-Cold War world has seen many thorny international issues resolved through negotiations. Others are in the process of being resolved. But the process of dialogue in each case has been long and difficult. In most cases, the greatest difficulty has been encountered in dealing with the core issues. That India and Pakistan are willing to talk to each other is an achievement in itself. To the extent that the process of dialogue has been resumed, the Agra summit has been a major success. But the India-Pakistan dispute is a dispute between two nations. It cannot be resolved by pinning hopes only on the personalities involved in the dialogue. Instead of looking for the 'one person who will deliver peace', and being disappointed, the Indians must start looking for solutions to the one problem that is at the heart of the conflict. Until then, the two countries must continue with their dialogue, without hope for a settlement.

*(The writer is a Pakistani columnist who has served as adviser to Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto and as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.)*



# Consensus on Pak. policy crumbling

RD-12 By K. K. Katyal 29/7

**NEW DELHI, JULY 23.** It is a pity that the national consensus on foreign policy — on Pakistan — appears to be collapsing within weeks after it found an impressive demonstration. The Opposition parties which extended full support to the Government on the stand to be taken at the Agra summit are highly critical on various counts. Apart from other things, they are angry that the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, was allowed to take an unearned advantage out of his encounter with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and that India slumped in the face of propaganda onslaughts from the other side. In the midst of heat and acrimony, a distinction needs to be made between the national policy on Pakistan and the conduct of the Indian side in the discussions at Agra. Unfortunately, this dividing line was blurred in the last three or four days, as the outcome of the summit was scrutinised closely. As a result, there was the danger of the nation projecting a divided face on a matter that calls for complete unity of purpose. This will need to be avoided in discussions in Parliament and outside.

At the summit, Mr. Vajpayee was, no doubt, able to counter Gen. Musharraf's unifocal approach, pointing to the holes in the Pakistani arguments on the "core issue" and projecting a balanced vision of Indo-Pakistan relations and its significance for peace and security in South Asia. But that is not the impression conveyed to the country and, perhaps, abroad. Pakistan has been able to spread the belief that a mutually acceptable draft of a joint declaration was almost ready but could not be adopted because of back-tracking by India under the pressure of hardliners in the establishment. Nothing is farther from truth. If the joint declaration did not materialise, it was because of Pakistan's obsessive concern with its line on Kashmir and because of its insistence on inserting a Kashmir-related overriding clause. The Pakistan Information Secretary was on

record as having told mediapersons at Agra that "there were some difficulties, of crucial importance to Pakistan, in a draft, that the two Foreign Ministers were busy sorting out these points and, hopefully, an agreed document would emerge before Gen. Musharraf's departure." It did not happen. But how many people in India knew that this was the case?

This was an inexcusable failure of New Delhi's dealings with the media, both domestic and foreign. The background briefings of the type that had been a normal feature on such occasions in the past were conspicuous by their absence before, during and immediately after the summit. The yawning gaps in the contacts between the media personnel and officials concerned made matters worse. As already pointed out, the Foreign Office spokesperson found herself in an unenviable position, for no fault of hers, in the absence of a clear strategy and a plan, worked out in ad-

## NEWS ANALYSIS

vance. Quite a lot could be conveyed to the media without breaching the norms of confidentiality, now cited by the Government to cover up its lapse.

There is a case for ensuring that the polemics on the official handling do not come in the way of New Delhi's pursuit of the peace process. The question is not whether the summit was a success or a failure but whether the two Governments could muster the requisite political will to continue the dialogue, resumed after a gap of two years. The two sides should be free to pick up the thread from where it was left at the agreed level at Agra or to break new ground. As for Pakistan, the "political will" includes its readiness to keep a tight rein on the jihadi butchers, working havoc in the valley. Laughable, indeed, is the Pakistani stand on India's worry over trans-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir — that, in most part of the State's territory, it is the Line of Control (LoC) and not a border. Apart from indulging

in the petty game of semantics, Islamabad forgets that the LoC came into being as part of the accord which enabled the repatriation of 93,000 Pakistani troops, who had surrendered to India, and that it has the force and sanctity of a border.

India's case is strong, howsoever viewed, but it suffers because of faulty projection and the lack of demonstrable faith in it by all sections in the country on all occasions. Take, Gen. Musharraf's contention that the Shimla Agreement did not address the Kashmir issue and, as such, he felt duty-bound to restore its centrality. A cursory reading of the agreement, solemnly accepted by the then President of Pakistan, Z. A. Bhutto, in talks with the Prime Minister of the day here, Indira Gandhi, would show, that Kashmir engaged their attention at some length. Had that not been the case, the agreement would not have contained this clause — "In Jammu and Kashmir, the Line of Control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this line." It also shows that terrorism, whether cross-border or cross-LoC, is not permissible under the agreement, solemnly reached between the heads of the two Governments.

What Bhutto accepted in private (and pleaded not to be made public for a while) should be a source of greater embarrassment to the General — Bhutto agreed to the virtual conversion of the LoC into an international border.

Equally untenable is the General's stand that Kashmir did not figure at Lahore. The very first operative clause of the Lahore Declaration (after the preamble) spoke of their commitment "to intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir."

## INVITATION TO PM COMING THIS WEEK

# We can build on the Agra understanding: Sattar

410-1  
29/7

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 23. Pakistan will send a formal invitation to the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, some time this week to visit Islamabad "at the earliest" to pick up the threads from Agra and build on the understanding arrived at in the course of the summit level talks on July 15 and 16.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, told a group of visiting Indian journalists here that Islamabad looked forward to an early opportunity to "reassemble and resume" the dialogue process. "There is no need for us to either start afresh or go back. We can build on the understanding arrived at in Agra."

Mr. Sattar was not willing to join issue with Mr. Vajpayee on whether or not both the sides had

arrived at an understanding at Agra. (The Pakistan Foreign Minister as well as the President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had claimed last week that the two sides had arrived at an understanding at least on two separate draft joint declarations at Agra).

On India's concern over 'cross-border terrorism,' Mr. Sattar said an agreement at Agra would have helped in all matters. Asked about the campaign by some in Pakistan that hardliners like the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, were responsible for not signing the Joint Declaration, Mr. Sattar said it was not fair to hold any Minister responsible.

Striking a conciliatory note on further dialogue with India, Mr. Sattar said there were some areas which had no 'closure'. "Therefore the need for an early oppor-

tunity to re-visit and resume the process."

The Foreign Minister said the draft letter of invitation to Mr. Vajpayee was ready and awaiting the signature of Gen. Musharraf. He would also be sending an invitation to his Indian counterpart, Mr. Jaswant Singh.

Mr. Sattar confirmed that the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries would be meeting in Colombo on the sidelines of the SAARC Standing Committee meeting in August.

"There is need for restraint on both the sides. We sincerely believe what was achieved at Agra needs to be preserved. Otherwise it would damage the Agra process. In my assessment the real progress would be in establishing structures for continuation of the dialogue," he said.

9/29/07  
11-10

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## Core Identity 2007

It was a PR assault once again — but this time from Islamabad, the general's own turf. Pervez Musharraf turned on the charm for the benefit of the world media, but most especially for the invitees from India. At one level, he was the perfect gentleman, the picture of reasonableness. He wouldn't hear a word said against the Indian prime minister or even the home minister. Similarly, he firmly put down the suggestion that there were hawks only on the Indian side: "There are hawks here too", was his gentle reminder. But take away the frills, and you got to Kashmir once again. Kashmir and Kashmir alone could lead to the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan, was the general's refrain. Of a piece with this theme song was the other reiteration: That what India recognised as cross-border terrorism was an indigenous freedom struggle. There were positive signals, to be sure. While in New Delhi, the general had avoided referring to a plebiscite, and had indicated that he would settle for Kashmir being an "issue" rather than only a dispute. In Islamabad, he went a step further and acknowledged for the first time that Kashmir could be settled bilaterally, failing which third party intervention could be sought. This subtle change of stand might have provided the basis for further negotiations had the general not been defeated by the logic of his own arguments. The third part of his three-step approach to Kashmir, for instance, involves excluding solutions that are mutually unacceptable.

This requires that the general accept that India's nationhood is tied to the rejection of the two-nation theory, which is the bedrock on which Pakistan's claims to Kashmir rest. Besides, the ground reality is that today no world power will go along with the 'clash of civilisations thesis'. From the US and China to Russia and even the European Union, each is a multi-religious entity opposed to ethnic divisions of countries. This might also explain why the general is no longer keen on a third party mediation. The Indian position on Kashmir rests on two premises. One, the unquestionable legality of Kashmir's accession to India. And, two, Kashmir's symbolic relevance to India's necessarily secular identity, of its core belief in pluralist existence. The loss of Kashmir will mean the negation of the fundamental values which our founding fathers enshrined in the Constitution. This having been said, we must also accept that Kashmir continues to be an intractable problem precisely because our handling of the state has not been to the satisfaction of its people. If Kashmir is a non-negotiable part of India, then the unrest in the valley must end, which can happen only if steps are taken honestly to examine the grievances of the people and address them. The world will per force focus on Kashmir, each time the Kashmiris come out to hold a protest demonstration. Simultaneously, we need more forcefully to assert our secular values. It is through these initiatives that we can focus attention on the struggle between humanist, integrative global forces represented by multi-religious, multilingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic states and unions and the parochialist, religion and ethnicity-inspired fragmenting forces. In that sense, Kashmir today is truly the symbol of the struggle between secularism and religious extremism.

# No PoWs in our jails, says Pak.

119-14  
ISLAMABAD, JULY 22. Chances of getting information about the 54 Indian prisoners-of-war (PoWs) lodged in Pakistan jails are fading as the massive combing operation launched in the country's prisons is yet to produce results. "We don't have any such prisoners in our jails," officials in the Pakistan Interior Ministry said. The combing operation does not seem to have paid off as authorities are yet to receive any information regarding the presence of Indian PoWs.

Soon after his return from Agra, the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had ordered the Interior Ministry to check all prisons in the country for PoWs. He had assured Indian leaders that all possible steps would be taken to get information about them.

While relatives of the PoWs say they have been held in Attock Fort and Kot Lakhait jail near Lahore, officials deny these claims. They have asked the Indian Government to provide clues about these PoWs, rendering the task of tracking them down easier. Gen. Musharraf has already ordered the release of 25 Indian civilians, to reciprocate the gesture of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, who ordered the release of all Pakistani civilians ahead of the Agra summit.

The officials said all prisons had been searched more than once, but no PoW had been found. In 1991, authorities conducted two rounds of searches for PoWs, but these proved futile. The recent searches had put the number of Indian prisoners at 155, but none of them was a PoW, they added. The release of 70 Indians is pending the approval of the Indian Government.

## PML accusation

The Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League (PML) has said Gen. Musharraf was turning out to be the "biggest hurdle" in finding a solution to the Kashmir issue and accused him of sabotaging the Lahore peace process.

The PML spokesperson, Mr. Mushaidullah Khan, said the people of Pakistan and India sincerely desired a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue and the Lahore Declaration was a practical step towards achieving this goal. But Gen. Musharraf sabotaged it through the military revolt of October 12, 1999.

"Gen. Musharraf is turning out to be the biggest hurdle to the resolution of the

Kashmir issue," he said. Commenting on Gen. Musharraf's remarks on Friday's press conference, he said "if people of the two countries sincerely wanted to resolve the issue of Kashmir, nobody could stop the process. Yes, the people of Pakistan and India do want a peaceful solution of Kashmir issue, but the diplomatic offensive launched by Mr. Nawaz Sharif towards this end was sabotaged by Gen. Pervez Musharraf".

He claimed that a democratically-elected Government in Pakistan had made significant headway in resolving the problem. "The General first disowned the Lahore Declaration, and then went to India in the guise of a dove holding out an olive branch, claiming he would create history, but was shown the door," he said.

"Gen. Musharraf's Agra 'yatra' was in fact a desperate attempt to justify the military revolt, upgrade his stature, and prove himself to be a redeemer, but he failed on all counts." The PML spokesperson said that when Gen. Musharraf was compelled to recognise the importance of the Lahore Declaration, he came up, as 'a face-saving gimmick', with the boast that it was he who got Kashmir mentioned there.

"If getting Kashmir included in the Lahore Declaration was so easy a job, then why could not the General get even a joint statement with Kashmir mentioned as a resolvable issue," he said.

Gen. Musharraf said it was a hard fact

that Kashmir was the cornerstone of Lahore Declaration and no amount of fabrication and deceit could falsify this. He wanted Gen. Musharraf to give up the habit of making wrong statements as it did not behove a soldier.

The spokesperson said that Gen. Musharraf's claim that "Generals know far better than politicians" was purely military thinking and similar "erroneous perception of the Generals had led to dismemberment of Pakistan, imprisonment of 90,000 troops in India, loss of the strategic Siachen and Kargil heights, distortion of the Constitution and democratic institutions, deterioration in economic and industrial fields of life and holding the country hostage to the international financial institutions".

He said Pakistan's Generals are still continuing with the erroneous perception that they are the super brains capable of sorting out any problem on earth.

They must remember that the credit of retrieving the 90,000 troops went to the civil Governments, the spokesperson said.

## Setback for Qayyum

Efforts to form a new Government in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) after the recent Legislative Assembly elections suffered a setback as the Pakistan army openly expressed its opposition to the former 'Prime Minister', Mr. Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, taking over the post for another term.

um Khan, taking over the post for another term.

Mr. Qayyum's Muslim Conference (MC) has won a simple majority in the elections to the 40 seats of the PoK legislature last month and staked its claim to form the Government.

However, a piquant situation has arisen following the army openly expressing its preference in favour of one of the MC leaders, Mr. Sikandar Hayat Khan, as the 'Prime Minister' instead of Mr. Qayyum, who was preferred by the majority of the party's elected representatives, media reports said today. Pakistan daily, *The Dawn*, reported that the military government has given its 'blessings' to Mr. Hayat Khan, who was one of the elected MC legislators. "However, the army's reported decision has sent a wave of anger among the supporters of Mr. Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan in the 30-member Parliamentary Party of Muslim Conference who are said to outnumber those who are siding with Mr. Sardar Sikandar Hayat," the daily said.

Quoting sources, it said the Pakistan army's General Officer Commanding of Murree division, Maj. Gen. Shahid Aziz, who is also in-charge of PoK affairs, had held separate meetings with Mr. Hayat Khan and Mr. Qayyum last Friday during which he informed them of army's decision.

It said Mr. Qayyum did not anticipate this decision but remained calm and composed. He was offered the office of the President of PoK, but he declined to accept that. Mr. Qayyum, however, wanted to resign his seat in protest but decided to wait, it said.

The Muslim Conference Parliamentary Party would meet at PoK's capital of Muzaffarabad tomorrow a day ahead of the first session of the new Assembly and discuss the leadership issue. The party has won a majority defeating the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Government headed by Sultan Mehamud. *The Dawn* said rumours were also rife that the federal Government was considering appointment of a retired Major General from PoK's southern belt for the post of President.

The reasons for the army's reservations in backing Mr. Qayyum, who was known to pursue an independent line from the Pakistan Government's stated Kashmir policy, were also not clear. — UNI, PTI

## Pak. 'A' cricket team to tour India

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 22. The Pakistan 'A' cricket team will tour India in October as part of its plan for resuming full-fledged cricketing ties with India, the Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Lt. Gen. Tauqir Zia, has said.

He was quoted as telling presspersons in Karachi this afternoon that the details of the tour were being worked out.

He said that the PCB was also planning to have an exchange of visits

with India at the under-19 level, which would help in grooming players.

The PCB Chairman said that Pakistanis were eagerly awaiting the visit of the Indian team in September for the Asian Test Championship.

Pakistan is scheduled to play India for the tie at the Qaddafi Stadium, Lahore from, September 12 to 16.

Gen. Tauqir Zia said three coaches had been shortlisted for the team. The PCB wanted the South African, Mr. Richard Pybus, to continue as coach but he had turned down the offer.

'PAKISTAN'S ADAMANT ATTITUDE TO BLAME'

# There was no draft agreement, says PM

By Our Special Correspondent

*Send for HD-1 23/7*

**NEW DELHI, JULY 22.** Pakistan's refusal at the Agra summit to allow any reference to India's key concern on cross-border terrorism in Kashmir was a major reason for the breakdown of the talks, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, said today making his first public comments on the reasons why the summit failed to produce a joint declaration or statement.

In fact, he listed several areas where the views of India and Pakistan remained significantly different and no compromise was possible. And he was not willing to say when he was likely to go to Islamabad having accepted an invitation from the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

He made it clear that at no point were the two leaders — Gen. Musharraf and himself — “ready to sign” any agreement for “no draft came before us,” it was only “discussed at the delegation level.” Mr. Vajpayee thus contradicted Gen. Musharraf's claim that twice the two leaders had come close to signing a joint declaration.

On the sidelines of the ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan where Mr. Ajit Singh, Rashtriya Lok Dal leader, took the oath as Cabinet Minister, Mr. Vajpayee mentioned that “another factor”



The President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, with Mr. Ajit Singh (centre) after the swearing-in ceremony of the latter, at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on Sunday. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, looks on. — Photo: V. Sudershan

was Pakistan's insistence that there could be no normalisation of bilateral relations until the Kashmir issue was resolved. That view was not in keeping with the Indian stance.

Talking to reporters, the Prime Minister listed the areas where there were serious and irreconcilable differences in the viewpoints

of the two countries. Gen. Musharraf had insisted on the centrality of the Kashmir issue and he had refused to accommodate India's major concern on cross-border terrorism while insisting on describing this as a “freedom struggle”.

The Prime Minister may have chosen to respond to questions

from reporters as there has been criticism that he has remained silent — he earlier said he would speak in Parliament first — even as Gen. Musharraf has gone public through his press conference in Islamabad on July 20. The ruling parties as well as the Opposition have said Pakistan was able to put its point of view across strongly through the media while India was well behind in this.

Mr. Vajpayee today said “the talks broke down because of Pakistan's adamant attitude against” not making any reference to “cross-border terrorism” and “repeatedly” referring to terrorist incidents as part of the “freedom struggle” in Kashmir. General Musharraf had also emphasised that there could be no movement forward in the bilateral relations between the two countries “till the Kashmir issue is resolved.”

Emphasising that all decisions were taken “collectively”, he insisted that shortcomings, if any, were his as “leader of the Council of Ministers”. The decisions were unanimous and were taken after members freely placed their views. He rejected the suggestion that a section of the Bharatiya Janata Party was blaming the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh. “This was wrong” he added.

# PM blames Pak for summit failure

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 22

PAKISTAN'S RIGID stance on cross-border terrorism led to the failure of the Agra summit, the Prime Minister said here today.

Going public for the first time since the make-or-break talks closed on July 16, Atal Bihari Vajpayee said: "Even after reaching a broad agreement on some points a general consensus on the whole gamut of bilateral issues eluded us till the end." He was talking to reporters at Rashtrapati Bhavan after Ajit Singh was sworn in as a Union minister.

Referring to the latest US mediation offer, Vajpayee said his Government won't allow such a thing to happen. Answering a question on his impending Pakistan trip, the Prime Minister said the visit would depend on emerging circumstances. He had accepted General Pervez Musharraf's invitation, but "much will revolve around an assessment of the situation".

(An IANS report, quoting officials in Islamabad said Prime Minister Vajpayee would receive a formal invitation from General Musharraf in a couple of days.

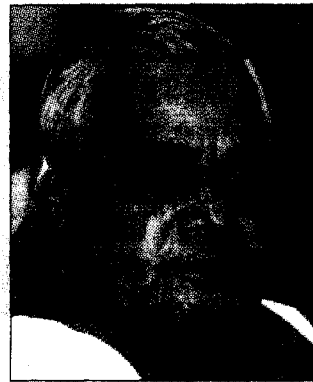
## PM'S MEMORY LAPSE

The Prime Minister's memory lapse on Sunday in front of TV cameras could add some gunpowder to the Opposition's ammunition. The PM told journalists that his discussions with Musharraf were based on his meetings with his ministers. He then proceeded to say, "As Foreign Minister Shri ....." There was a seemingly endless pause as Vajpayee tried to recall his senior Cabinet colleague's name. Finally, someone whispered Jaswant Singh's name into his ear and saved the situation.

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, Pakistan High Commissioner to India, will deliver the invitation. The contents of the letter have been finalised and Qazi has sought an appointment with Vajpayee, the officials said.)

Defending External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh's role in the talks, Vajpayee rubbished Islamabad's claim that he and Musharraf had come close to signing a declaration. "No draft came to us. It was only discussed at the delegation level."

On the reported differences within the Indian delegation, the Prime Minister explained that all



decisions were taken unanimously. He added that if at all there were any shortcomings, "the responsibility squarely rests on my shoulders as leader of the Indian delegation".

He said it was wrong to suggest that the two sides had come close to clinching a declaration. "There was some kind of an agreement on some points" and no more than that," he said.

Jaswant Singh told a TV channel today that India favours structured talks with Pakistan after its Agra experience.

Related reports on Page 9

# US strategy to keep peace dialogue going

S Rajagopalan  
Washington, July 22

THE UNITED States has opted to speak in two voices on the mediation issue on Kashmir to keep the pressure on both India and Pakistan to stay engaged in a dialogue mode, say analysts.

After the logjam in Agra and President Pervez Musharraf's hard line on Kashmir, it is believed that the two countries will dump the dialogue process and lapse into the old ways of sabre-rattling.

Washington wants to arrest such a backslide.

When Secretary of State Colin Powell came up with the offer to

assistant Secretary Christina Rocca barely 24 hours earlier. Rocca gave the impression that the US would prefer to watch from the sidelines.

Bush Administration sources, however, insist that Powell's remarks were only in the nature of an offer to the two parties and did not constitute any change in the US's basic position to mediate only if both India and Pakistan want it to.

In the circumstances, given India's resolute stand that it will not brook any third-party mediation on Kashmir, Powell's words may not add up to much.

But they do signify a certain amount of pressure being

brought to bear on India and Pakistan to keep talking.

This message is to be conveyed by Rocca to the Indian and Pakistani leadership when she begins her South Asia visit tomorrow with engagements in New Delhi. She will travel to Islamabad later.

It is not the first time that Powell has talked of a possible role for the US in Kashmir.

However, his previous remarks were in a different context.

On May 15, during a testimony before a Senate sub-committee, he had said: "I think we do have a helpful role to play because of the new relationship we have

with India. But it (Kashmir) is a difficult issue."

Powell's latest observations are in the context of the Agra state-mate. Although the official reaction put out by the State Department did not view the summit as a failure, Powell himself voiced his disappointment at the outcome.

Another inconsistency in the American line is that Powell now says the US will try to have "balanced and strong relations" with both India and Pakistan.

This, some analysts say, is not in conformity with the US's new "de-hyphenated" approach while dealing with India and Pakistan.



COLIN POWELL

help resolve "difficult outstanding issues" such as Kashmir on Friday, he was taking a line different from the one set out by

# First, the starters

SRZ  
M  
THE Indo-Pak summit at Agra is now history. Notwithstanding the stumbling blocks at the summit, the *bete noire* continued to be Kashmir.

In the mean time, it would be rewarding to dwell on a few other major issues between the two countries that need to be settled apart from Kashmir and its connected terrorism. There are four such issues.

The first one pertains to the maritime boundary that has to separate the two countries in the Arabian Sea off Gujarat. Every year, countless fishermen from both India and Pakistan unwittingly land up in each other's waterway, only to be nabbed by the Coast Guard concerned and incarcerated.

The matter then goes up all the way to the respective foreign ministries and it takes months before these unfortunate victims are eventually released. This has become a real nuisance now.

All that is required is for the Coast Guards of the two countries to get together and delineate the maritime boundary – ideally 24 degrees North latitude – and then have this prominently marked by buoys and illuminated markers so that this boundary can be clearly seen by the fishermen from a distance.

They can thus avoid crossing it by day or night. Special seafaring electronic measures can also be supplanted so that inadvertent crossings can be pre-empted. The maritime boundary issue is the easiest to resolve and does not necessitate any Herculean exercise.

Sir Creek, which lies between Kutch and Sind is the second issue. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, in his tearing hurry to fix up the Indo-Pak border on the ground, laid the dividing line here in the middle of the creek!

The Sir Creek runs for some 30 km along the border north of our Kori Creek before swinging westwards into Pakistan to link up with the Sir river and finally the Indus.

Creeks usually have a high saline content which precludes pisciculture; they do not possess any tactical relevance either. Nevertheless, there is constant friction between the two countries over the alignment of the border in Sir Creek. At times, this can become awfully disproportionate like the Atlantique incident of 1999.

India has nothing to lose by shifting the border to the eastern bank, that is, our

gndo pak  
Kashmir and terrorism apart, JK DUTT takes a look at four key issues that need to be settled between India and Pakistan for relations to improve



Indian soldiers patrolling at a forward area of the Siachen Glacier during an Air Logistics Support Operation by the Western Air Command on 26 September 2000. Indian and Pakistani forces have been fighting for control of the glacier, the world's highest battlefield at more than 20,000 feet, since 1984. More than 15,000 sorties are flown by Air Force helicopters each year over northern and eastern India in support of ground troops. — AP/PTI

side of the creek and end this age-old hassle once and for all.

Surely, if Myanmar can commandeer two of our villages along the Myanmar-Manipur border without a murmur of protest from us, adjusting the Sir Creek border as suggested will not create a political earthquake in New Delhi!

The Wullar Barrage, also known as the Tulbul Project, is the third issue. India's suggestion to construct a barrage at the mouth of the Wullar Lake – north-west of Srinagar, from where the Jhelum emerges – was objected to by Pakistan.

India's contention was, the barrage could ensure an even quantum of water in the Jhelum during the lean period from October to February.

This would not only help to irrigate Kashmir's apple district around Sopor but would also make the Jhelum navigable. India assured Pakistan that the water in the latter's portion of the Jhelum would not be depleted.

However, Pakistan drew India's attention to the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 and contended that such a barrage would violate the

treaty's provisions.

India's point that interpretation of the treaty was intended to maximise the use of water and not impose restrictions, was rejected by Pakistan.

Both countries should deploy their respective water management technocrats and carry out a complete feasibility study of three aspects: one, the availability of water in the specific context of the Wullar scenario; two, the seasonwise requirement of water for both countries for consumptive as well as non-consumptive purposes; and three, how best to utilise the net available quantity if it is less than the total demand.

The barrage can very well become a joint venture. This issue is not a heaven-and-earth crisis and can be comfortably settled. As a matter of interest, the Jhelum subsequently joins the Chenab and Pakistan needs to keep in mind that the Jhelum keeps spreading as it comes southwards from the Muzaffarabad area, gathering momentum all the way to the Chenab junction at Jhang Magwana.

Ergo, Pakistan should not fear any water shortage on this score. The Wullar barrage issue is just rife with

political oneupmanship, far removed from pragmatism and to the disadvantage of the affected people of both the countries.

Lastly, the Siachen Glacier issue is probably the most misconstrued of the whole lot. India is more at fault here. A belief is being harboured that Leh faces an imminent threat from Pakistan via Siachen; nothing could be further from the truth.

Siachen is but an ice desert with an average height of 19,000 feet or so where not even a blade of grass grows. To imagine that Pakistan would launch a corps-size force through Siachen for ingress into Ladakh is to compete with the moronic definition of "the height of imagination!"

Pray how will this force be maintained through blizzards, shifting crevasses, icefalls and the like? Siachen has no economic, military or even geographical value for us, its only claim to fame being a lopsided political ego value in which India has taken the lead.

We have been gratuitously claiming to be fighting "on the highest battlefield of the world" and such tripe but the moot question is, who really

accepts our convoluted standpoint? India should simply pull out its troops – currently a hugely oversized mountain brigade group – from Siachen and let Mother Nature take over as the defender against any visualised intrusions through this region.

As a corollary to one of the Agra breakpoints to wit terrorism, an introspection on India's positing over this scourge is revealing. Over a span of 27 years from Shimla to Kargil, the only mode of tackling terrorism in Kashmir on our part has been our verbosity!

India has never bothered to formulate a comprehensive politico-military methodology for effectively combating terrorism even after occurrences at Hazratbal and Charar-e-Sharief.

There is virtually no border management from our side. Northern Command's one-route commissariat line to its three corps is at Pakistan's mercy for interception. We have not developed a second safer line in five decades.

This lacuna affords Pakistan an open opportunity to cross the Line of Control and strike at will, our response being only "fire fighting". Pakistan has invariably retained the initiative throughout.

Truth to tell, India's whole attitude towards addressing terrorism is severely suspect.

For instance, after the Chhatisinghpur strike last year, where 36 Sikhs were massacred, the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister did his usual dash to the site protected by his NSG entourage, made several routine false promises about combating the terrorists as is his wont, and then did another dash to New Delhi to attend a function for Bill Clinton.

Again, five convicted Latvian terrorists who were involved in the infamous Purulia arms drop case and had been jailed by India, were released by our President when these criminals changed their nationality to Russian.

Yet, in typical doublespeak, we go on condemning terrorism. Who will believe that we are serious about our intentions?

All is not lost, though. Arguably a difficult thing to do but certainly not impossible, India has to convince Pakistan that the most appropriate route to the *piece de resistance*, that is, Kashmir would be through the *hors d'oeuvres*, that is, the other issues.

(The author is a retired Lieutenant-Colonel, Indian Army.)



# India threw the media match

**F**AILURE OF our publicity machine is being blamed. Talks at summits, or other major negotiations, do not depend for their success or failure on the quality or quantity of publicity surrounding them. Negotiators in such meetings are too cynical and shrewd, or too idealistic and committed, or indeed too steeped in technical and legal expertise of their subjects to allow peripherals like publicity and public relations divert them from their core interests and objective.

In these two summits — Simla in 1972 and Agra in 2001 — an Indian Prime Minister played host to a Pakistani President. Both times outside the capital Delhi. In the Agra summit, the Pakistanis, in media terms, remained aggressively obsessed with the electronic media. And their President himself took the lead manipulating the media of the other side personally, without their knowing that he was using them. The Simla summit was more relaxed and had remained gently concerned principally with print media, and a certain amount of wireless publicity.

Bhutto came to Simla without his usual ebullience, representing a despondent, broken country, at a time when the song most popular on their Radio channels was '*Jagta naheen hai dil mera ujade dayar meri*'. His delegation had no military members.

The Agra summit was a one-man-show presented to the world, and to India, by a commando-turned-showman: starchy, brimming with self-assurance, arrogantly determined to exploit his host's hospitality to show off how much he could get away with. Somehow he had convinced himself that by now the Indian media was showing him respect as a trust-worthy, gruff, and honest 'fauji' leader who means well. The senior editors attending his breakfast on July 16 morning proved him right, played right into his hands. Surely one of them could have asked him, when he threatened to settle down in his grand-father's Neharwali Haveli in old Delhi, if that was his way of seeking asylum in India!

He has used the 21 months, after toppling Nawaz Sharif, and becoming the wielder of supreme authority in Pakistan, for training the already-subservient Pakistani media, who by now applaud whatever he says, or does, or demands. On Kashmir he seeks more stridently what Benazir and Nawaz Sharif before him had sought. He insisted in Agra that India recognise Kashmir as the Core Issue that must be settled first of all. Until this issue or dispute gets settled, they (Pakistan) cannot permit any other matters or issues to be settled. He also insisted that they shall not permit any other moves towards peace, or allow any ini-

tatives including in the nuclear field to be taken. In his unifocal view of Indo-Pakistan relations, nothing other than Kashmir matters. He has boasted in his press-conference that he got India to accept this, in the Agra summit. He pooh-pooched Confidence Building Measures, settlement of Wullar Barrage, Sir Creek, Siachen, bilateral efforts to control Narcotics, promoting people-to-people relationship, opening up bilateral normal trade, as secondary matters that must all remain conditional to a prior settlement or at least movement on Kashmir.

On this the well-trained Pakistani media proved as fanatical as their Leader. When India raised the issue of their returning the Mumbai mafia don Dawood Ibrahim they stated that there was no such man in Karachi or indeed in Pakistan! Similarly, on cross-border terrorism they responded with a straight face that we had not mentioned cross-LoC terrorism; and the J&K border between us is effectively only the LoC. This logic and line of response leaves the Indian side speechless.

Our PM was at a disadvantage and just could not match this type of irrational obduracy. He simply expressed his displeasure with the General's line. In recent months our PM has had to coordinate and combine the diversity of views and perceptions of two coalitions: the Parties and groups compris-

ing the National Democratic Alliance; and the perceptions and ideological commitments to a variety of nuances believed in by the organisations and sub-groups of the Sangh Parivar. The Pakistani side took advantage of this for pressurising PM by talking of the hidden hand etc, for manipulating the course of the talks.

In Simla, Bhutto had to deal with an Indira Gandhi who had just been compared in our Parliament with 'Durga' or 'Mahishasur Mardini' and whom the *London Economist* was then referring to as a new Queen Victoria or the Empress of India. Her colleagues of the Political Affairs Committee (YB Chavan; Sardar Swaran Singh; Babu Jagjivan Ram; and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad) were all there, exclusively to be consulted by herself and otherwise neither seen or heard from. Mrs. Gandhi herself had no inter-action in Simla with the media. Her Principal Secretary, PN Haksar, too handled publicity at one remove, by providing quiet guidance to a small group of officials who managed the floor; HY Sharada Prasad, Ambassador Ashok Chib and this writer who was then the Official Spokesman.

The media presence itself was small in numbers, about a dozen from Pakistan, a couple of dozen from the home side, and 15 or 20 foreign correspondents including radio people. There

were no TV teams. I was left to manage all-media work, drawing from the wisdom of Sharada Prasadji, PM's Press Advisor, and Joint Secretary (Pakistan) Ambassador Chib. The principal negotiators, PN Haksar, TN Kaul and PM's Secretary Professor PN Dhar, and her Policy Planning Chief DP Dhar never took a hand in Simla, at briefing Pakistani, Indian or foreign media. The three of us managing the floor enjoyed the assurance of having the total backing of all our seniors, as also logistical and other support of a technically competent, but self-effacing PIB. Nareshwar Dayal, then a Deputy Secretary in the MEA, presently our High Commissioner in London, was the eyes and ears for the Sharada Prasad-Chib-Singh team.

The present Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Abdul Sattar, was there as their Joint Secretary in-charge of India desk, additionally functioning as Private Secretary to the then Foreign Minister Aziz Ahmad. Aziz Ahmad himself was effectively under the shadow of President Bhutto's Special Adviser Rafi Raza. My counterpart, Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khan, and I were old personal friends and he had special clout as a member of his President's personal staff.

The ambience at Simla was thus quite different, from the one reported from Agra. In Simla both delegations under-

stood the rules of diplomacy, the Pakistanis did not treat their media as another legitimate vehicle for negotiating. The Indian delegation was small, cohesive, and well-knit.

Any negotiations between two or more teams tend to reflect an inter-play of individuals and interest groups which need to be kept cohesive by the respective Skippers of the Teams. And the Skippers have to provide themselves, for dealing with the media, adequately savvy and experienced handlers of hour-to-hour developments in this area. One wishes Prime Minister Vajpayee's Press Advisor Shri HK Dua, who enjoyed such superior credibility in the media world, had not been released just prior to this Summit, and the former MEA Spokesman, Raminder Jassal, had been kept to back-stop and assist our able, but very new Spokesperson, the gentle Nirupama Rao. We seem to have left the media field pretty much to General Musharraf's media managers: his Spokesman Maj General Rashid Qureshi, Information Secretary Anwar Mehmood and their PIO Mr. Gaundal.

*(The author is former foreign secretary of India and was MEA spokesman during the Simla summit)*

*(Vir Sanghvi's column will return next week)*

## RINGSIDE VIEW

SK Singh



**The ambience at Simla was quite different from the one reported from Agra. In Simla, both delegations understood the rules of diplomacy, the Pakistanis did not treat their media as another legitimate vehicle for negotiating**

# BJP rushes to control Agra damage

9th Dec 2001  
H.V. 8  
2/27

Shekhar Iyer  
New Delhi, July 21

PRIME MINISTER A B Vajpayee watched Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's second televised blitz in the company of L K Advani and Jaswant Singh and a battery of officials at his official residence last evening.

After a quick discussion, Vajpayee asked Jaswant Singh to give India's first reaction to TV cameras outside the Race Road residence. Neither Vajpayee nor other Ministers were surprised by what Musharraf had to say in Islamabad after his utterances in Agra but the mood at 11 Ashok Road, the headquarters of the BJP, was rather sombre.

Top party leaders concluded the BJP faced an uphill task. It would have to show that Vajpayee did not return from the Agra summit as a loser. Also, that Musharraf has no "real" reasons to project himself as a winner.

Although relieved that the PM did not yield ground or was not "tricked" into any pact with Musharraf, BJP leaders have realised that the Government and the party have a lot of explaining to do on what went wrong and why.

With Musharraf sounding even tougher and clearer about his objective after his return to Islamabad, BJP leaders agree that the Agra summit looks not a jinxed chapter but a botched-up jamboree in the history of India-Pakistan relations.

BJP leaders say that unlike Vajpayee's Lahore bus journey, which created a wave of popularity for the PM, the Agra summit has become a bit humiliating with Musharraf hogging the limelight.

Worse still, the BJP and the

Government find themselves exposed to the Opposition attacks for their failure over the basics — lack of preparation and unstructured agenda, etc.

Even if Vajpayee is to directly handle the Opposition on the floor of Parliament next week, BJP leaders believe a convincing campaign will have to be mounted all over the country.

The BJP has to show that the PM put forward the centrality of India's concern — terrorism and Kashmir's importance to its nationhood — and did not buckle under Musharraf's pressure tactics through the media.

Some BJP leaders say the party may have no option but to hit out directly at Musharraf if the PM gives the clearance.

For starters, senior BJP leader J P Mathur did not mince in describing the General as the "biggest hawk". He accused Musharraf of trying to drive a wedge within the Indian Government.

As for the official line, BJP general secretary Maya Singh said, "The BJP is clear and firm that Kashmir is an integral part of India and there can be no negotiations. Any suggestion that any Indian (read Jaswant Singh) is prepared to accept any other position is malicious propaganda."

Jaswant Singh, who is under flak from many BJP leaders, will lead the Government's defence of the summit in Parliament, according to BJP leaders.

**PM briefs President:** Vajpayee called on President K R Narayanan today and briefed him on the Agra summit, Rashtrapati Bhawan sources said. The meeting lasted for 45 minutes, they said.

# Breakfast at Pervez's

If we but knew we were making television history some of us would have come better dressed, and others better prepared.

The invitation to meet President Pervez Musharraf over breakfast at Amar Vilas in Agra on the last day of his visit to India came during the preparations, when goodwill and effort were still the main motivations. Slots were being filled on both sides. The Prime Minister of India gave a lunch on the first day, an ice-breaker in the company of assorted celebrities. Later that day was the formal banquet by the President of India, an occasion for speeches in front of a protocol list. Sunday was marked out as the day of unrest: hard work on the language of agreement, interspersed with an afternoon at the Taj for the guests and neither peace nor serenity before or after. As it happened, the two delegations finally went to bed at four, just a little before dawn on Monday. But they had the satisfaction of having made substantial progress on the critical paragraph on the structure of the dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir.

The controversy over whether India and Pakistan would discuss Kashmir at Agra was artificial. This decision was made by the government of India many weeks before, when Prime Minister Vajpayee sent his invitation to President Musharraf. That brief but well-drafted note had no ambiguity: "We have to pick up the threads again, including renewing the Composite Dialogue, so that we can put in place a stable structure of cooperation and address all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir." Mr Vajpayee signed this invitation but it was made with the complete concurrence of his home minister Mr L.K. Advani. There was no hard line and soft line; there was only one line. Delhi knew that this was a prerequisite for any resumption of a dialogue, and accepted this reality with commendable lack of fuss. President Musharraf's subsequent insistence on Kashmir as some kind of "central" or "main" subject was a public relations exercise designed to calm nerves at home and increase his personal space in domestic politics. (If you learn next year that President Musharraf has become a candidate in a general election for the designation he holds now by compulsion, remember you read it here first.) India had agreed to talk about Kashmir, and where the clause appeared in the text was of less consequence than the fact of its presence. Similarly, the professed concern to fight the common enemy, poverty, together was code for a series of joint initiatives on other issues, from drugs to the economy (with a gas pipeline thrown in but not mentioned).

But harmony in Indo-Pak affairs can never come without a flap. It came over a word: "dispute". It was not semantics. Pakistan wanted the Kashmir problem to be called a dispute. India rejected "dispute" to avoid any future interpretation that might prejudice our position on the status of Jammu and Kashmir. We offered "issue" as the alternative. Pakistan conceded. We did a little bow ourselves and permitted Kashmir to be described as the "main issue" between the two countries. So far, so good. Indeed, so far so very good. With the Kashmir clause out of the way Monday morning seemed to promise nothing but optimism.

But we are always a night

before to the morning after.

The luxury lepers of the Summit — the media — were isolated in the plush surroundings of the Mughal Sheraton and fed solitary confinement rations (dribbles of information) by dignitaries visiting from the elite stretch between Jaypee Palace and Amar Vilas, where the Upper Classes were closeted. The first serious morsel came a little before sunset on Sunday, when General Raashid Qureshi dropped by to display a large smile. The words did not matter. The beam was positive. From Jaypee Palace a little later, or perhaps simultaneously, arrived Mrs Sushma Swaraj, friendly, courteous and concerned about the well-being of seven hundred journalists with nothing to do except exchange gossip and theory. But soon Mrs Swaraj also had a message to convey. The talks had covered a wide range

President Pervez Musharraf offered us a Barmecide's Feast. You could eat whichever dish you believed was there. You could leave the room with evidence for whatever was your wish. On Kashmir he took a hard line for Pakistani breakers of the fast, but also indicated that the dispute over dispute had been resolved by a Pakistani concession. He outlined the way he would like to take a Kashmir dialogue forward, through a series of steps instead of placing the answer before the discussion. Tidbits were dropped, gently or abruptly, between the Eggs Benedictine and *uthappam*. The President suggested that the return visit by the Prime Minister could take place as early as in September, or if not that perhaps by November.

It was obvious that behind the fireworks lay another face, of a growing level of understanding in the one-to-one meetings

of subjects, making them precisely what we wanted: a "composite" dialogue. Kashmir? Oh, a few things had also been said about Kashmir, to the best of her knowledge.

A nuclear power should not go ballistic, but that is what the Pakistan delegation became. The politics of briefing follow their own logic. Sushma Swaraj was addressing her own constituency, which was as apprehensive about Peacenik Vajpayee as the Pakistan Army was likely to be about Muhajir Musharraf. However television does not choose its audience; an audience chooses its television station. There were probably as many people watching Doordarshan in Pakistan on Sunday as in

India. The reaction was immediate and intense. Gossip swirled through the Mughal Sheraton that there had been phone calls from Islamabad that asked President Musharraf a simple question: what are you doing?

He had to answer that question. He made his unhappiness clear to the Prime Minister immediately, who in turn transferred a piece of his mind to his minister for some information and lots of broadcasting. Before midnight Pakistan issued a press release that Kashmir had been the talking point of the day, and that nothing else would be resolved if Kashmir was not. Was it entirely accidental that most newspapers had gone to bed and could not be roused from their printing machines by the time this statement was released? Was this deliberate? Was there some agreement between the two delegations that they should try and minimise the perceived damage from the briefs? Perhaps. It is an inference. Fact: Television does not sleep. Hawks declared the summit dead.

The breakfast at Amar Vilas took place at swivel-point, when the Summit could turn in whichever direction the principals wanted.

The breakfast was on record. Placed beside the elegant Noritake china at each setting lay a scratchpad and a pencil for notes. A television camera pointed at the President from midpoint between the two wings of the straight-line U formation in which we were seated. I thought that, rather sensibly, the Pakistanis were keeping a record, because 18 editors can easily manage 19 different versions of any answer. I was not aware that this repast was being relayed into millions of homes through a Pakistan TV feed that would be picked up by Star, but what of that? The President wanted to be quoted; that was part of his purpose. As a journalist, I wanted a story: that was my reason for being there. My question would not change, whether it was on the record or off it. I would have done a story for my newspaper if the President had not pre-empted all of us with his camera.

President Pervez Musharraf offered us a Barmecide's Feast. You could eat whichever dish you believed was there. You could leave the room with evidence for whatever was your wish. On Kashmir he took a hard line for Pakistani breakers of the fast, but also indicated that the dispute over dispute had been resolved by a Pakistani concession. He outlined the way he would like to take a Kashmir dialogue forward, through a series of steps instead of placing the answer before the discussion. Tidbits were dropped, gently or abruptly, between the Eggs Benedictine and *uthappam*. The President suggested that the return visit by the Prime Minister could take place as early as in September, or if not that perhaps by November. It was obvious that behind the fireworks lay another face, of a growing level of understanding in the one-to-one meetings. By the time the Summit was over the President and the Prime Minister had spent more time with each other, over substantive issues, than had ever been done by two leaders of India and Pakistan.

The drama of the last day of the Summit, the two high points when a nine-point declaration was almost signed, is well known by now: repetition would be a waste of space. There was agreement at the foreign ministers' level on the draft before it

was stopped, cold, in its tracks at the proverbial last minute. Whose nerve surrendered to caution? The aftermath is crowded with questions, and President Musharraf has opted to tell his version of the answers through what has become a favourite methodology, a press conference. The point to note is that President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee have spent the days since the summit in risk management, and both have done so with some skill, using their personal strengths and public image to their best advantage.

Which of the two is more dangerous to the enemy? A general with a gun, or a general with a microphone?

President-General Musharraf's infatuation with the media is understandable, given the long years of restraint under the discipline of the Pakistan Army, unable to say his piece when he

It is dangerous to underestimate the virtues of silence. Mr Vajpayee is a high-profile orator but a low-profile individual; his natural style is accommodative rather than aggressive; and he understands that in a democracy too much candour can be injurious to one's health. Some things are best internalised. The temptation to confuse silence with weakness is a mistake. The PM, doubtless absorbing a lifetime of lessons from the *Mahabharata*, is a charioteer on this battlefield, letting the horses of his own side race and let off their enormous emotional steam till they can be retargeted towards a defined destination. There must have been those who argued that he should have used the authority of his position and his personal stature in his party to overcome objections and sign the declaration in Agra. Lahore has shown him that a brittle agreement does not last

must have felt like kicking his political masters for dribbling with the truth on matters of the greatest controversy and highest importance. If he was silent and accepting by nature this would have been more bearable. But clearly he is a natural with media, articulate and unfazed, and protected by the brilliantly effective armour of candour. Some day President Musharraf will also discover that media is a difficult mistress, prone to punish the slightest human error without mercy, but that day has not come yet. With such a man we must learn to find out not what he is willing to tell us, candidly, but what he is not willing to tell us.

His press conference in Islamabad was his breakfast meeting

on a larger stage; at neither venue has he disclosed the substance of his one-to-one conversations with Mr Vajpayee, particularly during the last meeting on Monday night when the two met for more than an hour and a half to say goodbye. I do not have the magical properties of a fly, and I was not sitting on a Jaypee Palace wall, so I cannot inform our readers about what went on. But when words are unavailable we might want to let facts speak for themselves. Within some forty eight hours of "failure", for instance, an invitation came from Pakistan's foreign minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, to our foreign minister, Mr Jaswant Singh — and was promptly accepted. That did not have the look and feel of failure. It is evident that Mr Vajpayee and Mr Musharraf have agreed to keep the momentum of the talks alive. It was reiterated that Mr Vajpayee would travel to Pakistan; that invitation and its acceptance stood. The time between Agra and Islamabad will be used by both sides to find the missing links that prevented an agreement. The pressure cooker atmosphere at a Summit, with its inbuilt time limitations, often leads to a Pyrrhic victory. Lahore is an excellent example. If there are solutions then they are best cooked over a slow fire, rather than a two-day conflagration.

It is dangerous to underestimate the virtues of silence. Mr Vajpayee is a high-profile orator but a low-profile individual; his natural style is accommodative rather than aggressive; and he understands that in a democracy too much candour can be injurious to one's health. Some things are best internalised. The temptation to confuse silence with weakness is a mistake. The Prime Minister, doubtless absorbing a lifetime of lessons from the *Mahabharata*, is a charioteer on this battlefield, letting the horses of his own side (including a mare or two) race and let off their enormous emotional steam till they can be retargeted towards a defined destination. There must have been those who argued that he should have used the authority of his position and his personal stature in his party to overcome objections and sign the declaration in Agra. Lahore has shown him that a brittle agreement does not last; to last, it must have the consensus of all concerned. If that takes time, so be it. Paradoxically, Mr Vajpayee has been strengthened by his flexibility. Since he did not insist on his own inclinations, he proved to his party that he would not place himself above it. Mr Vajpayee knows that if any long-term peace has to be reached with Pakistan then its process must have the support of the BJP. He is not worried about parties like the Shiv Sena; but he needs the consent of Mr Advani and of the majority of his party. He will get it before his visit to Pakistan; indeed he will not go without it.

The one thing that Mr Vajpayee has ensured, and this is critical, is that the dialogue continues. His step-by-step risk management obeyed the democratic process: ministers, allies and all political parties over three days. He will speak to the nation through Parliament. But the one message that came through clearly was that *baat cheet to chalni chahiye*. There was no serious objection. The process continues.

The key to the India-Pakistan relationship lies in another paradox: success will only come when there is no victory. But it takes time to appreciate and achieve that.

# Pervez misled Pak over Kashmir: PPP, PML

By K.J.M. VARMA

Islamabad, July 21: The Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League on Saturday criticised President Pervez Musharraf for "misleading" the people of the country that they had failed to highlight the Kashmir issue with Indian leaders in the past and charged him with "perpetuating" his rule by "manipulating" the issue.

"General Musharraf blatantly used the Agra summit to perpetuate his illegitimate rule and get him recognised as President by the Indian leadership," the two mainstream parties — the PPP,

**'We love peace, but not at cost of security'**

*By arrangement with Dawn*

Taxila, July 21: President Gen. Pervez Musharraf has said Pakistan is a peace-loving country and has always worked for tranquillity and stability in the region, but it cannot be done at the cost of security.

"We cannot lower our guard and must have the desired deterrence against misadventures by the enemies," he added. The President was speaking at the handing over of the first batch of 15 Al-Khalid main battle tanks, developed indigenously over a period of eight years at an estimated cost of \$20 million, to 31 Cavalry of Armoured Corps at Heavy Industries Taxila on Friday. President Musharraf said his government would provide all resources to ensure a strong defence.

led by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and the PML, headed by deposed Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif — said.

In Friday night's televised press conference, Gen. Musharraf had alleged that politicians have no courage to talk about Kashmir and said the "politicians did nothing to resolve the core issue of Kashmir."

Reacting to the military ruler's allegations, a PPP spokesperson Faratullah Babar said Gen. Musharraf was "blatantly and brazenly" using the Kashmir issue and the Indo-Pak relations to strengthen his hold on the presidency.

Mr Babar said Gen. Musharraf has "cleverly" used India's invitation to "sneak" into the presidency.

Less than a month after India invited him, he ousted incumbent President Rafiq Tarar and declared himself President on June 20, he said. "He is now attempting to consolidate his hold on the presidency by getting an endorsement from the local body representatives after the completion of the local body polls, currently underway," Mr Babar said and demanded that the military ruler hold general elections and restore democracy.

Questioning Gen. Musharraf's

attempt to hold the Indo-Pak relations a "hostage" to the single issue of Kashmir, he said "Kashmir undoubtedly is the issue between two countries that has led to the conflict.

Therefore efforts should be made to manage the conflict as it cannot be resolved overnight."

He said there should be a step-by-step approach to resolve the issue than holding the Indo-Pak relations a "hostage" to the Kashmir problem.

"Musharraf used the summit for his benefit to capture the presidency and used the failure of Agra summit to consolidate his constituency," he said. (PTI)

## Islamabad to crack down on sectarian outfits soon

Lahore, July 21: Pakistan will soon launch a massive crackdown on religious parties indulging in sectarian violence with the imposition of a new Anti-Terrorism Ordinance, official sources said here.

The interior ministry will impose the amended Anti-Terrorism Ordinance within the next few days and the crackdown will begin on August 14 after newly elected district governments assume office, the sources said.

Under the ordinance, two prominent sectarian organisations would be banned in the first phase.

In the second phase, the ban would be imposed on two religious parties patronising these groups, Online news agency reported.

To promote sectarian harmony, the government has decided to appoint a non-controversial religious scholar belonging to the Ahle Sunnah school of thought as federal advisor on religious affairs.

Pir Ijaz Hashmi, the general secretary of the Milli Yakjehti Council Punjab, is a strong candidate for the slot.

A meeting of the leaders of various religious parties would also be convened in the last week of July. It would constitute a committee to sort out differences between different sects. (Indo-Asian News Service)



INDIGENOUS TANK: Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf (right), accompanied by unidentified officers, inspects the first Pakistan-made tank Al Khalid during a rollout ceremony at the government-owned Taxila Heavy Industries at Taxila, Pakistan, on Friday. (AP)

# The road stretches on from Agra

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22/7

**A**T AGRA last weekend, India and Pakistan came very close to drawing up a new road map to arrive at the long-elusive destination of a good neighbourly relationship. Despite an extended and somewhat exasperating negotiation, India and Pakistan fell short of it by couple of small but very important elements.

In the very process of drawing up that map, however, India and Pakistan appear to have taken the first steps on a journey that hopefully will take them to a future different from the depressing past.

Despite the substantive nature of the talks in Agra between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, strong negative impressions have tended to cloud the perceptions of the summit.

The Government has successfully re-engaged Pakistan, but has failed to effectively manage the optics of this process at home. Its inability to shape the perceptions of the summit meeting at Agra have created political misgivings at home about engaging Pakistan at the highest political level.

The Government's ambivalent statements on the final outcome of the summit have also robbed India of the political mileage that could have accrued to it on the international stage.

Nevertheless, what started out as a blind date with Gen. Musharraf, the author of the Indo-Pakistan confrontation in the icy wastes of Kargil two years ago, has turned out to be a productive exercise. It almost produced a "draft declaration" on a new approach to bilateral relations.

There indeed is some quibbling about who blocked the final agreement. There is also an Indo-Pakistan argument on the role of that draft declaration in shaping the next round of talks between the two countries. But there is no question that considerable progress was made at Agra in crafting the framework for a substantive re-engagement between the two nations.

From all indications, the two leaders had got along well and extended full courtesies to each other during their long one-on-one sessions as well as at delegation level talks. The two leaders are fully aware of the potential of the new moment in bilateral relations and the importance of the other interlocutor in facilitating an eventual agreement.

After the talks, India has a better sense of the persona of Gen. Musharraf and the kind of compulsions he is under. His propaganda offensive during and immediately after the summit has, to be sure, grated on the Indian nerves. But there remains a residual sense here there is no one else to deal with in Pakistan.

In the draft Agra Declaration India and Pakistan had agreed to show "sensitivity" in addressing the core concerns of the other side. They had also approved a mechanism that elevated the discussion on Kashmir, peace and security as well as terrorism to a political level.

This dealt with Pakistan's demand for a serious and high level discussion on Kashmir. It also addressed India's interest in raising the profile of the issue of terrorism to the same level as Kashmir.

In deference to the Pakistani stand that Shimla and Lahore did not help resolve the problems at hand, India was prepared to drop references to these past treaties. And in consideration of Indian opposition to the United Nations resolutions and the concept of a "plebiscite", Pakistan agreed not to make any references to them in the declaration.

The mutual accommodation produced the first signs of an experiment to remove some of the traditional benchmarks that have increasingly prevented a creative discussion of the issues between the two nations.

Just one paragraph in the draft Agra Declaration proved to be contentious and prevented India and Pakistan from clinching the agreement. Not surprisingly the paragraph was about the Jammu and Kashmir and how the two sides would approach it in future.

Three elements complicated the drafting of this vital paragraph on Kashmir. In calling for an inclusion of the "wishes of the Kashmiri people", Pakistan appears to have overplayed its hand and undermined the prospects of an eventual agreement.

*On the Indo-Pakistan front, the emphasis now is on absorbing the lessons from Agra and finding ways to move forward, says C. Raja Mohan.*

Despite having got a draft declaration that gave considerable emphasis to Kashmir, Gen. Musharraf appears to have been ill-advised in demanding more concessions from India.

Pakistan continued to emphasise on "sequential" progress first on Kashmir and only then on others. India's emphasis was on "simultaneous" movement forward on all issues.

India also wanted an emphasis in the same paragraph on the importance of working together to de-escalate the levels of violence in Kashmir. Indian formulations on this were not acceptable to Pakistan.

While these differences on formulating the problems and working out the modalities to address

them are important, they are by no means insurmountable.

At the same time, sustaining the peace process between India and Pakistan is likely to be an arduous task. The temptation to play to the galleries remains irresistible; as a result there is always the danger of losing one's interlocutor on the other side. However, the emphasis now is on absorbing the lessons from Agra and finding ways to move forward.

To be sure there will be many bumps on the road to peace and cooperation that India and Pakistan have embarked on. Staying the course, despite the strong pressures to give up the journey, will remain the biggest challenge to Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf.



# Mamata and her MPs still share treasury benches

# Agra PR disaster: Jaswant seen as the villain of the piece

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Trinamul Congress chief Mamata Banerjee may be vacillating over her return to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), but as far as the Lok Sabha records are concerned, her nine-member party still remains a part of the ruling coalition.

So, irrespective of her decision, when the monsoon session of Parliament opens on Monday, Trinamul Congress members will continue to retain their seats along with the other NDA partners.

Lok Sabha officials maintained that even when Ms Banerjee had quit the NDA and gone in for an alliance with the Congress, there was no formal word from her party informing the Speaker about her decision. It was explained that the seating arrangements of MPs on the opposition and treasury benches are made on the basis of formal letters from the political parties.

In the absence of written intima-

tion, the Trinamul Congress MPs were not moved out of the NDA bloc. And now that the fiery TC chief is reportedly negotiating her return to the ruling coalition, there is even less likelihood of her sending any such letter.

Till her return to the ruling alliance is formalised, the Lok Sabha will witness the interesting sight of Ms Banerjee and her MPs being seated in the treasury benches even though her relationship with the NDA still remains uneasy. On the other hand, it will be a source of some embarrassment for the Congress party since the Trinamul Congress, for all intent, has not formally severed her links with it.

The Lok Sabha, however, has received a message from TC chief whip Sudip Bandhopadhaya, informing it of the Speaker's office of its decision to suspend Ajit Panja. However, officials maintained, even Panja will continue to be seated with the other Trinamul Congress MPs.

By Smita Gupta  
The Times of India News Service  
NEW DELHI: There may be great relief — bordering on jubilation — in the BJP that the Vajpayee-Musharraf talks failed, but there is also anger at the public relations disaster that it turned out for India.



Jaswant Singh

In the blame game that has begun in the party, most fingers are being pointed at Jaswant Singh and the ministry of external affairs (MEA) for the fact that virtually all the news that emanated at Agra about the talks was from the Pakistani side.

A senior BJP leader said, "There was utter failure on the news front on the part of the MEA," and added that when the

Agra summit is discussed at the three-day meeting of the party's national executive beginning July 25 here, this point would definitely be raised.

BJP sources are also pointing out that Mr Singh committed a serious faux pas by making notings on the draft statement that he and Pakistani foreign minister Abdul Sattar were looking at as it went back and forth between the two sides: The implication, these sources added, is that the rest of the statement was acceptable to the Indian side, and they fear that this copy, with Jaswant Singh's notings, may be misused by the Pakistanis.

Party sources said this assumes importance in the context of what Mr Sattar said at his first press conference after returning to Islamabad from the summit where he stressed that the Agra draft statement would form the basis for

future dialogue between the two countries. Of course, this was repudiated by the MEA spokesperson who said that the Simla and Lahore agreements would be the starting point for the next round of talks between the two countries. But if the Pakistanis decide to use the draft statement with Mr Singh's notings on it, it could become embarrassing, said a BJP leader.

As it is, the fiasco of media management by the Indian side was brought up this week at both the NDA and all-party meetings, which were addressed by the Prime Minister. While Mr Vajpayee succeeded to some extent in explaining that the statement that the Pakistanis wanted him to sign would have meant compromising on the Indian national interest, he clearly has not been able to explain the public relations disaster.

## Cong. to pull up Centre for summit fiasco, other failures

By Anita Katyaj  
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The Congress may step up its criticism of the NDA government's handling of the Indo-Pak summit when Parliament begins next week as there is a view in the party that its attack on the issue has not been strong enough.

"The party's post-summit response and its plans on pursuing the matter in the monsoon session of Parliament came in for discussion at a special meeting called by Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday. The meeting was called to draw up the party's strategy for the forthcoming month-long session.

Prime Minister Vajpayee is to make a suo motto statement on the Agra talks on the opening day of the session on Monday and the opposition is expected to seek a discussion on the matter. The Congress, which extended wholehearted support to Mr Vajpayee's dia-



Sonia Gandhi

logue with Pakistan before the summit, however, went on the offensive after the conclusion of the Agra talks. While blaming Pakistan for its inflexibility, the party also blamed the NDA government for its handling of the summit, particularly its lack of preparation.

There is, however, a view in the party that the Congress should have been more critical in its response vis-a-vis the NDA government. For instance, AICC general secretary Kamal Nath is credited with the view that the Congress, in its role as the main opposition party, needs to explain to the people "in user-friendly language" as to how the NDA government had bungled at Agra. Senior party leaders have decided to meet again over the weekend to take into account Pakistan President Musharraf's remarks during his meeting with the media.

The fact that the Congress will continue its tirade against the NDA on the issue was also evident when party spokesperson S. Jaipal Reddy spoke. He said while the pre-summit phase had been characterised by lack of preparation, the post-summit phase was charac-

terised by confusion, with the government coming out with contradictory statements. "We do not want to use a harsh word like failure, but the summit was certainly a fiasco," declared Mr Reddy.

In addition to the Agra talks, the Congress also plans to pillory the government on the recent UTI crisis, the Centre's failure to pursue the Babri Masjid demolition case, the Air-India disinvestment process and the telecom scam. The party has been consistently keeping the Ayodhya issue alive, with Ms Gandhi even writing three letters to Mr Vajpayee.

With the crucial assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh due soon, the Congress will sharpen its focus on the issue, stepping up its demand for action against the three Central ministers named in the CBI chargesheet.

Finance minister Yashwant Sinha is likely to be in the firing line when the opposition draws attention to the UTI crisis. The finance ministry will face the brunt of the opposition attack for the manner in which the country's biggest mutual fund "got sick twice in two years of the NDA regime."

## 'Cross-border terrorism was linked to Kashmir'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 21. The Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has claimed that India had agreed at the Agra summit to the 'centrality of Kashmir' as the main cause that has bedevilled relations between India and Pakistan. A senior Indian diplomat, who was privy to the parleys between the two sides at Agra told *The Hindu* that while Gen. Musharraf's claim was not incorrect, the Indian acceptance of Kashmir as an issue was part of a carefully-worded formulation that linked it to the concern over 'cross-border terrorism'.

At his televised news conference on Friday, Gen. Musharraf claimed that a table and two chairs were ready at the local hotel for the signing-in ceremony of the joint declaration and both sides had agreed on at least two separate drafts of the declaration. "Do you think I would have agreed to have any declaration or statement if the centrality of the Kashmir issue was not agreed upon by India?" Gen. Musharraf shot back when a reporter wanted to know if the agreed draft declaration had acknowledged Kashmir as the core issue of tension between India and Pakistan.

At one stage in the course of the two-hour press conference, Gen. Musharraf said at no point of time in Agra did Pakistan give up its 'principled position' on Kashmir. "Honestly I have no idea about the reasons and circumstances under which the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, could not agree to the mutually-agreed draft declaration. I must say that Mr. Vajpayee was sincere and open-minded in his approach towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. I am optimistic that Mr. Vajpayee wants the process to continue and we would hopefully arrive at a mutually-acceptable solution."

The diplomat contested Gen. Musharraf's claim that both the sides had twice arrived at an agreement. "Leave alone twice, there was no agreement even once. If there was a mutually-accepted draft why would we have not gone ahead and signed it," he asked. It appears that the confusion on the so-called two agreed drafts arose because the Pakistani side tried to sidestep normal resolution procedures. Sources said Pakistan insisted on keeping away senior officials from the preparation of the draft declaration and wanted it to be handled only by the two Foreign Ministers. "To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Jaswant Singh had referred the drafts handed over by the Pakistani side for closer scrutiny by a team of senior officials in the Foreign Ministry. At no point had Mr. Singh consented on the drafts. The Pakistan allegation of an invisible hand preventing an agreement is nothing more than crude propaganda".

## Pak. accuses India of firing on LoC

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 21. For the first time since it announced the policy of 'maximum restraint' on the Line of Control (LoC) in December last, Pakistan accused India of indulging in "artillery fire" on the LoC and said it would retaliate if its troops were fired upon by the Indian troops.

The Director-General of the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi, told *The Hindu*, "We received information this morning that Indian troops had fired in the Siachen and Kargil sectors on the night of Friday/Saturday." According to the information received, the Indian troops had allegedly fired across the LoC without any provocation. "There is not going to be any initiation of firing on Pakistan's part. But if we are fired upon we will retaliate, which is in self-defence."

The ISPR chief, who is also Press Secretary to the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, claimed that Indian troops fired 83 shells at the Kargil sector on Friday, and Pakistani forces responded with restraint.

# Jaswant's turn with editors minus TV

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

**New Delhi, July 21:** After Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, it is now foreign minister Jaswant Singh's turn to meet Indian editors. But the meeting scheduled at South Block tomorrow will not be a breakfast session — it will be held post lunch at 3 pm. Nor will Doordarshan be allowed in for a live coverage.

The Centre's decision to brief a select group of editors comes nearly a week after Musharraf's breakfast bombshell. But there are signs that South Block is finally getting its act together. The changed stance stems from the confidence they gained from Musharraf's news conference yesterday.

India feels the general has overdone his Agra act.

"I think the press conference better explains and people should understand why we could not reach an agreement in Agra," Singh said yesterday, less than an hour after the Pakistan President's news conference was telecast live by PTV from Islamabad.

Though Singh's meeting with editors tomorrow will not be covered live, he plans to give an interview to the TV channel, Aaj Tak, which will be telecast later in the day. The day after, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee will make a statement on the Agra Summit — all part of Delhi's media strategy.

One fallout of the Agra Summit, sources said, is that Singh has

decided not to lead the Indian delegation to the Asean Regional Forum meeting scheduled to be held in Hanoi between July 24 and 28. Instead, deputy chairperson of the Planning Commission K.C. Pant has been asked to head the team. This is the first time in four years that Singh has opted out from heading the Indian delegation.

South Block officials said Singh, who is the leader of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha, decided against the trip because he would be pre-occupied with Parliament's monsoon session beginning on Monday.

But Singh's decision also has much to do with the Agra Summit. If he were to lead the delegation to

Vietnam, he would have been asked by leaders from other countries to explain why India and Pakistan could not clinch a deal at Agra — questions that he would much rather avoid.

Sources said the foreign ministry is trying to come up with a new coinage to describe the summit, so as to avoid using terms like success or failure. "It surely was a significant milestone that we crossed in Agra, but it can hardly be called a watershed," a senior official of the ministry said. "It should be described as a case of 'promise denied'."

The Indian top brass are aware that they will have to explain to the people and Parliament why Vajpayee went ahead with

the summit and what the gains were.

After yesterday's news conference, South Block sources feel that Musharraf has squandered away the gains he made at the breakfast show in Agra. The Pakistan President repeatedly stressed that there could be no progress in Indo-Pak ties unless the Kashmir issue was resolved first, in a manner being described by Indian diplomats as going on and on "like a broken 78 rpm record".

He also made it clear that he was unwilling to give much on the issue of cross-border terrorism.

The general could have sold his point better if he had put the progress of both these issues in tandem, the sources said.



# Pervez claims news meet refusal

FROM ASHIS CHAKRABARTI

Islamabad, July 20: President Pervez Musharraf today said he was not allowed to hold a news conference at the end of his Agra summit with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Declining to go into details, Musharraf said the Indian side had "some compulsions" because of which he could not hold the planned press meet.

Musharraf's statement came, at his news conference, on the heels of Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh's earlier contention that the news conference could not be held because of security reasons.

Singh had claimed that the security protocol needed the host side to be given at least 90 minutes before any such programme of the Pakistan President in Agra.

Also denying the Indian foreign minister's complaint that the Pakistani side sought to conduct "negotiations through the media", he wondered why his breakfast meeting with the Indian editors had been made a big issue, "especially in this age of information". He argued he had not said anything at the meeting with the editors that he had not said before.

And he assured to personally arrange a news conference if Vajpayee or Singh wanted to hold one as and when they came here for the next round of talks.

While praising Vajpayee's "open-mindedness and pragmatism", he refused to be drawn into any "rift" within the Indian camp, as several questioners suggested that it was "hawks" (led by Indian home minister L.K. Advani) who allegedly threw the summit off course and prevented a declaration. There were "hawks" on both sides but it was for the moderates to work out peace initiatives, by ignoring the "extremists".

"I didn't go there for point scoring. This is not a football match where we are trying to score goals against each other. I don't do that. We are into too serious a business that involved not just governments, but one-fifth of humanity living on the Indian sub-continent," Musharraf said.

He didn't agree that all was lost at Agra. "Let's not let history slip from our grasp." And he would still want the media in India and Pakistan, along with the people, to play their roles in the rounds ahead.



Pervez Musharraf at the news conference in Islamabad. (Reuters)

## Two men and a woman who rocked Agra boat

FROM ASHIS CHAKRABARTI

Islamabad, July 20: Three rocked the boat in the Yamuna in Agra — two men and a woman — even as Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf not only kept it afloat but nearly oared it ashore. That is the post-Agra prognosis in the Pakistani capital.

Back from their sticky Indian summer, the Pakistani establishment holds home minister L.K. Advani, information and broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj and joint secretary (Pakistan) in the external affairs ministry Vivek Katju responsible for wrecking the Agra peace march from behind the scenes.

Advani, of course, is the public face of the demotion squad. In fact, while the Pakistani media has openly railed at "mosque-smasher" Advani, the foreign office mandarins here are simply livid at both the Indian home minister and Katju. Swaraj may have been a minor spoiler, but she is believed to have set the odd ball rolling by "leaking out" to the media the Indian side's objections to the Pakistani approach to the Kashmir issue.

By contrast, Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh is perceived as something of a chameleon, who changed colours of a hawk to those of dove. And, Vajpayee is presented in the Pakistani script as the ineffectual angel who beat his wings in the void.

The countdown to the breakdown, as a senior Pakistani foreign ministry official put it, began

around 6 pm on July 15, when Katju walked into the Pakistani camp, holding a copy of the draft of the stillborn Agra declaration. "Cataclysmic", Katju apparently called it, "and we knew we are getting thicker into the mud".

The draft had a "preamble and then went on to talk about a settlement of the Kashmir issue, including ascertaining the wishes of the Kashmiri people, a structure for future dialogues, narco-terrorism and economic and trade issues. It was a composite draft," the official claimed.

If this was the beginning of the turbulence time, there were portents even before this. "Sunday afternoon, at the delegation level talks, your home minister brought up the issue of the POWs. He also mentioned terrorism. But we could have also brought in the issue of Indian oppression (in Kashmir) in response to that. We could feel the tension building up. But our president still thought we should keep on track and offered to come up with the declaration. Then came the Sushma Swaraj statement on TV. I protested to one of the Indian officials," recalled the foreign ministry official who had been involved in the negotiations and the draft-making exercises.

Despite the hitches, however, the talks went on. "Advani and Sushma spanners notwithstanding, we knew the two principals did talk Kashmir at length. In fact, that morning (July 15) of a two-hour meeting, they (Vajpayee and Musharraf) talked Kashmir for 90 minutes."

"The drafting committee met again around midnight. The two foreign secretaries were leading the two sides. Next morning, we gave the draft, which then went to the two foreign ministers who drafted the final agreement." It was said to have "nine parameters for the agreement, starting with a settlement of the Kashmir issue to pave the way for normalisation of relations. It was shown to the two principals and they agreed."

Upto now, the agreement or the joint declaration seemed a distinct possibility. Singh then took the agreed draft, saying "he would be back to us in 15 minutes after he had shown it to your Cabinet committee (on security). We waited and waited. He came back after an hour — around 1.30 pm — to tell us that the Cabinet committee has not accepted the final draft."

Feverish attempts continued even after this to retrieve the lost draft, to no avail. That was why, even when Musharraf went to make the farewell call on Vajpayee, it lasted 60 minutes.

The Pakistani foreign office is not, however, consigning the unaccepted Agra declaration to the Yamuna waters. Reiterating the position earlier taken by Pakistan foreign minister Abdul Sattar on his return here, the official said the process started at Agra would be taken forward. "We have no problem with the agreements at Simla and Lahore, though India has violated the first agreement several times," he said. But the Agra acrimonies, with its unfinished agenda, will continue to cast their shadow over future rounds.

'SUMMIT DERAILED BY ELEMENTS INIMICAL TO PEACE'

# 'Kashmir is the central issue'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 20. The Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, tonight gave a distinct impression that having failed to reach an agreement at Agra with India on the centrality of the Kashmir issue to normalisation of ties between India and Pakistan, he is making an appeal to the people of both the countries to be the judges and pressure their respective regimes to get down to resolution of the conflict.

Addressing his first news conference after the Agra summit, Gen. Musharraf left no one in doubt that in the perception of Pakistan, the summit was derailed by elements inimical to peace. He repeatedly talked about the "open-mindedness and reasonableness" of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, at the summit but refused to speculate as to why they could not succeed in endorsing the draft Agra joint declaration.

He asserted that there could have been a declaration on the centrality of Kashmir to the problem between India and Pakistan within 30 minutes if there was sincerity on both the sides. "Agar dil me kot hi to baat alag hi (if you are not sincere, it is a different matter). Then you have to indulge in jugglery of words. We have taken refuge in adjectives".

The Pakistan President also contested the view of Mr. Jaswant Singh that he or his delegation at Agra was "unifocal, segmented or narrow" in its approach. He was a soldier and cannot be a diplomat like his Foreign Minister or Foreign Secretary. "I am trying to lay focus where it belonged".

Gen. Musharraf became angry with a journalist who wanted to know if the outcome at Agra could have been different if Pakistan was led by a civilian government. "Are you making fun of me? What have the politicians achieved? The Shimla Agreement was reac-

hed at a juncture when there were 90,000 prisoners of war in India. Kashmir figures somewhere down the line in the Lahore Declaration. When have the politicians of Pakistan stood up for the cause of Kashmiris?"

"They do not have guts to speak about Kashmir. It is a misperception about the difference a civilian set-up could make to relations with India. At least in Pakistan, it should not exist. The military knows much better about all the issues than the political class about Kashmir and all other issues", he said.

When another journalist raised the reported anti-Pakistan statements made by noted human rights activist, Ms. Asma Jehangir, during her recent visit to India, he said, "I have a lot to say about the matter but I am refraining. I fail to understand how anyone can talk against his/her own country abroad".

While emphasising that there could be no peace between India and Pakistan until the issue of Kashmir was settled to the satisfaction to all the three parties involved — India, Pakistan and Kashmiris — Gen. Musharraf chose not to comment on the reasons why India went back on the two agreed drafts of the declara-



tion. His contention was that it was an internal affair of India and he would not like to speculate on the circumstances or compulsions that could have come in the way of Mr. Vajpayee in agreeing to the draft declaration. Gen. Musharraf thanked everyone from the Prime Minister to the Protocol Officer who looked after him and his entourage during their stay in India but did not say a word about the Union Home Minister, Mr. Lal Krishna Advani.

Gen. Musharraf did counsel restraint when some of the journalists referred to Mr. Vajpayee in relatively harsh words and reminded them how much he was

hurt when a woman journalist on an Indian television channel had raised the issue on "can we trust this man (Gen. Musharraf)?"

The primary objective of the press conference was to reach the people of India and Pakistan directly and the General made no bones about it. At one stage, he said that the press interaction was dedicated to the people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir so that they could judge for themselves the outcome of the Agra summit.

The Pakistan Government had gone out of its way to ensure not only the presence of Indian mediapersons but also provided uplinking facility to all the representatives of the Indian television channels that had specially flown in for the event.

In a way, it was Gen. Musharraf making a repeat performance of his interaction with a group of select senior Indian editors on July 16 with a slight difference. The interaction with the Indian editors was supposed to be an off-the-record event though it made its way to one of the Indian channels. The press conference tonight was a conscious and deliberate attempt by the Pakistani Government to reach out to the masses in India and Pakistan. Gen. Musharraf made it a point again and again to refer to the Kashmiri people as the third entity.

He raised the two very questions he had posed before the gathering of the senior Indian editors — the centrality of Kashmir to normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan and went on to assert that the Kashmir issue was "at the heart of the India-Pakistan confrontation".

Gen. Musharraf said he wanted to pose the same questions to the people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir. He argued that in his view, Kashmir was not only the centrality of the problem between India and Pakistan but also that the issue could not be resolved

without the involvement of the people of Kashmir.

## 'Not a football match'

PTI reports:

He also said the Agra summit could not be compared to a football match "where we are scoring goals".

"I didn't go (to India) for point scoring. This is not a football match where we are scoring goals and my intention is not that as we are dealing with the future of our two countries."

Continuing on the comparison, he said, "there is no doubt in my mind that the people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir are not for goal scoring because that is what spoils the atmosphere for them."

## Clarification

The President also categorically stated that he was the first to salute Mr. Vajpayee when the latter arrived at the Punjab Governor's house in Lahore during his historic bus trip to Pakistan in March 1999.

"I was the first to salute him when he (Mr. Vajpayee) got out of the helicopter at the Governor's house," Gen. Musharraf, who was then only the Army Chief, said "clearing a controversy that he avoided saluting the Indian leader." Describing as "childish" the allegation that he had not saluted Mr. Vajpayee, the General said, "he is 20 years older than me. What is a salute, it is like saying *Adab*."

## Pak. shelling in Kargil, Poonch

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR JULY 20. For the first time after the Kargil war, Pakistan troops today shelled the Kargil, Rajouri and Poonch sectors. One jawan was reported killed. (According to PTI, four Pakistani soldiers were killed after the Indian forces retaliated.)

Official sources said that Pakistan had resorted to unprovoked shelling towards the Indian side, which was retaliated in the same manner. The shelling started in the morning and was continuing till reports last came in. It took the people in Kargil unawares and triggered a largescale migration from the area, which witnessed a devastating war in 1999. Kargil wore a deserted look after the people ran for their lives. Many have taken shelter in underground bunkers. In Rajouri and Poonch sectors heavy shelling was reported; a number of Army installations had been targeted. Many soldiers were reported injured.

## Kashmir, not a disputed territory

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 20. India today rejected the assertion by Pakistan's President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, that Kashmir was a disputed territory and reiterated that the border State was an integral part of the country. Reacting to the press conference by Gen. Musharraf, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, said, "the thesis advanced by Gen. Musharraf that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory is totally not acceptable". He added that Jammu and Kashmir "lies at the core of Indian nationhood".

Mr. Singh indicated that Pakistan's fixation to Kashmir was a key factor behind the inability of the two countries to reach an agreement at Agra. He pointed out that the press conference in itself explained best the difficulties which were encountered in concluding an agreement at Agra. Mr. Singh rejected Gen. Musharraf's distinction between the International Border and the Line of Control (LoC) while explaining Pakistan's stance on the question on cross-border terrorism. "LoC is a treaty document and we have to agree to that."

## BJP blames it on Jaswant Singh

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, JULY 20. The Bharatiya Janata Party has started playing the blame game. While publicly congratulating the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, for his "superb handling" of the summit-level talks with Pakistan at Agra, in private it laid the blame at the door of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, for all that went wrong.

Some party leaders today said they feared the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, had with him a "draft" of the agreement, almost in its final stages, with some "corrections" made on it in Mr. Jaswant Singh's handwriting.

On the basis of this "document", Pakistan alleged that India went back on the draft cleared and finalised by its own External Affairs Minister. The BJP is worried this could become a powerful propaganda tool in Pakis-

tan's hands. Mr. Singh has always been looked upon with suspicion by some hardliners in the BJP since he is not from the Jhandewalan stables, and there is also an element of jealousy in his quick rise to a powerful position in the Government.

The same group in the BJP fought hard to prevent Mr. Vajpayee from giving him the finance portfolio in 1998, and now they are making him the scapegoat for all that went wrong at Agra, including the media-handling debacle.

While Mr. Vajpayee is getting the bouquets from the party for standing firm like a good *swayamsewak*, not giving an inch to Pakistan on key issues such as Kashmir and cross-border terrorism — he has been receiving congratulatory letters from many Sangh leaders and cadre — the party is also content with the role of the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K.

Advani, who is reported to have stood his ground on the issue of terrorism, without which there could be no joint declaration or agreement.

The bottomline: satisfaction and relief in the BJP that no agreement has been reached with Pakistan.

The party is also defending the decision to extend an invitation to the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to establish the Vajpayee Government's "sincerity" in wanting to normalise bilateral relations.

When several party leaders led by Mr. J. P. Mathur — and including the general secretaries, Mr. Pyarelal Khandelwal, Mr. Sunil Shastri, Ms. Maya Singh and Mr. Sangh Priya Gautam — met him this morning, Mr. Vajpayee is believed to have told them his attempts to make peace would continue.

'I went to India for the sake of the deprived... I returned empty-handed but not disappointed'

# Pervez back to Kashmir rhetoric

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, July 20. — India shouldn't shy away from accepting that ties with Pakistan can't improve unless the Kashmir issue is resolved, General Pervez Musharraf said today.

"Can we have peace without resolution of the Kashmir dispute? Certainly not," he told a press conference that was covered by the Indian media too. "Resolution of the Kashmir dispute, the biggest confidence building measure, is at the heart of Indo-Pak confrontation and this is the only issue that is blocking peace between us."

He denied there was any cross-border terrorism in J&K and said if India and Pakistan fail to resolve Kashmir, "they should let a third party mediate".

The Pakistani President rejected New Delhi's charge that his "unifocal, rigid and segmented" approach had led to the summit's failure. "I was only trying to lay the focus on where it belongs. I'm again just laying the proper focus".

He admitted there were other issues between the neighbours — such as Siachen, Sir Creek, nuclear restraint and Jinnah House in Mumbai — but peace could be achieved much more easily if the Kashmir issue was resolved.

Taking a dig at India's stand that Kashmir is a problem, not a dispute, the General said: "We've to take refuge to these words only when our intention is not sincere."

The President said that though he returned from Agra "empty-handed", he had nearly six hours of one-to-one talks Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, 90 per cent of which was focussed on Kashmir.

"I went for peace for the sake of the deprived who constitute one-fifth of the humanity living in the sub-continent."

He didn't return disappointed because there was tremendous goodwill, understanding and resolve to carry forward the peace process. "It was a good beginning and *inshallah*, the process will continue."

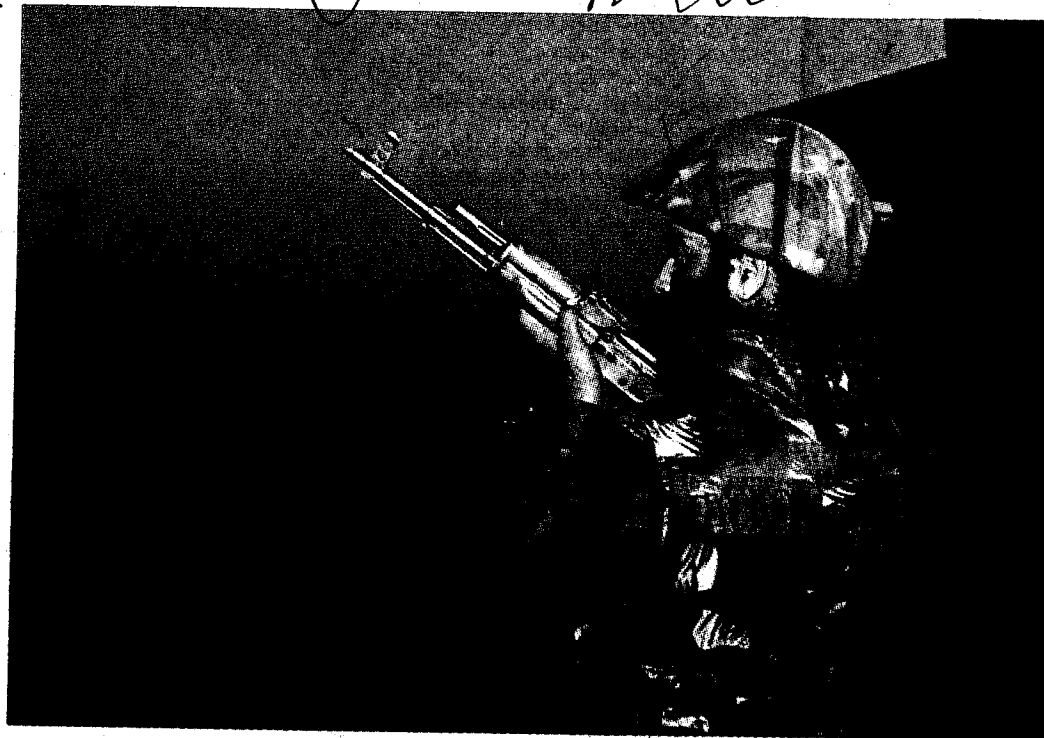
The summit, Gen Musharraf said, was a "historic opportunity" for him and Mr Vajpayee to create history and it was a "pity that twice mutually agreed draft" couldn't be inked by the two. "However, I do understand that it's not time for recrimination or throwing blame at each other."

The General said he didn't go to India to score points. "It's not a football match... It's too serious a business (in which) future of two countries is involved." There was no question winning or losing, but let justice, truth and right prevail, he said.

The President hoped that Mr Vajpayee and Mr Jaswant Singh would visit Pakistan to carry forward the peace process. "We want to give peace the biggest chance. I mean it." Both India and Pakistan had done "enough harm" to each other over half-a-century, now it's time they focussed on normalisation of relations.

Did the summit fail because of the "hawks" in India? Gen Musharraf said: "Hawks are everywhere... in India as well as in Pakistan... But as long as vast majority are for peace, hawks can be ignored."

Both countries need to pick up threads from the progress made in Agra and "let's not get bogged down in diplomatic parlance... The Simla Accord and Lahore Declaration failed to



A soldier stands guard at Naikbagh, near Srinagar, where the Army had an encounter with militants on Thursday. Two militants were killed in the gunbattle. — AP/PTI

bring any result because they ignored the Kashmir issue."

Did he want to address the media in Agra? "I wanted to hold a press conference" but it couldn't be held because the Indian side had some compulsions, he said. Will India and Pakistan fight again? That was unlikely because both had now more responsibilities after going nuclear, he said.

The General referred to the controversy over his breakfast meeting with Indian editors in Agra. Such a thing was "really surprising in this age of information," he said. He praised Indian media's broadmindedness and offered to take Mr Vajpay-

## SUSHMA BARB

ISLAMABAD, July 20. — Mrs Sushma Swaraj has blamed Gen. Pervez Musharraf for "derailing" the talks by speaking his mind to Indian journalists during his breakfast meeting on 16 July. She told the Pakistani media that she had tried to make their Indian counterparts understand that the onus was on India to make the summit a success. — PTI

■ Details on page 8

ee and Mr Singh before Pakistani media whenever they visit the country.

**No pact:** India today rejected Pakistan's charge of going back on assurances made in Agra, a report from Delhi adds. "No agreement was reached. There was no closure of an agreement and no subscription by signature," a foreign ministry spokesperson said.

**Indian prisoners:** Gen Musharraf has ordered the release of 25 Indian civilian prisoners lodged in various jails.

There are 171 Indians in Pakistani jails facing various criminal charges and sentenced to imprisonment between one to seven years.

■ More reports on page 8

## Not acceptable, says India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 20. — India has refused to accept most of General Pervez Musharraf's arguments. The foreign minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, said Kashmir was not the "central issue" between the neighbours and that cross-border terrorism did exist.

Mr Singh also objected to Pakistan's attempt to project Kashmir as a dispute. He ruled out any multilateral talk on Kashmir, as General Musharraf has suggested if bilateral talks fail.

Indian officials were guarded in their comments on Gen Musharraf's press conference. A PMO official said: "We're seized of the matter and are monitoring it. The reaction won't be hurried, but will be measured."

**BJP reaction:** The BJP has strongly reacted to the Gen Musharraf's "hawkish stance" at the press conference. Senior leaders said the Prime Minister shouldn't visit Pakistan if the possibility of finding a common ground was remote.

Most of them feel that Mr Vajpayee, instead of waiting for a Parliament session, should address the nation immediately and clarify India's position on Kashmir. The General's statement that the two sides had twice reached a situation close to signing the declaration may create confusion, they said.

## KARGIL FLARES UP AFTER TWO YEAR LULL

JAMMU, July 20. — Four Pakistani soldiers and an Indian jawan were killed in an exchange of fire along the Line of Control in Poonch district while Pakistani troops fired on Indian positions in Kargil sector breaking a two-year lull there.

Defence officials said the Pakistani troops, apparently trying to infiltrate militants, started shelling on Indian forward posts in Poonch around 5.30 a.m. today. Indian soldiers retaliated and the gunbattle continued for 40 minutes.

In Kargil, the first barrage of shells landed in Goma-galu and Budgam mountain ridges around 5 a.m. The blasts were followed by intermittent shelling throughout the day prompting Indian troops to retaliate. There was no casualty.

Officials said Pakistani army shelled the border towns Batalik, Drass and Kargil early in the morning. By 11 a.m., the shelling area increased to about 8 km around Kargil. The administration has stopped the movement of vehicles Srinagar-Kargil road. — SNS & PTI

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# Requiem for a summit

By Salman Haidar

HD-10 2/7

*There are no winners from Agra... The summit should not be seen as a contest; rather, it was a joint effort to find common ground. The leaders made their effort but failed at the last.*

THE ENDING of the Agra Summit without any agreement has brought a great sense of disappointment. High hopes had been raised and till the last moment it seemed that something substantial was on its way. Why nothing eventually came out remains a matter of intense interest and conjecture. The two Foreign Ministers have put a brave face on it, emphasising the positive features of the meeting. This is no failure, we are told, and much was achieved when the two leaders met. There are no recriminations from either side as very similar reassuring messages come from the two capitals. Yet all the worthy sentiment after the event cannot cloak the fact that the summit ended in disrepair, without any agreement. The reality of this disappointment is plain for all to see.

Why it went wrong and what the outcome signifies are obvious questions as we look back at the event. The two Ministers have tried to give the summit the facade of at least partial success, but this has not stilled the revival of familiar complaints and reproaches from both sides. There are plenty to say 'I told you so' and to reiterate the stock responses that are never far to seek in Indo-Pakistan affairs. Thus we are reminded that the General is hemmed in by his military colleagues, that the Prime Minister has to watch his back, that the Indian bureaucracy is obdurate, that Mr. Sattar is an India-baiter, and so on. It is safe to assume that such views and judgments will frequently surface and complicate the future, making it look more and more like the intractable past. This is part of the price of failure at the summit.

This is not to ignore the small mercies that Agra gave us. Most important is what seems to be a certain amity and mutual consideration that appears to have developed between the two principals. They spent long periods closeted together and clearly found it possible to engage in serious converse with each other. If the summit ultimately failed to deliver agreement, it was not for want of effort by Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf. Whatever slender hope is now to be salvaged dangles essentially from their mutual

readiness, if indeed it exists, to resume their effort at a propitious moment. As it is, they have agreed to meet again, though when and where is yet to be considered. However, the self-justifying explanations that are now beginning to emerge from both New Delhi and Islamabad may make the prospect ever more problematical.

One useful result of the meeting would be the resumption of regular diplomatic contact, permitting the routine exchanges that have been suspended for so long and whose lack has been felt. Easing of bilateral contact might also permit SAARC to resume its uneven journey. There has been no announcement to this effect but such relatively small but helpful decisions might yet emerge from the debris.

Another relatively small advance has been recorded in some areas of people-to-people relations, such as travel, scholarships for Pakistani students at Indian colleges, less stringent handling of strayed fishermen, and so on. The unilateral measures announced by India before Agra are to remain in effect. It is idle to expect Pakistan to respond in like measure: they do not like unilateralism, even in a good cause, and would have preferred these measures to be instituted through mutual agreement. All the more credit to India to hold firm despite the present circumstances.

Looking back at the breakdown, explanations from all sides confirm that it was caused by the failure to agree on how to describe the Kashmir issue in the agreed declaration. It did not prove possible to accommodate within a single text both Pakistan's insistence that Kashmir should be acknowledged as the 'core issue' and India's demand that cross border terrorism by Pakistan should be brought to an end. This is not simply a failure of a drafting exercise, for what is invoked here cuts at the heart of each side's Kashmir policy. For India, to give to the Kashmir issue the

priority that Pakistan demands would make it the gateway to bilateral friendship and not one among many issues that need to be sorted out. For Pakistan, chalking off support for the militants would leave it with no Kashmir policy at all, no means to keep the dispute alive. These differences are well known and have been reiterated again and again by both parties, so the talks foundered on a well charted rock.

Many have wondered whether more careful preparations could have led to a different result. There seems to have been a difference of view on this question. India's External Affairs Minister said that his side had more than once asked for preliminary meetings of officials, only to be turned down by Pakistan. One can only wonder why Pakistan preferred this course. It could be because it felt that going direct into the top level meeting offered a better chance of success, for Indo-Pakistan bureaucratic procedures have an uninspiring record and lead rapidly to deadlock. Whatever may have been the calculations prior to Agra, one cannot see Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Vajpayee rushing into another Agra-type meeting any time in the future. Careful preparations for any future meeting, if and when it takes place, seem unavoidable and necessary.

Gen. Musharraf's diplomatic style also merits some scrutiny. He certainly seemed every inch the soldier, brisk, straightforward, stating what he meant and pursuing his objective with forthright vigour. But not all positions can be taken by direct assault. In diplomacy, as in other engagements, the longer way round may sometimes prove quicker. Perhaps the best that could have been achieved at Agra is measured progress in the right direction and nothing was to be gained by pushing for a decisive breakthrough document.

This summit attracted unprecedented

media attention which brought with it a whole sheaf of problems. In the public perception at least, the dynamic of the media activity almost overwhelmed the negotiation itself. After building up expectation in the early phase, media coverage began to take on a destructive tenor as the talks lengthened and no hard information was made available. Steps on this negative path were the Union Information Minister's efforts to brief the media and Gen. Musharraf's breakfast with editors, neither of which went down well. The result was that the watchers from the media were ready to write off the summit long before it actually ground to a halt. Did this have any effect on what was going on in the conference chamber? Probably not, for these are separate activities. The summit would have ended as it did with or without the adverse reverberation from the media. But better managed and better judged coverage could at least have ensured that there would be no rancour such as we witnessed at the end.

The biggest loser of the summit failure is Kashmir. Hopes were raised high in the Valley before the meeting, they will now have been dashed. Already some militant groups have signified their intention to step up their activity, which means that the Kashmiri public will have to brace itself for more violence. The security forces will respond, to add to the woes of the locals. The slight easing of conditions that announcement of the summit brought is unlikely to remain, and the small current revival of tourist and pilgrim traffic may once more come to a halt. The diplomacy of *Insaniyat* has failed to prove itself in its testing ground of Kashmir.

There are no winners from Agra. Depending on the comments one looks at, one or other of the leaders is held to have come out best from their encounter. But the summit should not be seen as a contest between them; rather, it was a joint effort to find common ground. The leaders made their effort but failed at the last. The sad conclusion is that ultimately neither could rise to the occasion and break free from the baggage of the past. As a result, we are condemned to more of the familiar hostility and tension between the two countries.

# HDA Pak. keen to discuss n-issue

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 20. India and Pakistan have agreed that the SAARC process should be resumed in accordance with the charter and that the eleventh SAARC meet should be convened at the earliest.

The Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, announced at a specially convened press conference here tonight that a decision on SAARC was arrived at the Agra Summit. In a written statement at the beginning of the two-hour-long conference, Gen. Musharraf said Pakistan attached particular importance to a discussion on nuclear risk reduction and nuclear-related confidence

building measures.

"We are committed to a nuclear policy of restraint and responsibility. We have strengthened custodial controls in Pakistan. The two countries need to take further steps, unilaterally and jointly, to reduce the risk of accidental and unauthorised use of nuclear weapons. We look forward to discussions on this issue at the level of Foreign Ministers", he said.

However in response to a question on whether Pakistan would reciprocate the unilateral confidence building measures (CBMs) announced by India in the run-up to the Agra Summit and the subsequent announcement made by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, that India would

go ahead with the CBMs, Gen. Musharraf maintained that CBMs would be meaningless unless the core issue of Kashmir was resolved.

In his statement Gen. Musharraf said that Pakistan was disappointed that a Joint Declaration which could have laid down the road map for the establishment of a peaceful, tension-free and co-operative relationship could not be reached.

"Nevertheless, we reached understandings which signify a substantial forward step in our bilateral relations. Pakistan would like to build on this and move rapidly towards the destination of amity, good-neighbourliness and co-operation with India", he said.

## Sushma blames Musharraf for derailing summit

ISLAMABAD: Information and broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj, who was criticised by General Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistani media for "selective" briefing on the Agra summit, has blamed



**Sushma Swaraj** the Pakistani president for "derailing" the talks with his much-publicised telecast of the breakfast meeting with Indian editors.

Mincing no words, Ms Swaraj firmly told a Pakistani daily that Gen Musharraf himself was to be blamed for it. "Those were not my remarks to news-hunting television channels which spoil things at Agra. Things were derailed the moment the video recording of *General sahib's* tough talk to a group of senior editors was instantly made available to all TV channels of the world, who took no time in airing them," she said.

*The News* daily quoted her as saying that the meetings like the one Gen Musharraf had with the editors were generally kept off the record. "That helps concealing the unpleasant things from public."

She said the Indian media was initially not in favour of the government inviting Gen Musharraf. "Let me start by revealing to you that most of the newspapers were really upset when our Prime Minister invited your President for a summit in May. Column after column was coming everyday wondering as to why Vajpayeeji has invited Gen Musharraf *sahib*, who did Kargil to us." (PTI)

## OPPOSITION CRITICISES GOVT.'S LACK OF AGENDA

# Summit not unsuccessful: PM

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JULY 19.** The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today described the Agra summit as "not unsuccessful" and that talks with Pakistan would go on ("baat cheet ko aage le jane ki koshish karenge"). He had accepted the invitation of Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, for another summit, but the question of fixing the dates did not arise at the moment.

At the very outset, the Prime Minister confessed that the Government's handling of information flow at the summit left much to be desired, and that Pakistan had frustrated all attempts to prepare the agenda papers.

Addressing an all-party meeting of leaders in Parliament here, Mr. Vajpayee gave a lengthy account of how Pakistan had a one-point

agenda, insisting that Kashmir was the "core issue" and a matter of "dispute."

The Prime Minister disarmed the opposition by saying that he had consulted them before the summit and that they had appreciated his peace initiative and wished him success while cautioning him to remain firm on India's concerns. That is what he had "dutifully" done, even if that meant the end of the summit without a joint declaration or a joint statement. It was, therefore, "not unsuccessful."

Dr. Manmohan Singh (Congress) criticised the Government for going into a summit without adequate preparations — no agenda, no structure, and no interface with the media. He also pointed an accusing finger at the Government for contradictions in

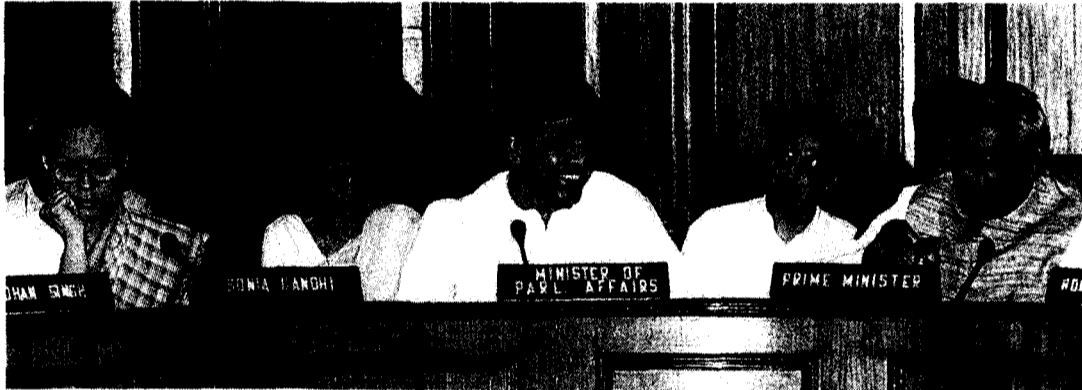
its post-summit stance — the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, had said in Agra that "the caravan of peace must go forward," while on Wednesday in Delhi, his Ministry's spokesperson suggested that what transpired at the summit should be put into history's dustbin and the process, whenever it begins again, should begin afresh, taking up from the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration. This view was also expressed by Mr. Yerran Naidu, (TDP) who said contradictions confuse people.

Lack of agenda before the summit was a point of attack by several party leaders. Mr. Amar Singh (Samajwadi Party) was critical of the attempt at diplomacy in a vacuum, and the opportunity India had afforded to the General to legitimise his position. Mr. Anand Geete (Shiv Sena), went to the ex-

tent of suggesting that the invitation to Gen. Musharraf was a mistake, and that no talks should take place till cross-border terrorism stopped. Mr P.H. Pandian (AIADMK) said it was impossible to hold summit-level talks without a piece of paper to go on, it had become clear that Gen. Musharraf came to India to exploit the opportunity to place his views before the world community. Mr. J. Chittaranjan (CPI) was of the view that every effort should continue to keep talking to Pakistan, for there was no other option.

There was all-round criticism of the Government's handling of the media, but since the Prime Minister had acknowledged this at the very start, none of the party leaders dwelt on it. Some party leaders suggested directly that the Prime Minister should not go to Islamabad for another summit.

Repeating the exercise done on Wednesday, where Mr. Vajpayee had briefed the NDA leaders, he went over the same points. Pakistan's insistence on Kashmir, it was unprepared to talk about terrorism, and it wanted to hold all other Confidence Building Measures hostage to progress on the resolution of the Kashmir problem. That was not acceptable to India. Mr. Vajpayee said repeatedly that India pointed out the need for the two countries to act responsibly as two nuclear powers. There was an urgent need for confidence building mechanisms in this area which was not related to the Kashmir issue, but this effort too came to nought.



The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, along with the Union Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, and the Congress president, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, at the all-party meeting on the Agra summit in New Delhi on Thursday. — Photo: Rajeev Bhatt

## The journey must go on: Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD, JULY 19.** Expressing disappointment over India's decision to "disavow the understandings" reached between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, at Agra, Islamabad tonight appealed to New Delhi to carry on the caravan of peace on the basis of the progress made at the just-concluded summit.

In a five-para statement, the Foreign Office sought to contest the Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson's claim that since no closure was reached on the text of the agreement, both sides would have to begin afresh on the basis of the existing agreements — the Lahore declaration and the Shimla agreement.

"We have moved forward at Agra and the journey should be continued," the Foreign Office statement said.

The Foreign Office's reaction to the decision of the Vajpayee Government to forget Agra as a "bad dream" is significant as Gen. Musharraf is scheduled to hold a press conference here tomorrow. Following the decision of the Government to liberally issue vi-

sas to Indian journalists to cover the event, 18 mediapersons from New Delhi have flown here.

The military establishment was taken aback at what it believes is the "u-turn" by India, particularly after the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, announced a

### Jaswant accepts invitation

**NEW DELHI, JULY 19.** The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, has accepted an invitation by his Pakistan counterpart, Mr. Abdul Sattar, to visit that country.

Dates for the visit will be worked out mutually, an External Affairs Ministry spokesperson told reporters.— PTI

day after the summit that India would pick up the threads from Gen. Musharraf's visit.

At a news conference here the same evening, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, echoed the same sentiments and even spelt out the broad nature of the understanding arrived at by both sides.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, a senior

Pakistan Government official said, "we are convinced that the u-turn by India on the Agra summit within 24 hours is a reflection of the deep divisions within the Vajpayee establishment on its approach towards making peace with Pakistan." The official wanted to know why India was harping only on the Shimla agreement and the Lahore declaration.

"Then why not refer to all the agreements, including the United Nations Resolutions. After all, it was India that took the issue of Kashmir to the U.N. So let us start from there. In my view, this attitude of India does not augur well for normalisation of ties."

The Foreign Office statement claimed that the differences between the two countries at Agra pertained to only one para of the joint draft declaration and asserted that the two leaders had reached several understandings, which signified a "substantial step forward" in bilateral relations. It said Pakistan believed these understandings should be preserved and expanded in the interest of peace, security and development.

It hoped India would join in the effort to build on the foundation of these understandings.

# Declarations difficult for Generals: Benazir

<sup>HD-19</sup>  
**LONDON, JULY 19.** The former Pakistan Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, today put the blame squarely on the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for his failure to sign a joint declaration with India during the Agra summit.

"It was startling to witness his puerile brinkmanship where the Indians called the bluff," the Pakistan People's Party chief said adding the "summit did prove that whilst politicians come up with agreements, declarations are difficult for Generals".

Commenting on the summit, the self-exiled leader, facing corruption charges in Pakistan, said in a statement here that "time was always running short — and then extended. Gen. Musharraf departed when sources leaked that the talks would continue the next day".

She said the entire world was watching the "Agra summit" and expected a joint declaration but eventually "there was not even a joint statement".

"Blaming Pakistani politicians for succumbing to army pressure, some in India believed they could do business with the army instead. They found a self-confessing powerless army chief who said he would have to live in India in his old Neharwali house if he signed a declaration. The civilian



leaders signed Simla, Islamabad and Lahore (agreements)— all honourable agreements," she said.

Stating that diplomacy is the art of the possible, she said, "political leaders are trained in the art of give-and- take. General Musharraf is a military dictator. When he speaks, others jump to attention. If they don't, they are locked away".

Ms. Bhutto said Gen. Musharraf made key "errors" in the trip. "He failed to build an internal consensus of legitimate political forces.

He relied on an inefficient team which failed him previously. With good advice, he could have stayed an extra day. Exhausting the other

side is a pretty elementary diplomatic trick. Instead, he left in a huff," she noted.

Islamabad was keen for a declaration and New Delhi knew it. This was confirmed by a Pakistani delegate who told the *Gulf news*, "I went up to the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and told him he could write what he wanted and we would accept it," she said.

Stating that it is extraordinary, Ms. Bhutto said, "it is little wonder that Mr. Jaswant Singh wanted another day of talks to put in his wish list when the Islamabad side offered such accommodation".

"If there is a legacy to this summit, it is that New Delhi managed to match Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmir dispute with an equally vocal and high profile repetition of cross border terrorism," Ms. Bhutto said. She recalled that since 1993, when the diplomat, Mr. J.N. Dixit, offered to Pakistan, Kashmir as a separate agenda item at the Commonwealth Conference at Cyprus, the Indian side is willing to include Kashmir as the bone of contention. "But the interpretation of that contention is different to Pakistan's," she said.

Ms. Bhutto said "narrowing the focus to the words on a draft statement, usually successfully

manoeuvred by diplomats, is ignoring the larger picture. That picture involves tense relations between two nuclear capable States that fought three wars and have daggers drawn at the Line of Control in the Kashmir Valley".

Ms. Bhutto said that a nervous world community pushed both leaders towards the negotiating table to lessen tensions that may prove fatal for "South Asia, housing one-fifth of humanity". But Gen. Musharraf, she said, was hampered by his dependence on a military constituency wedded to militancy. "He lacked a popular mandate and desired his nation's highest constitutional posts. Given his agenda, ambitions, army, America and Afghanistan, Gen. Musharraf played his cards well, except for the late night departure."

"Buying international time and goodwill in the run-up to the summit, he seized the presidency, assumed Draconian powers under the National Security Council, got another tranche of the IMF loan and persecuted opponents," she said.

"In extending an invitation to the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, he held out the promise of another summit. More time to choreograph a domestic political scenario by October 2002," she noted. — PTI



# Visa posts for Pakistanis under cloud

Saurabh Shukla  
New Delhi, July 18

AFTER the deadlocked summit, New Delhi's move to set up visa posts for Pakistani nationals as part of confidence-building measures (CBM's) has run into rough weather.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had announced a series of CBMs on the summit eve. The most important of them was the July 9 decision to make travel between India and Pakistan easier.

The decision would let Pakistani passport holders come by road and obtain visas at the Attari checkpoint. There was also a proposal to open visa check-posts at Munabao in Rajasthan and the Uri and Sialkot sectors in J&K. But the move is being opposed now by the security forces.

A secret note from the Intelligence Bureau had recommended "these posts in Jammu and Kashmir along the Line of Control are not feasible for security considerations as they are under heavy fire from across the border from Pakistani security forces and militants," sources said.

The proposal to grant visas at the Attari checkpoint had been

opposed as the security agencies might not have the facilities to verify documents of Pakistani nationals, insiders said.

The Attari border has long been a grey area and has seen major hauls of counterfeit currency and explosives.

South Block sources say a review meeting of MEA and security officials had been called by Ashok Bhandari (Special Secretary), J&K, in the Ministry of Home Affairs, on July 19 to review this issue.

Insiders said MEA and security agencies were not comfortable with the decision to open visa posts, but since the decision had been taken at the highest level they had let it go.

Even on the other check post planned at Munabao in Rajasthan, it seems the MEA had not done its homework well.

Sources say Munabao was an old British link that connected India to what is now Pakistan but was discontinued after Partition. Insiders say even the post at Munabao is not feasible as it is about 40 km inside Indian territory.

An alternative site on the Gadra-Barmer road has been identified, but the hiccups continue.

## Militant groups threaten to step up attacks

Islamabad, July 18

WITH THE Indo-Pak summit at Agra failing to achieve a breakthrough, Pakistan-based Kashmiri militants have decided to take a more "hawkish" posture threatening to step up attacks in Kashmir as well as other parts of "mainland" India.

Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, which had urged Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf not to accept the Indian invitation for talks, has said it would "expand its militant activities" in Kashmir against Indian security forces.

"Our leader Hafiz Mohammed Saeed has announced that our activities would be extended to mainland India and the Lashkar would target important installations anywhere in the country," a Lashkar spokesman was quoted as saying by a daily today.

The Lashkar spokesman said jihad was the best recipe to resolve the longstanding dispute over Kashmir.

The Hizbul Mujahideen accused India of intransigence and being responsible for the breakdown of talks. Hizb leader Salahuddin said the "failure at talks" reflected India's insincerity to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Harkat-ul-Mujahideen leader 'General Abdullah' said, "armed and continuous struggle is the only solution to the problem." He said 'jihad' activities would go on until the liberation of Kashmir. PTI

# India-Pakistan ties back to square one

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 18. — India-Pakistan relations are back to square one. Barely 24 hours after saying that the Agra summit was not a failure, India today announced that any fresh talk with its neighbour will have to be based on the Shimla agreement and Lahore Declaration.

No more sugar-coated rhetoric. After making concessions to Pakistan (burying the ghost of Kargil and inviting General Pervez Musharraf to walk the "high road" to peace), India now thinks it proper to begin from the scratch.

"The caravan of peace will move ahead. Our engagement with Pakistan will continue. The process of peace that has been put in place at the initiative of the Prime Minister will also proceed forward," the foreign ministry spokesperson, Mrs Nirupama Rao, said.

But, since the draft joint declaration of the Agra summit didn't receive "closure, we'll have to begin again on the basis of existing agreements, i.e. Shimla agreement and Lahore Declaration that are the cornerstones of Indo-Pak ties."

## MUSHARRAF'S PRESS CONFERENCE

NEW DELHI, July 18. — The Pakistani President continues to woo the Indian media, even from across the border.

For the first time, perhaps, the Pakistan high commission here has asked the Indian journalists to contact it for visas if they want to cover Gen Pervez Musharraf's press conference in Islamabad at 5 p.m. on 20 July.

It will be the General's first face-off with journalists after the Agra summit. On 16 July in Agra, Gen Musharraf invited 18 Indian editors for breakfast. The event turned out to be a press conference, televised nationwide. The President used the opportunity to put across his views on J&K, though the summit was heading towards an impasse on the issue. — UNI

Several proposals were discussed between the two sides at Agra, but none of them received "closure and subscription by signature. There is no agreement."

Yesterday, the Pakistani foreign minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, had said that the draft declaration could be a "valuable foundation" for future talks between the neighbours.

Taking a dig at Pakistan, Mrs Rao said India was committed to upholding the international and bilateral norms of confidentiality. Therefore, it would not reveal the "nature of the draft agreement", unlike Pakistan.

India is stunned by Mr Sattar's comment that "contempo-

rary diplomacy" requires opening up to the media. It's a "very novel" interpretation of how diplomatic parleys should be conducted, she said.

"...If the logic of media conducting negotiations simultaneously with the principal is to be accepted, then I'm afraid international and bilateral confidential parleys are to be held in an amphitheatre."

**Terrorism:** India has objected to Pakistan terming cross-border terrorism as cross-Line of Control terrorism.

It was Gen. Musharraf who had told Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee that both countries should stop rhetoric and latter

had agreed, Mrs Rao said.

Pakistan, however, seems to have crossed the self-drawn *lakshman rekha*. Mr Sattar has termed cross-border terrorism as cross-LoC terrorism because, according to him, there is no border a such between the neighbours.

"We know very well that Pakistan understands perfectly what is meant by cross-border terrorism, which is inclusive of encouraging and abetting infiltration and terrorism across the LoC," Mrs Rao said.

**Hurriyat:** The Hurriyat today said India and Pakistan should continue the dialogue to resolve the Kashmir issue, adds PTI. Mr Abdul Ghani Lone, Hurriyat leader, termed as "untrue and canard" reports that Gen Musharraf had told the group to chalk out a programme to become true representatives of Kashmiris.

There are reports from Pakistan that India had agreed in principle to allow Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan. The reports couldn't be confirmed.

■ 'Serious talks' at Agra summit, says USA: page 5  
■ NSC, Cabinet back Musharraf's stand: page 8

# Congress slams Centre on summit

FROM KAY BENEDICT

**New Delhi, July 20:** The Congress today contradicted parliamentary affairs minister Pramod Mahajan's statement yesterday that all parties had expressed satisfaction over the Agra Summit, saying it was a "fiasco" that "represented a diplomatic disaster and a media mishap".

Congress spokesperson Jaipal Reddy said at the all-party meeting called by Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee "Dr Manmohan Singh expressed dissatisfaction at the way the summit was handled".

Coming down heavily on the government for the failure of the summit, Reddy said no government in the history of independent India has received such unqualified cooperation from the Opposition in general and the Congress in particular. "The Congress gave the government a blank cheque. What did the nation get in return? It only got a heavy overdraft," Reddy said.

Asked if the Congress felt the summit was "not a failure", Reddy said: "We blamed Pakistan for the disappointing result. We did not want to use a harsh word like failure, but it was certainly a fiasco."

"The pre-summit phase was characterised by lack of preparation. The summit phase was characterised by confusion and the post-summit has been characterised by one contradiction after another," he said, adding that the summit ended in a non-statement. The second day, he said, was marked by a positive statement by the foreign minister. But on the third day, after the NDA meeting, the government issued a negative statement.

The Congress leader said that the government at the all-party meeting made half a statement. "After all, it was not such a bad thing, we are again going to talk, it is all going to be forgotten as a bad dream," Reddy said.

THE TELEGRAPH

# NDTV denies telecasting Musharraf meet live

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 20. - NDTV today denied allegations of secretly taping the breakfast meeting between General Pervez Musharraf and Indian editors at Agra, and then, uplinking and broadcasting it live.

NDTV's director, Mr KVL Narayan Rao, said Mr Pranoy Roy, the NDTV chief, who was invited to the meeting, had no idea before the meeting that there would be a camera at the function.

Mr Rao said Mr Roy didn't notice the camera throughout the entire meeting and did so only after it was over. Only then did he ask for a copy of the tape for NDTV, producers of news programmes for Star News. Mr Roy had "no idea when PTV, who were filming the meeting, would give him the tape or not." The request to PTV was a last-minute on-the-spot decision, Mr Rao added.

The NDTV director added that the telecast wasn't live since it was aired 30 minutes after the end of the meeting. He also denied that the Pakistani President's breakfast meeting was an off-the-record briefing. He said the invitation letter didn't say it would be off-the-record. Nor was it stated during the meeting that it was one. The editors, he said, seemed to know that, and went on television to say what took place at the meeting even before the footage appeared.

Did PTV uplink from the NDTV studio? Mr Rao said PTV took the tape from the NDTV studio at the Taj hotel after it was telecast. Then, PTV took the tape to the Mughal Sheraton where they uplinked it themselves, he added.

THE STATESMAN

# Pervez plays a broken record

FROM ASHIS CHAKRABARTI

Islamabad, July 20: He had not left any doubt at Agra, still President Pervez Musharraf was not taking any chances.

"Resolution of (the) Kashmir dispute is at the heart of Indo-Pak confrontation and this is the only issue that is blocking peace between us," he said at a news conference with a large Indian presence.

He made it clear that the two countries could not move forward if India continued to consider Kashmir its "atut ang" (integral part).

For a man who "talks in direct language and hits straight", talking of confidence-building measures without tackling the Kashmir issue was "like putting the cart before the horse". And, "whether we like it or nor, the horse happens to be Kashmir".

Calling the Kashmir violence a "freedom struggle" once again, he dismissed the allegation of cross-border terrorism. "There was nothing on the India-Pakistan border. And, on cross-LoC terrorism, I beg to differ because it is the indigenous freedom struggle and has nothing to do with cross-border terrorism."

While saying he deplored "anyone trying to disturb peace in India", he did not answer a question on threats by Lashkar-e-Toiba and some other militant groups to strike deeper in Kashmir and at key installations in India. His explanation once again: it is a "freedom struggle".

Musharraf lost his cool only once when a local journalist suggested that politicians had done better at Simla and Lahore than an army general had at Agra.

He argued that the political



Pervez Musharraf

leaders had failed at Simla and Lahore because they could not get the Kashmir issue incorporated in the agreements. Raising his voice to reflect his anger at the comparison between the army and politicians, he said the military was "part of the government and it understood issues better than the politicians."

This was an indication that he would continue to use Agra, where no declaration was made, as the framework for future negotiations rather than the agreements at Simla and Lahore.

He disclosed that in the six hours of talks with Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in four instalments, Kashmir was discussed "90 per cent of the time". Musharraf said he and Vajpayee had come close to inking a declaration on an agreed draft twice.

Musharraf refused to call the summit a failure, though, choosing to focus on the process of dialogue that resumed with Agra.

"I return empty-handed but I'm not disappointed," he said. "There was tremendous goodwill and understanding. There was resolve to carry forward the

process."

His Kashmir refrain may evoke screams of exasperation in New Delhi, but they would be happy to note his dismissal of the possibility of third party mediation.

"We are big, responsible and understanding states. It is best to solve our disputes mutually," he said at the question-answer session. The comment represents a change from an oft-repeated Pakistani call for mediation that has survived through military and political regimes in that country.

As evidence of his willingness to take the process started in Agra forward, the general said he would formally invite Vajpayee and Jaswant for a second round of talks. "I am going to send an official invitation to Vajpayee and we are going to send an official invitation to foreign minister Jaswant Singh."

"Now we have to see whether they come before my UN visit (in September)."

During his opening statement, Musharraf posed three questions, answering them himself.

"Do we genuinely want peace?" — "Yes."

"Can we bring peace without resolution of the Kashmir dispute?" — "No."

"Can we reach a resolution without ascertaining the wishes of the Kashmiri people?" — "No."

The word "people" — Pakistani, Indian and Kashmiri — came back and back again to the lips of a general using the politician's vocabulary. "I did not go to (Agra) for point-scoring. This is not a football match. People desire peace... People will not allow it (the process) to be stopped."

■ See Pages 6, 8

# NSC, Cabinet back Musharraf's stand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

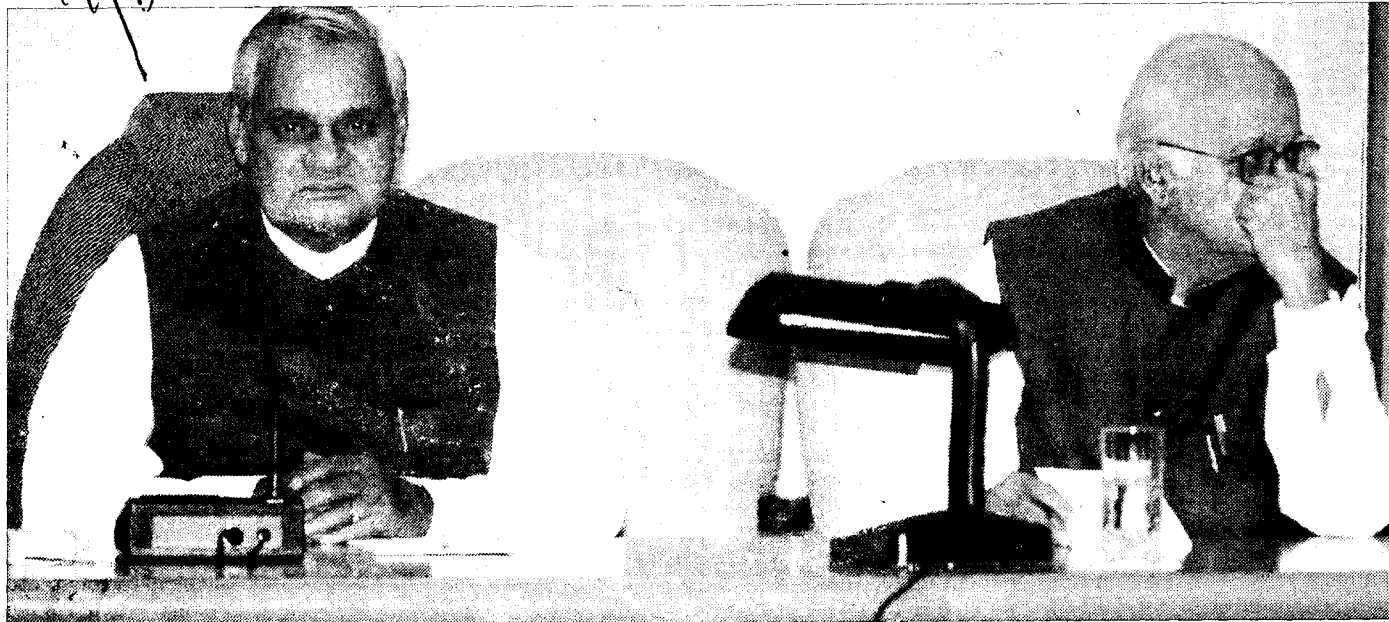
508 19/7

ISLAMABAD, July 18. — Pakistan's all powerful National Security Council and the Cabinet today backed the stand taken by President Pervez Musharraf at the Indo-Pak summit amid reports that his popularity had soared after his plain talking with Indian editors in Agra.

The General addressed a joint session of the Cabinet and NSC, which was attended by Chief of the Air Staff, Chief of the Naval Staff, Deputy Chief the Army Staff and the four Governors besides the federal ministers.

General Musharraf will address a press conference on 20 July for which the Indian media will be invited, they said.

He will also soon convene meetings with politicians, Islamic clerics, leaders of Pakistan-based Kashmiri parties, editors of Pakistan media, students and women groups to brief them about the outcome of his India visit.



Mr AB Vajpayee and Mr LK Advani at the NDA meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

Media reports here said his popularity graph soared specially after the telecast of his meeting with senior Indian editors during which he bluntly

stressed the centrality of Kashmir in bilateral relations between India and Pakistan.

Officials said he was all set to

repeat the exercise of meetings with groups and individuals whom he met in the run-up to his talks with the Indian Prime Minister, Mr Atal Be-

hari Vajpayee, in order to consolidate the "positive" image he "acquired by standing firm on the Kashmir issue."

It is also evident from a

day's press conference by the Pakistani foreign minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, that General Pervez Musharraf considered the Agra Summit "inconclusive" and not a failure and he hoped to continue his talks with Mr Vajpayee when the two meet in September this year at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

It was also during the consultative meetings with various segments of Pakistan society, that General Musharraf virtually set the tone for the Agra summit, before he set off to India tour on 14 July, in which he pledged to discuss Kashmir as the main issue with Indian leaders.

Barring the former Prime Minister Mrs Benazir Bhutto-led Pakistan Peoples' Party and deposed the Prime Minister Mr Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League and the 19-party Alliance for Restoration of Democracy and other small parties and groups supported General Musharraf's visit to India.

PM says there was only one summit draft

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 18. — Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said at an NDA meeting today that he had told General Pervez Musharraf that if Pakistan raised the issue of Kashmir, the issue of PoK and cross-border terrorism would automatically come up.

He reportedly told the meeting that there was only one draft, and not many, prepared by officials of the two countries during the India-Pakistan summit.

The Prime Minister is to make a statement in Parliament on the opening day of the monsoon session on Monday.

At the NDA meeting at his residence, Mr Vajpayee's brief address dwelt on the need for the summit and the positive message it had sent to the world.

The Union home minister, Mr LK Advani, clarified at the meeting that the General's address at his breakfast with Indian media personnel had completely vitiated the atmosphere. He also pointed to the General's meeting with Hurriyat leaders, describing it as Pakistani intransigence. The external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, briefed the meeting about the background of the summit and its various aspects.

The Shiv Sena was represented by the Union power minister, Mr Suresh Prabhu, who said at the meeting that the Indian side should have done better media management to put across its viewpoints on various issues, including cross-border terrorism.

While the NDA unanimously backed the Prime Minister for his firm stand on the Kashmir issue, it urged the government to take all steps to check the possibility of escalation of terrorism in the wake of the summit deadlock, the parliamentary affairs minister, Mr Pramod Mahajan, told reporters after a two-hour meeting at Mr Vajpayee's residence.

# India rejects Agra draft, wants talks to begin afresh

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

NEW DELHI: Two days after the Agra summit, India has said the draft document over which the India-Pakistan talks were deadlocked was not worth the paper it was written on.

"It is disappointing that no closure was reached on the text of the agreement. We will, therefore, have to begin again on the basis of the existing documents—the Simla and Lahore agreements—which form the cornerstones of India-Pakistan bilateral relations," external affairs ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao said on Wednesday.

However, Ms Rao emphasised that the engagement with Pakistan would continue. "The process of peace put in place at the initiative of the Prime Minister will proceed forward." She said that various proposals were discussed in Agra, but without the signatures of the two leaders, they remained mere proposals. The next round of negotiations would have to be picked up from Lahore, which had carried forward the Simla agreement, she said.

However, she refused to say whether the document which was discussed in Agra had taken into account both Simla and Lahore. She said those details could not be revealed in the interests of diplomatic propriety.

Ms Rao conceded that the Agra summit was useful for both India and Pakistan. It gave each country a clear understanding of each other's positions. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee

and President Pervez Musharraf also got to know each other.

India is furious that Pakistani foreign minister Abdul Sattar revealed details of the draft document the two sides were considering at his press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The spokesperson also lashed out at Mr Sattar's use of the term 'contemporary diplomacy' to defend Islamabad's constant use of the media during the Agra talks. She said it was a breach of confidentiality as well as diplomatic propriety.

"If the logic of the media conducting negotiations with the principals is to be accepted, the confidential discussions might very well be held in an amphitheatre with the media present."

Asked about Mr Sattar's new definition of cross-border terrorism (he had said there was no border, but only a line of control and that no cross-LoC terrorism was discussed), she said New Delhi was astonished at the technicalities voiced by Pakistan.

"I would like to voice my astonishment at the technicalities disclosed by Mr Sattar. Pakistan knows very well what India means by cross-border terrorism," she said, adding for good measure, "It is encouraging and abetting infiltration and terrorism across the Line of Control." The Agra declaration came unstuck on the issue of cross-border terrorism.

Meanwhile, official sources claimed that ahead of his summit with Mr Vajpayee, Gen Musharraf had been warned by militant and Islamic fundamentalist groups not to compromise on the Kashmir issue.

► See Edit: Faraway in Moscow, Page 10

## ARMS AND THE MEN



Army personnel clean their weapons at a post along the Indo-Pakistan border at Palanwala, about 90 km north-west of Jammu, on Wednesday.

## Pak apologises to Nirupama Rao

NEW DELHI: A Pakistan government spokesman has apologised to external affairs ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao, who was heckled by a group of Pakistani journalists soon after a short midnight briefing on the outcome of the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit in Agra on Monday, official sources said on Wednesday.

Embarrassed by the incident, Pakistan's principal information officer A.A. Gondal regretted the behaviour of the Pakistani journalists. (PTI)

# Atal low-down on Agra flop show

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 18

PRESIDENT PERVEZ Musharraf's insistence that an Agra pact would take effect only after India and Pakistan made "progress" on Kashmir was the main reason why India backed off from any joint statement. Giving a blow-by-blow account of the summit, Atal Bihari Vajpayee today explained to NDA leaders why it did not yield a declaration or even a joint statement.

Musharraf, he said, refused to agree to include a clause on checking cross-border terrorism as militant strikes in Kashmir were "part of a freedom struggle".

The General also wanted India to put down the Kashmir problem in the statement as a "dispute" and not an "issue" between the two sides.

The Prime Minister has convened an all-party meeting tomorrow to apprise Opposition leaders on the Government's resolve to carry forward the peace process beyond Agra. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan said Vajpayee today also held a Cabinet meeting on the summit and there were no differences over his acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan.

On whether the Shiv Sena opposed a return visit, Mahajan said the two Shiv Sena Ministers at the meeting made no such demand.

In his meeting with NDA leaders, Vajpayee conceded that sufficient preparatory work could not be done because of Pakistan's refusal to a structured dialogue

process once Musharraf had been invited.

Those at the meeting deduced Musharraf had come with a strategy to rake up the Kashmir issue and that he was averse to any mention of the Lahore Declaration and the Simla Agreement for political reasons.

Vajpayee said India could not sign any statement just to showcase the summit's success. He said Musharraf was not willing to agree on anything — not even on confidence building measures to reduce the risk of a nuclear war — till Pakistan saw progress on Kashmir.

The PM said he made it clear that India could not agree to calling Kashmir a "dispute" since its accession couldn't be a subject matter. Refusing to term the summit a failure, he and NDA leaders said it was a setback only in terms of media management.

Musharraf was so hung up on the "centrality of Kashmir", that even before leaving, he told the PM that he would not mind Kashmir being not called a "dispute" if the main rider of "no movement on other areas till Kashmir is resolved" was incorporated. Vajpayee's answer was a polite no.

Vajpayee told the General that if Pakistan took 1947 as the reference point for Kashmir, India would jolly well start with the manner in which Islamabad annexed areas of Kashmir. He also reminded Musharraf that the Parliament had mandated the recovery of Pakistan-held areas and at this rate, India would be forced to mull on that.

## Musharraf briefs Cabinet, security panel

Pervez Musharraf today briefed his Cabinet and the military-dominated National Security Council on the reasons leading to the stalemate at the Agra Summit amid reports that his popularity graph had soared after his plain-talking with senior Indian editors while in Agra.

The two bodies approved the stand taken by Musharraf at the Agra Summit, officials said.

Musharraf will address a Press conference on July 20 for which the Indian media would be invited, they said. He would also soon convene meetings with politicians, Islamic clerics, leaders of Pakistan-based Kashmiri parties, editors of Pakistan media, students and women groups to brief them about the outcome of his India visit.

Media reports here said his popularity graph soared, specially after the telecast of his meeting with Indian editors during which he bluntly stressed the centrality of Kashmir in bilateral relations between India and Pakistan.

Officials said he was all set to repeat the exercise of meeting groups and individuals whom he met in the run-up to his talks with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in order to consolidate the "positive" image he "acquired by standing firm on the Kashmir issue".

More reports and photographs on  
Page 9



# Delhi rebuts Islamabad account of summit

920 Pak  
19/7 HND

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 18

IN ITS first cryptic rebuttal of Pakistan's official version of all that had transpired at the Agra summit, India said today that the Simla and Lahore agreements — not any "draft" arrived during the recent two-day Agra dialogue — would form the basis for further talks with Pakistan. "We will have to begin again," MEA spokesperson Nirupama Rao said.

The credence which Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar attached to what he described as a "draft" agreement during his first post-summit Press conference yesterday was dismissed by India. "There was no closure and subscription by signature". Therefore, the importance of the Agra summit, as far as India is concerned, was limited to the extent of "knowing each other's points of view on certain subjects".

The status quo-ante which India would like to establish,

grows out of its concern that the Pakistan Foreign Minister's selective representation of the "draft" might lead to the interpretation that New Delhi had made some concessions to Musharraf during the two-day summit.

Delhi has voiced its "astonishment" at Pakistan's hair-splitting on the term "cross border terrorism". Sattar had implied that since there was no border in Kashmir, only a Line of Control, the Indian term was imperfect.

"Pakistan understands what is meant by cross-border terrorism — the technicality issued by the Foreign Minister is astonishing. The term is inclusive of encouraging and abetting infiltration and terrorism across the LoC," the Indian spokesperson said.

The spirit in which the Pakistani delegation led by President Pervez Musharraf had conducted the Agra dialogue continued to attract New Delhi's scorn.

Yesterday, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh had

stressed the need to maintain confidentiality in diplomacy. After Sattar's display of more sleight of hand in his own interface at Islamabad, India stressed that this was simply not on. "If the logic of the media conducting negotiations with the principals is to be accepted, then bilateral confidential parleys might very well be held in an amphitheatre with the media present," the Indian spokesperson said.

Delhi's hopes for an end to the media circus notwithstanding, it is clear that more shows are in the offing. Pakistan is learnt to have issued an invitation to Indian journalists to a Press meet in Islamabad. Sources in Delhi expressed dismay today at the turn of events and even accused Sattar of breaking the convention of placing in the public realm even what transpired during the one-and-ones between Musharraf and Vajpayee, where, for the most part, even notes had not been taken.

# India, Pakistan made progress at some level, says Hurriyat leader

The Times of India News Service

SRINAGAR: Senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader and chairman of the People's Conference Abdul Ghani Lone said on Wednesday that though no joint statement was issued at Agra, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf had reached an understanding at some level, as was evidenced by the statements of Jaswant Singh and Abdul Sattar in their respective countries.

Speaking to reporters here, Mr Lone claimed that the two leaders were definitely in favour of carrying forward the dialogue process till a permanent solution to Kashmir problem was reached. Mr Musharraf had put forward his views on Kashmir and was also able to convey them to the international community during the recently concluded summit.

Mr Lone was all praise for Mr Musharraf for conveying to India the Pakistani stand on Kashmir.

About the Hurriyat leaders' meeting with Mr Musharraf in New Delhi, Mr Lone said he gave them a patient hearing, but did not open his mind or discuss the agenda for the talks that he held the next day at Agra.

About the deadlock at the summit, Mr Lone admit-

ted that there was no way to resolve the Kashmir issue, but to restart the dialogue. He asserted that the Hurriyat would have to be included in the process later.

Mr Lone pointed out that India was far ahead of Pakistan in economy and military might, but India had its own compulsions to invite Mr Musharraf for talks. He even claimed that the Indian Army had suggested resolving the tangle through talks. Given the situation, the talks would resume in the near future, he added.

On the internal conflict in the Hurriyat, Mr Lone said it should be appreciated that the Hurriyat, which was a conglomerate of different parties with different outlooks, had garnered support and was able to put across its basic idea of the right to self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the Hurriyat proposed to meet leaders of all opposition parties in the country to convey its viewpoint on the vexed problem. Refuting the allegations of the J&K police about his associates' involvement in the Charar-e-Sharief blast last month, Mr Lone said he was ready for an independent probe into the matter and added that if he was found to be involved in the blast, then he would quit politics.

# Agra : A victory for hawks on both sides

WINDOW  
ON  
PAKISTAN

THE DEADLOCK at Agra on the wording of an Indo-Pakistan joint statement comes as a shocking anti-climax. Expectations had been raised to euphoric proportions by the media hype... It is too early to say how the leadership will now proceed. Will the dialogue continue? Will Prime

Minister Vajpayee pay a return call to Pakistan? Will the negotiating framework, which had been tentatively agreed upon, remain in place? Or are we back to square one after a high-profile summit which has led us nowhere?

The breakdown of the talks has been a victory for the hawks on both sides. Militant parties and hawks which are somehow involved in Kashmir... found obliging allies among the Indian hawks led by the hard-liners in the BJP, namely the Advani faction, which finally scuppered the draft of the joint statement which had been agreed upon by the foreign ministers of the two countries... This goes to prove how the BJP government has become hostage to the hard-liners... Given their strength, it appears that Pakistan was being over-confident about the prospects of a breakthrough on Kashmir, which Musharraf believed he could count on.

We hope we have not reached the dead end. Musharraf has very sensibly conceded in categorical terms during his visit that the Kashmir problem cannot be resolved by military means. But there are others who think differently.

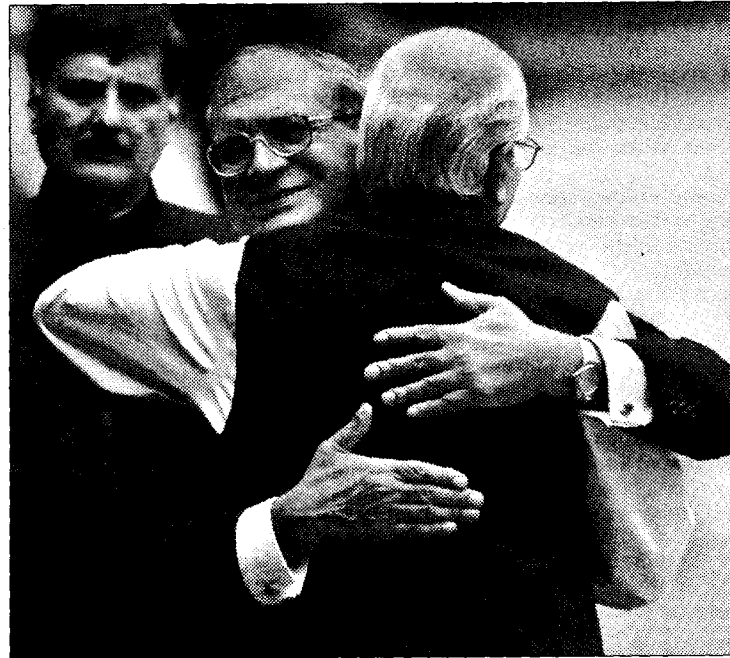
• Dawn

## The denouement

THE INDO-PAK summit went as far as was possible against a backdrop of ongoing distrust and tension between the two countries. Both the sides purposefully refrained from describing it as a failure... The summit was not expected to produce instant results. It has, however, helped to over-

come the mental divide that prevented them from continuing a dialogue, howsoever fragile it may be... At best it can be said that the talks reached an unintended hiatus, rather than collapsed... Besides the predominant Kashmir dispute, there appeared to be any number of other issues, many of which were tied to a settlement of the main one and did not need to be agitated at the talks. It would have been better had both sides trimmed the agenda before the meeting so that it permitted sufficient time to take up every issue. The two leaders came together amidst their earlier acrimonious exchanges... That they did manage to develop a sporting relationship that extended their one-to-one meeting beyond schedule and produced a convivial atmosphere at the various functions goes to their credit. The summit, which was designed to change history, suffered a previous denouement. Better management would have prevented the misunderstanding that haunted the meeting in the ending phase and soured the atmosphere. Regardless of the results, the summit will become a milestone like Simla and Lahore, for no other reason than that it, more than any other, brought the two sides within a smart draftsman's reach to break the deadlock and put a structured dialogue in place on all issues.

• The News



L K ADVANI AND ABDUL SATTAR: Till we agree to disagree...

## India's capricious conduct

THOUGH IT is too early to say about the exact reason, which has led to the unceremonious end, yet it is understood that the Indian rigidity over Kashmir has once again deprived the South Asian region of an opportunity of peace, stability and prosperity. President Musharraf's strenuous efforts to make the Indian side recognise the centrality of the issue have not borne fruit.. the region is once again left in the dark shadows of confrontation, tension and poverty. India has not

only scuttled Musharraf's peace endeavour, but has also disappointed the world community, eagerly awaiting some positive outcome to ward off nuclear threat to the South Asian region.

The development is, however, not totally unexpected, as the hawkish elements around Vajpayee were bent upon undermining the Agra Summit. In any case, India has a very poor record of respecting its commitments, accords and agreements with Pakistan.

• Pakistan Observer

## Was it pre-planned?

...THE FINAL outcome was completely in accord with the subcontinent's history of relentless acrimony and conflict, be it in the battle field or across the table. The gentle waters of the Jamuna must have sighed in dismay, though, and the spirit of Jalaluddin Akbar might have even shed a tear on not witnessing a ceremony to bury the hatchet. For Pakistan, it was just another lesson that it is still a bit too early for the Kashmir movement and India's far-sighted American mentors to temper its megalomania with some sanity and respect for diplomatic norms, and that it may be futile to negotiate with its present leadership so long as they believe they can annihilate the Kashmiri freedom struggle militarily.

The uncivil manner in which Musharraf was denied an opportunity to talk to the press before his return home, might be a diplomatic record Indian arrogance alone can be expected to break.

A highly cultured literati that Vajpayee is, one is inclined to believe, he could not have been happy about his minions... A disturbing question would, however, continue to assail many a mind in Pakistan: Was it all — the glittering reception, one after the other closed-door meetings, the last minute changes in the declaration draft, and insistence on mentioning "cross-border" terrorism as a problem — not part of a well-crafted script?

• Business Recorder

AGRA TALKS NOT A BENCHMARK FOR FUTURE, SAYS INDIA

# 'We must start from Shimla, Lahore'

By Atul Aneja

**NEW DELHI, July 18.** India today declared that the draft Agra declaration could not be the basis for further engagement with Pakistan. New Delhi is prepared to continue the engagement with Islamabad on the basis of the Shimla accord and the Lahore declaration.

Official sources here said India did not see the Agra discussions as a benchmark for resuming the next round of talks with Pakistan. "It is disappointing that no closure was reached on the text of an agreement. We will have to begin again on the basis of the existing agreements — the Shimla agreement and the Lahore declaration", the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said. Analysts interpret the official statement as the Government's formal acknowledgement that the Agra round of

talks was unsuccessful.

Highly-placed Government sources said the decision to reject the talks was taken during the Cabinet meeting last night. They added that the decision was triggered by certain observations made by the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, in his statement yesterday. Mr. Sattar had listed topics which would comprise the structure for a "sustained" dialogue as well as the mechanism for carrying it forward. He had further observed that the draft declarations in Agra would provide a "valuable foundation" for the two leaders to reach a full agreement.

Significantly, the Cabinet decision also reverses the statement of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, at his press conference in Agra on Tuesday. Reiterating India's commitment to build on the summit, Mr. Singh categorically said,

"we will pick up the threads from the visit of the President of Pakistan."

Apparently, India has taken exception to Pakistan's recourse to the media for projecting its views. Asked to comment on Mr. Sattar's observations that the media was an element of "contemporary diplomacy," she dismissed his interpretation as "novel". Pointing to the necessity of observing confidentiality, she said that otherwise, "bilateral confidential parleys may very well be held in an amphitheatre with the media present all the time."

According to her, Pakistan needed to observe three cardinal rules of diplomatic conduct. First, it had to uphold confidentiality during negotiations. Second, it had to ensure that diplomatic protocol was observed at all times. Third, the "host as well as the guest" needed to exercise restraint in dealing with the media.

Pakistan's persistence with its media offensive, overriding India's protestations yesterday over the telecast of Gen. Musharraf's interaction with Indian editors, further affected New Delhi's sensitivities, the sources said. Building on its media campaign, Pakistan today offered visas to Indian journalists wanting to cover Gen. Musharraf's press conference in Islamabad on Friday.

India today also took umbrage at Mr. Sattar's distinction of the Line of Control and the International Border in dealing with the question of cross-border terrorism. Expressing "astonishment", the spokesperson asserted that "Pakistan understands perfectly well by what is meant by cross-border terrorism, which is inclusive of encouraging and abetting infiltrations across the LoC."

# Pak. dumbstruck

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD, JULY 18.** The military establishment in Islamabad is 'dumbstruck' at the 'u-turn' by New Delhi on the Agra summit and believes that the latest stance adopted by India is a serious setback to the process of reconciliation and dialogue set in motion during the three-day official visit of the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

No senior official in the Pakistan Government was willing to comment on the cryptic statement made in the evening by the Indian Foreign Office spokesperson, Ms. Nirupama Rao.

"Unless we see the actual content of the statement of the Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson and arrive at a conclusion on the reasons that are behind the latest stance, we are not in a position to offer any reaction," was the standard response of the officials of the military establishment.

It is not clear yet if Islamabad would join issue with New Delhi on the assessment of India that the Agra summit is best forgotten and both the countries begin from scratch.

But there is no doubt that the Musharraf Government has every reason to be disappointed with the changed Indian stand. Islamabad had certainly not anticipated the latest development.

The Musharraf Government has compulsions, much more than India, to keep up the pretence of continuing its efforts towards a serious dialogue for normalisation of relations with India. The military government faces much greater pressure than India from the international community to work for peace in the sub-continent.

The managers of the military establishment were quite happy with the press conference addressed by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, at Agra on Tuesday morning wherein he had acknowledged that Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf had traversed enough ground in the course of their one-to-one meetings.

The positive spin given by the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, hours after Mr. Jaswant Singh had spoken at Agra appears to have been influenced by the tone and tenor adopted by Mr. Singh. Mr. Sattar, in fact, went much beyond what his Indian counterpart had said about the Agra summit. He not only talked of how close both sides came to an agreement on all major issues of concern between the two countries but also hinted at the possibility of an agreement when the two leaders are expected to meet on the sidelines of the United Nations Security Council / General Assembly in New York in September.

197  
"Prime Minister Vajpayee has accepted our President's invitation for a return visit. The two leaders are expected to meet in New York in September and continue efforts to promote agreement. The goodwill between them is an asset for better relations between the two countries," Mr. Sattar said in a written statement distributed at the press briefing.

The only development during the day was a meeting of the Cabinet and the National Security Council presided over by Gen. Musharraf in his capacity as President. An official statement on the rare joint meeting of the two bod-

## Pak. apology

**NEW DELHI, JULY 18.** The Pakistan Government spokesman has apologised to the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, Ms. Nirupama Rao, who was heckled by a group of Pakistani journalists soon after a short midnight briefing on the outcome of the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit in Agra on Monday, official sources said today.

Embarassed by the incident, Pakistan's Principal Information Officer, Mr. A.A. Gondal, regretted the behaviour of the Pakistani scribes. Mr. Kamran Ali Khan, Minister (Press) at the Pakistan High Commission, also made a verbal apology to Ms. Rao. On behalf of the Pakistani journalists, Mr. Javed Mir conveyed their apology, the sources said. No sooner had Ms. Rao read out her prepared brief statement at the Media Centre at the Mughal Sheraton Hotel than a few Pakistani journalists mobbed her as she alighted from the dais to make an exit.

The journalists chased her and other officials till the main lobby of the hotel and heckled her to express their protest against what they called Gen. Musharraf "not being allowed to meet the press by the Indian Government" at the Jaypee Palace Hotel before leaving for Islamabad.— PTI

ies merely noted that Gen. Musharraf briefed them on his just-concluded summit-level talks in India.

The team of Gen. Musharraf appears to be thrilled with the performance of the President particularly in front of the media community both in New Delhi and later in Agra.

They are so enamoured of the experience that Gen. Musharraf has decided to address a special press conference on Friday and the Pakistan Government has issued a blanket invitation to Indian scribes to travel to Islamabad to cover the event.

# Hurriyat tells duo to walk peace trail

Srinagar

18 JULY



Lone

THE HURRIYAT conference, on Wednesday, said India and Pakistan should continue the dialogue to resolve the Kashmir issue. Talking to newsmen here, senior executive member of Hurriyat conference Abdul Gani Lone termed as "untrue and canard" press reports quoting Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf having told them (Hurriyat leaders) to chalk out a programme so that they become true representatives of the people.

He said during the nearly 30-minute meeting between Hurriyat and Gen Musharraf in New Delhi "Musharraf did not utter a word but listened to our stand patiently."

He said: "We placed our common stand to him that Kashmiris are the principal party to the Kashmir issue and they should be involved in the talks for an everlasting solution."

"Gen Musharraf not only gave us a patient hearing but stood like a rock during the summit that involvement of Kashmiris was essential for a solution to the Kashmir issue. We are happy that he stood his ground and yielded not an inch from the viewpoint," Mr Lone said.

— PTI

The Economic Times

## Back to Simla and Lahore for new beginning

# Delhi hurls Agra draft into dustbin

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, July 18: Yesterday's sober tone was today replaced by harsh words as India rejected Pakistan's suggestion of picking up the threads from the draft in Agra, asserting that the two countries will have to "begin again" when they meet next.

Delhi said future talks should be based on the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration and not on the failed draft joint declaration, which, India insisted, should not be seen as an agreement.

The plain-speak is an attempt by the government to draw the line and let Pakistan know what to expect and what not to at their next meeting. The leadership is also preparing for questions that are likely to be raised in Parliament which sits on Monday.

"It is disappointing that no closure was reached on the text of the agreement," foreign ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao said. "We will, therefore, have to begin again on the basis of the existing agreements, the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration."

However, Pakistan's attempts at playing down the importance of the LoC have raised South Block's hackles. Pakistan's foreign minister Abdul Sattar had argued yesterday that since the LoC was not a formal border between the two sides, cross-border would mean areas along the international boundaries of India and Pakistan. Sattar's contention is that there is no terrorism along the international borders.

19/7  
The statement is being seen here as an assurance to hardliners in Pakistan that Islamabad was not compromising on the struggle in Kashmir. It is also an attempt at diluting the LoC, which Musharraf had tried to alter during the Kargil intrusion and had recently described as the "problem and not the solution" of the Kashmir issue.

"I am astonished at this technicality being used by Pakistan. We know very well that Pakistan understands perfectly what is meant by cross-border terrorism, which is inclusive of encouraging and abetting infiltration and terrorism across the Line of Control," Rao asserted.

Sattar had, in his wrap-up remarks yesterday, said that the draft declaration would serve as a "valuable foundation" for the two leaders to reach a "full agreement" at a future meeting. Sattar had also listed the issues which had already been agreed upon by the two sides in their draft.

Rao, however, said that not only was India displeased at this "breach of confidentiality", it was also in no mood to accept parts of the Agra draft as agreed points. Unless, she said, there was "closure and subscription by signature, there is no agreement".

Rao reacted sharply to Pakistan's justification of Musharraf's meeting with Indian editors on Monday. "If the logic of media conducting negotiations simultaneously is to be accepted, then I'm afraid international and bilateral discussions could very well be held in an amphitheatre with the media present."

# Musharraf orders search for Indian POWs

KOTA NEELIMA  
NEW DELHI, JULY 18

**T**HE PAKISTAN Government on Tuesday ordered "combing" all prisons in the country to establish whether they house any Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) from the 1971 war a day after Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf gave an assurance in Agra that he would "personally" look into the issue.

President Musharraf has launched an "administrative action" to reascertain whether any Indian POWs are being held in Pakistani jails, Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar told newsmen said at a press briefing on the Agra summit in Pakistan capital, Islamabad, today.

Musharraf had yesterday promised to personally look into the matter while addressing a group of senior journalists in Agra. He said, "I am a soldier. I would be the first man to release prisoners of war. But still this issue is being raised again... So I will certainly personally look into it."

Meanwhile, Pakistani newspapers reported overnight quoting officials of the Interior Ministry, "We have already checked

the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has also taken up the subject a number of times with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

The Ministry explains its efforts to trace the POWs in a letter to the NHRC, dated November 7, 2000 saying, "India is taking all necessary steps regarding repatriation of Indian prisoners in Pakistan. However, the process is complicated on account of Pakistan's compulsive hostility towards India and its lack of adequate response on this humanitarian issue." The correspondence is between the Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and the NHRC joint secretary.

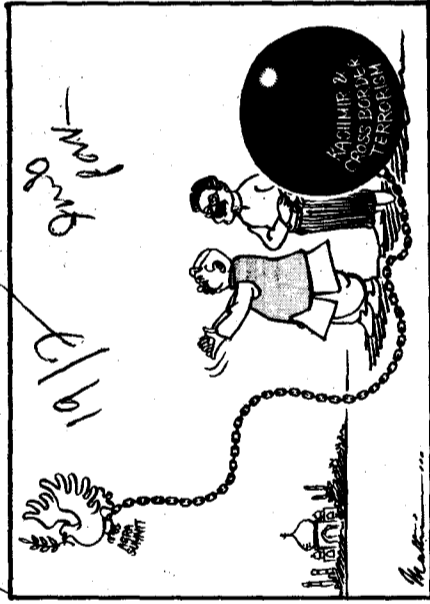
"The issue of missing Indian POWs was also raised in these official level discussions (Indo-Pak meeting in Islamabad in March, 1999). The Pakistan side persisted with its denial about the existence of Indian POWs in custody, but offered to re-examine the matter

afresh," the letter says. Indian has in the last two decades repeatedly given a list of 54 POWs to Pakistan.

One man who is not only a witness to the presence of Indian POWs in Pakistani jails but also has a first-hand account of the inhuman treatment meted out to them is Roop Lal Sahariya. Branded as a spy and arrested in 1974, he was released in 2000 after concerted efforts by the Indian Government and human rights groups within Pakistan, spear-headed by Asma Jehangir. "In Attock prison, there are about 40 Indian POWs. I came to know about them through prison channels while I was detained there," he says, adding that 18 more are in Dhulai Camp prison in PoK.

"Very few of them are mentally stable. Some of them even do not know whether they are Indian. That has always been the excuse for not counting them as Indian POWs," he says. "I was very close to a POW who was relatively in a better state of mind. His name is

\*Sepoy Des Raj from Kathuwa lodged in Sialkot jail. He explained that the torture in Pakistani jails was mainly aimed at converting prisoners. This along with solitary confinement for decades, renders them mentally challenged," he adds.



twice with all jails but found no clue of any Indian POW as claimed by Indian authorities." "It is difficult for Pakistan to keep Prisoners of War so long as it was bound by the Geneva Convention," the official was quoted as saying.

Although Pakistan has repeatedly denied the existence of any Indian POWs in its jails, facts speak otherwise. There exists plenty of correspondence between human rights groups of both sides confirming their exist-



# Pak students vow to build bridges of friendship

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

5/8/78

NEW DELHI, July 18. — "We are students, what do we have to with politics. If the Agra summit is a failure, we will work harder to re-build the bridges of friendship". A definite note of optimism in Pakistani students.

A group of 30 Pakistani boys from the Habib Public School, Karachi had come for an inter-active sports meet to the Delhi Public School, RK Puram today. And that done, the students — from both sides — spent most of their time asking each other about films and girls. "Are the girls better here or there?" was the oft repeated query. And the answer from both countries was: "We like your girls better".

The twenty five students, who are visiting India for the first time, were struck

by the similarity between Lahore and New Delhi. "Physically the appearance is similar. The greenery too is similar. And even people look the same. The only difference is in the food. We don't have so many vegetarian dishes. The *palak paneer* we had in Modern School last night. It was mouth watering," said Asad Raza. Babar Ali wants to see some Bollywood films before he leaves. "We can't see them there. They are banned in the cinema halls there. *Sholay* is an all-time favourite. In a popularity contest, Amitabh Bachhan wins hands down. The three Khans — Shah Rukh, Amir and Salman — are also hot favourites," he said.

"Curiosity drives people to watch as many Bollywood films as they can. We are buying as many audio cassettes here as we can afford to take back home."

## A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION: SURJEET

KOLKATA, July 18. — The Agra summit was a step in the right direction, but the manner in which the Vajpayee government took the step was wrong, the CPI-M general secretary, Mr Harkishan Singh Surjeet, said today. "We were all waiting for the joint declaration at the end of the summit talks. But the declaration never came. What happened? Evidently, Mr Vajpayee was not properly prepared for the talks. We need to know what was the deficiency on the part of our government," Mr Surjeet said at a meeting held to condole the death of the LF chairman, Sailen Dasgupta.

Mr Surjeet said the the Kashmir problem could be solved only through concrete dialogue. The people of the both countries want peace and normalisation of relations, he said. — SNS

The interaction of these students with their Indian counterparts will serve as the base for future cordial relations between two countries. For some students, this is the second visit to this country. They have very good relations with Indi-

an students whom they had met during their last visit.

"They represent the second generation, who do not have any sour memories of partition. Their first hand experience of the Indian perspective will clear many

doubts in our county," said the HPS school administrator, Mr Anwar Abbas.

The students also feel the same way — "hum sab to aag- aag shakhaen hai darakth to ek hai. (we are like many branches but part of the same tree)". The delegation comprises five officials and 30 students competing in cricket, hockey and swimming disciplines. They have played few friendly matches against some Delhi schools. They lost a cricket match to the Modern School, Barakhamba Road, yesterday. But they maintain "we are here to win hearts not matches".

Five of these students are here for second time. One of them, Amar Raza, said there were no notable changes in India except for the prominent use of computers. The Pakistani team won both the hockey matches played at Panipat last time as well as this year.

# U.S. pushes for continuing engagement to deal with India-Pakistan imbroglio

BY CHIDANAND RAJGHATTA  
The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: Even as the curtain comes down on the Agra Summit, the United States is pushing for continued high-level talks between India and Pakistan as the best means for resolving long-standing bilateral disputes. Washington has also welcomed the prospect of Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Islamabad.

Senior administration officials, who have been waiting for the joint statement at the end of the summit before responding to the events in Agra, reacted circumspectly ahead of a verdict on whether or not the meeting was a success. "We strongly support sustained engagement at a senior level between India and Pakistan as the best way to address long-standing bilateral disputes and reduction of tensions through peaceful means. The agreement on further talks gives us reason to hope this meeting will be the start of such a continuing process," a state department official told *The Times of India*.

A similar reaction is expected at the official State Department briefing scheduled at 10.30 p.m. IST. The White House is also kicking around a statement along similar lines. Notably, Washington made no specific mention of the K-word that Pakistan is so intent on nailing down.



A.B. Vajpayee

The summit has evoked little interest here outside the mainline print media. The big story in Washington these days is the Case of the Missing Intern (Chandra Ann Levy) and her affair with a California Congressman (Gary Condit). There is saturation coverage on television of the affair and little of anything else. The talks between Russia and China and parleys in West Asia made it to the cable network headlines ahead of the bickering in the subcontinent.



Gen. Musharraf

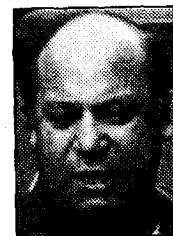
But there is plenty of interest in the outcome of the summit in diplomatic and strategic parlours, both within and outside the administration.

Even as the summit winds down, the Pentagon is revving up its planes for the visit to India on Wednesday of Chief of Joint Staff Henry Shelton, the highest-ranking military official to visit the country in a long, long time. He is expected to be in India from July 18 to 20 and meet with the cream of Indian military and political leadership. Shortly after Shelton's visit, it will be the turn of the new Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, who will undertake a familiarisation trip of the region.

Ms Rocca, who leaves Washington on July 21, will be touring the region for a little more than two weeks, most of the time in India. She is also expected to go to Nepal and Pakistan.

## Musharraf's visit was a political gimmick: Sharif

ISLAMABAD: Deposed Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif has said that Indo-Pak summit "failed" due to non-representative character of President Pervez Musharraf and described



Nawaz Sharif

his visit to India as "nothing more than a political gimmick."

"The failure was bound to happen and we warned about it several times," he said in a statement.

Mr Sharif, who was toppled in October 1999 military coup by Gen Musharraf and later exiled to Saudi Arabia indefinitely, said "Musharraf did not hold any representation of the Pakistani nation and the behaviour of the Indian government clearly demonstrated this."

"During his visit to New Delhi, the focus of attention was on his ancestral home and in Agra it was the Taj Mahal," he said, adding "the only thing the Pakistani nation got from this visit was few pictures of Mr and Mrs Musharraf under the shadow of the Taj. Trying different Indian foods, reviving some childhood memories, strolling at Taj Mahal and talking to the international press does not address the real issues."

Gen Musharraf was aware of the "likely response" of the summit that's why "his much-hyped visit was nothing more than a political gimmick," Mr Sharif said in the statement released to Pakistani daily *The News* in London on Tuesday by his son Hasan Nawaz.

On the contrary, the Sharif-Vajpayee Lahore meeting was a complete contrast to what happened in Agra, the statement said.

"Failure to issue a (joint) statement or signing a declaration, reminds us when the Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee came and signed the historic Lahore declaration with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif," the statement said.

It said, "that meaningful summit addressed the major issues while highlighting the Kashmir problem."

"Now General Musharraf stands with a failed summit in which he could not even manage to get a word out of Mr Vajpayee's mouth about Kashmir," the statement added. (PTI)

## Britain foresees great opportunities ahead in Indo-Pak relations

BY RASHMEE Z. AHMED  
The Times of India News Service

LONDON: Britain has welcomed the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan, in an apparently determined attempt to extract modest hope from the post-Agra pall. The relentlessly upbeat message comes amid a near-total blackout in the news media here of the summit's disappointing finish.

Discounting the lack of even a diplomatic face-saver, such as a joint declaration, the foreign office says it foresees great opportunities ahead. "We are still encouraged," insisted a foreign office official, conveying the optimistic message in leaden tones. Britain, it seems, is rooting for the invitation diplomacy being pursued on the sub-continent.

Said the official, "The Indian

Prime Minister invited the Pakistani President over. Now, the Pakistani President has invited the Indian Premier and they've accepted. We see that as encouraging."

The official line, however, appears to blur a bit in private. According to analysts, Britain, which repeatedly takes the "international community's line of South Asia being the most dangerous place on earth", is concerned about India and Pakistan's inability even to take the easy diplomatic route of saying nothing, but taking a couple of pages to do it in.

But, the concern over two newly-nuclear neighbours locked in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation over Kashmir, has failed to impress the British media this time round. Newspapers and television are dominated instead by their own confrontational poli-

tics, namely the contest to lead the main opposition Conservative Party. Most of the broadsheets limit themselves to bald reportage of the summit's rather tasteless end, leaving editorial comment to arguably weightier matters such as Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempt to play the China card.

*The Times*, London, which initially front-paged the sunshine-and-smiles amity in Agra, has consigned the non-story of the joint declaration that never was to the inside pages. Meanwhile, *The Guardian* offered only a gloomy taste of the friction and misunderstandings between the Indians and Pakistanis at Agra, in an unwittingly subjective comment on a bitter reality it is only a sudden war or a sudden peace that makes news. Continuing hostility is passe.

# India goes ahead with CBMs

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 18. Unmindful of the 'cold response' from the military establishment in Pakistan, India is going ahead with enforcement of the confidence-building measures (CBMs) announced days ahead of the Agra summit.

The member-secretary of the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR), Mr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, is now here as a follow-up to the announcement from New Delhi offering 27 fellowships to senior researchers from Pakistan.

Mr. Chatterjee told *The Hindu* here that the scheme of scholar-

ships envisaged award of fellowships to 27 senior researchers from Pakistan for study in institutions of higher learning and universities across India.

"Each scholar would get an opportunity to stay for six months and pursue research in the subject of his/her interest. Developmental issues would be our priority. Our focus would be on subjects such as education, health, environment and women's issues," he said.

The idea is to link the Pakistani scholars to 'matching institutions' in India and enable them to pursue research in areas of mutual interest.

Mr. Chatterjee who has been in Pakistan since Monday has visited several research institutions and universities in Islamabad and Peshawar. Among the institutions he has visited include the Quaid-e-Azam University, the Pakistan Institute for Development Economics and the Society for Development Policy Institute and the Peshawar University.

The senior official of the ICSSR is planning to leave for Lahore tomorrow and travel to Karachi from there.

Pakistan is not exactly happy over the manner in which India has gone about the announcement on CBMs. The immediate

response of Islamabad to the series of CBMs unveiled by New Delhi was that it expected CBMs to flow from the summit.

A statement by the Pakistan Foreign Office had maintained that Pakistan expected CBMs to follow rather than precede the Agra summit. It was the same response at the news conference by the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, the day after he returned from his trip to India.

Mr. Sattar said the CBMs did not figure at the Agra summit and there was no change in the position of Islamabad on the subject. "I have nothing more to add," was his cryptic comment.

## India was not for holding ties hostage to Kashmir question

By Neena Vyasa

NEW DELHI, JULY 18. There was "near agreement on confidence-building measures related to the nuclear issue" but even that could not be agreed upon between India and Pakistan at the Agra summit because of several factors that derailed the process, highly-placed Government sources indicated today.

The three points that came in the way of signing a joint declaration were Pakistan's insistence on describing the Kashmir issue as a "dispute" although India had at one point agreed to make it the "first point" in the eight-points to be included in the declaration that was being drafted on the second day of the summit talks on July 16. That flexibility shown by India came to nought, for Pakistan in the end insisted on adding a clause to say if that the entire declaration would be "subject to" and "dependent on" movement on the Jammu and Kashmir issue (on the ground in terms of finding a solution). "India was not going to accept that," it was said, for India was against holding the entire bilateral relationship hostage to the Kashmir question.

The second issue on which no headway could be made was that of cross-border terrorism. "Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, did not want anything at all on this issue, he insisted it was a freedom struggle in Kashmir, and this was not acceptable to us."

Finally, it was candidly admitted that the

live telecast of Gen. Musharraf's breakfast meeting with 35 editors on July 16 morning after the talks were under way and even as the delicate and complex negotiations had started, was completely unacceptable. As already stated by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, it was to have been an off-the-record exchange of views which the Government had felicitated. The controversy involving the Hurriyat leaders earlier was bad, but the telecast of the breakfast meeting is what finally vitiated the atmosphere completely. Although those words were not used, it was clear that the Government saw it as his attempt to use the media to pressure the Government.

But it seems that by late evening of July 16 when it became clear that no declaration was possible, Gen. Musharraf was keen on "any kind of joint statement." But by then, it seems that the Government had made up its mind that it would be nothing at all.

It seems during the 90-minute "courtesy call" made by Gen. Musharraf to bid farewell to his hosts, the Prime Minister mentioned Kargil and told him frankly that he had given him the invitation in spite of it for the sake of establishing peace between the two countries. As for his comparing Kargil to the 1971 war which ended with the creation of Bangladesh, and what was happening in Kashmir to the struggle of the people of Palestine, the Indian view that emerged at the summit was that it was not possible to have an agreement, or a

joint statement with him in these circumstances.

He confirmed what Mr. Jaswant Singh himself stated earlier. That Pakistan stalled and prevented any preparation for the summit although India had opened all channels of communication after sending the invitation to Gen. Musharraf, offering to send official delegations to discuss specific points or receiving delegations here. Pakistan's negative response resulted in the absence of any agenda when the summit talks began. (The opening statement by the Prime Minister on July 15 was thus an effort to place an agenda before the two leaders.)

It was conceded that the Government also failed to understand that for the Musharraf Government was not a continuous process. For him the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration were associated with his political rivals and he wanted to have nothing to do with them. In the Indian democratic system, Governments accept responsibility for agreements signed by previous regimes, even if under different political dispensations. "Gen. Musharraf wanted to begin afresh with Agra."

It is also learnt that when the General came to make the courtesy call, he was kept waiting for nearly 30 minutes before Mr. Vajpayee met him. The message was clear. The "cordiality" that marked the interactions of the previous two days had evaporated into thin air, the honoured guest had outstayed the welcome.

# RSS against PM return visit

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 17

THE GOVERNMENT insisted today that the Indo-Pak summit could not be said to have failed, but the Sangh Parivar has called it a failure and expressed grave reservations about Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's proposed return visit to Pakistan at General Musharraf's invitation.

The RSS said a return visit to Pakistan would probably be a "fruitless exercise" in the current scenario.

A return trip by Vajpayee would have no meaning unless Pakistan gave up its rigid position on Kashmir, Sangh spokesman M G Vaidya said.

But he added that the visit was scheduled five months later and could be feasible if Pakistan changed its attitude during the time. Speaking to the 'Hindustan Times' from Nagpur, the RSS leader blamed Pakistan for failure of the talks.

"But we are not at all surprised at the outcome of the meet; for something like this was expected all along. Since a week

before the summit, there were clear signs that the Pakistani side would stick to their demand for a solution to Kashmir. And India had clearly stated its position that Kashmir could not be the central issue at the talks," Vaidya said.

VHP leader Acharya Giriraj Kishore said Vajpayee should not visit Pakistan unless the latter accepts certain conditions. Before such a visit by the PM, Pakistan must create a conducive atmosphere by ending its proxy war in Kashmir and ISI activities in other parts of the country, he said.

It must also show its willingness to talk about PoK and release all Indian prisoners of war in its jails, Acharya Giriraj added. He said though the talks had failed, the two countries had succeeded in "melting the ice" and the path had been cleared for further dialogue in the future.

Elated about the fact that India had not made any concession to Pakistan, the VHP leader congratulated the PM and the Government for "ably representing Indian public opinion".

## BJP sees lesson in failure

Shekhar Iyer  
New Delhi, July 17

THE BJP has found lessons for the Government in the just-concluded Agra talks. It acknowledges now that the "unstructured talks" were not a bright idea in the first place. Though fully supportive of Vajpayee's decision to accept Musharraf's invitation to Pakistan, the party believes an agreed agenda would have helped avoid Pakistan's accusation that India is not ready to discuss key issues like Kashmir.

Congratulating Vajpayee on standing firm and putting forward India's concern over cross-border terrorism, the BJP has held Musharraf guilty of "gross transgression of diplomatic norms," leading to breakdown of the talks.

In the party's first official reaction, BJP president K Jana

Krishnamurthi said Vajpayee's initiative to improve ties with Pakistan could not be seen as a failure. "Had the initiative not been a failure, the PM would not have accepted Musharraf's invitation to visit Pakistan. We hope when the leaders meet next, there will be better understanding and an agreed agenda."

He said he did not subscribe to the view that the Vajpayee Government hadn't done enough homework for the summit. "Vajpayee took the bold initiative to invite the General.

The BJP's allies in the NDA rallied behind the Government following the summit deadlock and backed its stand that the meet was not a failure. The Samata Party, Lok Janshakti and Janata Dal (U) chorused the view that the doors had been opened for further negotiations between the two countries.

# Jaswant slams Pak scribes' conduct

HT Correspondent  
Agra, July 17

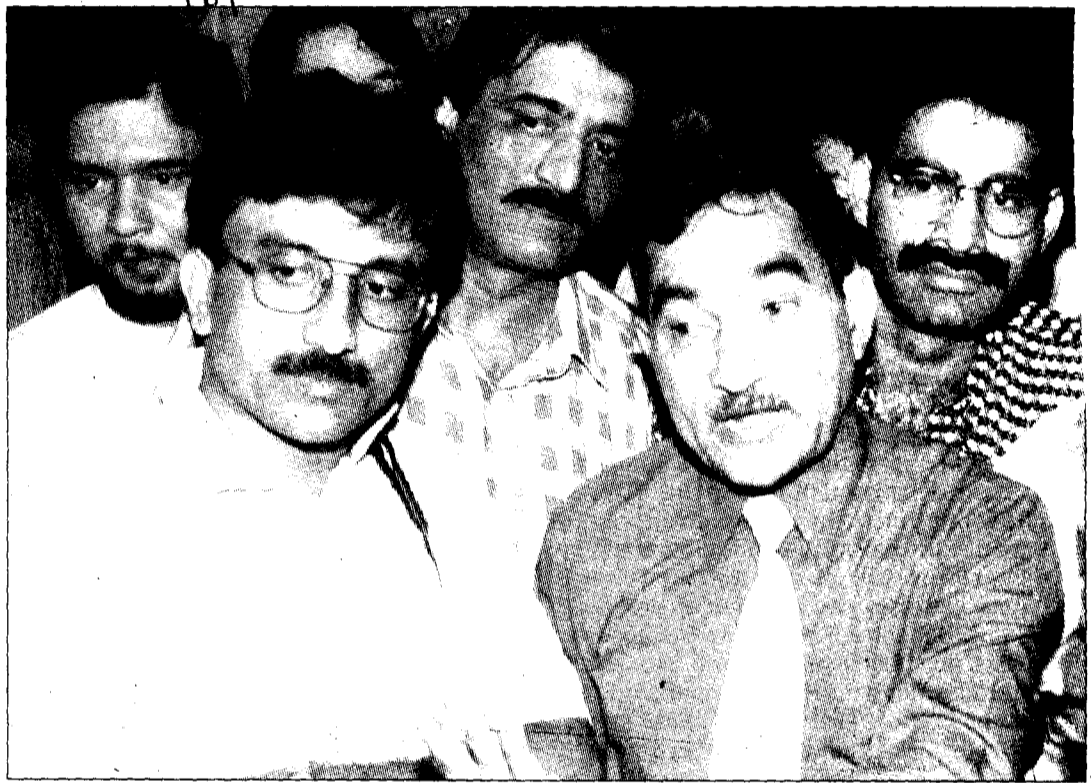
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister Jaswant Singh today condemned the unruly behaviour of some Pakistani journalists who treated a senior Indian official last night in an "uncivilised" manner.

At the post-midnight MEA briefing by ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao, Pakistani journalists shouted angrily, saying President Pervez Musharraf had been denied the chance to address a Press conference after his summit talks with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee broke down. Rao and some senior MEA officials were mobbed by a group of journalists from Pakistan.

Jaswant Singh said, "This is regrettable and condemnable. I am responsible for the security of my officials.... It is very uncivilised".

Asked if any action would be taken against the journalists concerned, the minister said, "They are from your fraternity. I don't want to tell the media how to behave". After last night's briefing, the journalists chased Rao and a couple of other officials in the hotel lobby forcing the hotel security to intervene.

No sooner had Rao read out her prepared statement at the Mughal Sheraton Hotel media centre, some Pakistan journalists mobbed her as she got off the dais to make an exit. The journalists chased her and other officials for quite a distance till the main lobby of the hotel and heckled her to express their protest against what they called Presi-



Agitated Pakistani journalists give vent to their frustration over the brief statement by the Indian foreign affairs spokesperson on the summit on Monday. They also alleged that the Indian authorities stonewalled a proposed Press conference by Pervez Musharraf before he left for Islamabad.

dent Musharraf, "not being allowed to meet the Press by the Indian Government".

Their conduct left even some of the Pak High Commission staff blushing. At least one among them was seen later profusely apologising to Indian officials. Singh clarified that the Pak President's request to meet the Press had come at very short notice and did not meet the

requirements of the security blue book.

Objectively speaking, the Indian side had done well to preempt another media circus by Musharraf. By spreading the word about Musharraf's intended Press conference, they had made the international press rush to Jaypee Palace Hotel where the President was making his farewell call on Vajpayee. This, observed a for-

eign office hand, had been done with a view to ensuring that the General had the last word so long as he was in India.

By the time Rao's Press conference could commence, Musharraf was on his way to Pakistan. The hysteria whipped up in the minds of some of the Pakistani activist-journalists was wreaked on the hapless Indian spokesperson.

# How the fiasco in Agra was put together

One is disappointed, yes. But one is not surprised at all at the abrupt conclusion and termination of the Pervez Musharraf-Atal Bihari Vajpayee summit at Agra. There was a brief period of about two or three hours on the evening of Sunday, July 15, when optimistic expectations surged high because of indications about a joint statement being issued at the end of the summit and remarks by President Musharraf that the talks were useful and were going "alright".

The minutiae of events in the chronological sequence of discussions at various levels and the exchange of draft documents have all been covered in detail both by the print and audio-visual media. The media coverage in fact distorted the objective perspective in which the summit discussions were held. The dubious virtues of the coverage were political illiteracy and an inclination towards hyperbole. But that is not the purpose of this article. The purpose is to bring out in precise and objective terms, to the maximum extent possible, the fact that the summit failed because Pervez Musharraf had decided in advance that it should fail if India did not accept his demands *in toto*.

Least one is accused of a jingoistic approach or of starting a "blame-game", it is worthwhile recounting the pronouncements and also orientations of President Musharraf and the Pakistani government, particularly after he received the invitation of the Indian prime minister, Vajpayee, on May 24, 2001. In fact, it would be pertinent to go further back to Musharraf's repeated announcements that he is willing to meet Vajpayee at any time, on any date, at any place, to discuss India-Pakistan relations and to bring them back on track. His lengthy interview to M.J. Akbar, published in the *Asian Age*, was the first detailed articulation by him of his India policies. The second instance is an equally lengthy interview given to Dileep Padgaonkar, the executive editor of the *Times of India*, just a week before he came to Delhi and Agra.

In both these interviews he clearly underlined the following points. His primary and overarching objective to have a meeting with Vajpayee was to discuss the Kashmir issue from his point of view. He clarified that while he is willing to discuss other issues affecting India-Pakistan relations, he will be willing to discuss these other issues in a substantive and meaningful manner only after a solution satisfactory to him is achieved on Kashmir. When queried about his views on terrorist violence and secessionism, his response was that he was opposed to violence and terrorism but that he did not consider the secessionist violence in Jammu and Kashmir

The author is former foreign secretary of India

as terrorism. In his view, it was a violent struggle for self-determination. That the *jihād* in Kashmir was justified. That it was a freedom struggle which Pakistan supports, politically, morally and diplomatically.

At the same time, he indulged in obfuscation stating that Pakistan was not playing any role in the violence in Jammu and Kashmir and that this was an entirely indigenous phenomenon. He flatly denied Pakistan's sponsorship and support to various violent groups in terms of sanctuaries, supplies and training. When pressurized in these interviews to be specific about a solution which he may have in mind, he said that an acceptable solution can be based only on going back to holding a referendum or a plebiscite envisaged in the United Nations resolutions of 1947 and 1948. But he wanted these resolutions to be applied only selectively without implementing the provisions in these resolutions for vacation of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistani raiders and regular Pakistani armed forces.

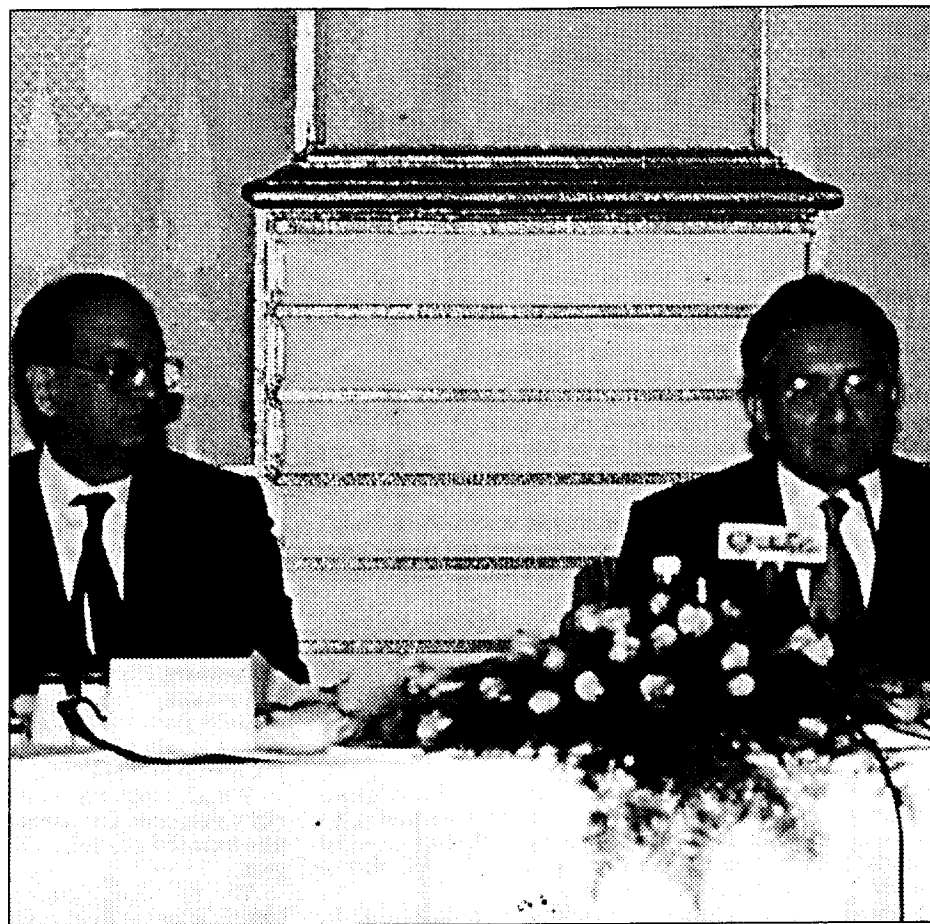
In an interview to *Gulf News*, just 48 hours before his arrival in Delhi, Musharraf stated that neither the Shimla agreement nor the Lahore declaration and accompanying documents have any relevance to the summit at Agra. These were the agreements which have not served any purpose, according to him. His foreign minister, and he himself of course, claimed that he was quoted out of context by the Indian media. That he was willing to take cognizance of the Shimla and Lahore agreements as benchmarks for the future of India-Pakistan relations.

Addressing a women's delegation in Islamabad in the first week of July, he said that he desires a new status for the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir delinked from India. When his ladies' delegation asked him what he thought of Kashmir valley being given to Pakistan and Jammu and Ladakh remaining in India, his reported response was that there must not be any ill-informed suggestions on these lines. He told these ladies' delegates that there are Muslims in Ladakh and Kargil and in Jammu. They cannot be abandoned. So the whole state of Jammu and Kashmir has to be perhaps delinked from India to move towards a solution.

Responding to speculation whether the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir could be a basis for a solution, he said a week before arriving in Delhi that the line of control is the problem. How it can be a solution — implying that he does not accept the relevance or sanctity of the line of control. He also kept harping on the point that he was the first head of government and state of Pakistan who has persuaded India to invite him to come and discuss only the Kashmir question.

Under instructions from him his finance minister, Shaukat Aziz, and his commerce minister, Razzak Dawood, made public pronouncements in the second week of July that

Musharraf's response to Vajpayee's invitation was based on wrong assumptions, writes J.N. Dixit, and once that was clear, he fell back on his alternative gameplan



It was not roses all the way

India-Pakistan cooperation can be structured only after the Kashmir problem is solved. Musharraf did not show any response to suggestions regarding nuclear risk reduction, in the context of nuclear weaponization of India and Pakistan. In fact, he re-affirmed the legitimacy of Pakistani nuclear weapons and missiles as a deterrence against India and linked

it to the Kashmir issue. He also remained adamant about tripartite talks with Pakistan, the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and India being participants to find a solution to the Kashmir issue.

Although he agreed at individual suggestions that the contacts with the Hurriyat should be separately undertaken by India

**‘Musharraf said that an acceptable solution to the Kashmir problem can be based only on going back to holding a referendum or a plebiscite envisaged in the UN resolutions of 1947 and 1948. But he wanted these resolutions to be applied only selectively without implementing the provisions in them for vacation of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistani raiders and regular Pakistani armed forces’**

and Pakistan, he insisted that the Hurriyat should be acknowledged by India as the sole representative of Jammu and Kashmir, which is politically and factually unjustified. He then announced just three days before the summit that he is not bringing his finance minister and commerce minister, but only his foreign minister, Abdul Sattar, for the talks with the foreign secretary in the delegation, consisting of his personal staff and foreign office officials.

These signals should have been sufficient for us to realize that he was coming for the summit with a narrow agenda and a single aim. That is either to proclaim to the world after the summit that India had accepted the Jammu and Kashmir issue as not just a very important item of discussion but the only and the most important item of discussion. And if he did not succeed, to proclaim to the world that despite the special effort that he had made to come to India, India remained obstinate and unreasonable.

Leaving aside the cosmetic hype which surrounded his engagements in Delhi and Agra, he pushed through the one-sided agenda without any concern about its consequences. After giving initial indications that his meeting with the Hurriyat will depend on the government of India's views, not only was the Hurriyat invited to the tea party hosted by the Pakistan high commissioner, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, but they had a 25-minute meeting with Musharraf in which he repeated the contents of the letter which he wrote them just before the summit, extending them full support and acknowledging them as the sole representatives of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In his banquet speech at the presidential banquet on the evening of July 14, he adopted an admonitory and hortatory tone urging India to solve the Kashmir problem. It should be mentioned in this context that he not only wanted Kashmir to be the sole item on the agenda but he also wanted a solution to the Kashmir problem within a definite time-frame (almost like an ultimatum).

Then came the calculated theatrics aimed at aborting the summit meeting. He addressed a breakfast meeting of senior Indian and foreign editors on the morning of Monday, July 16, without telling them in advance that his address to them in the discussions would be filmed and broadcast by the Pakistan TV. It was a highly aggressive performance in which he emphasized that Pakistan cannot give up the primacy of Kashmir in the discussion agenda with India. He stated that he considered confidence-building measures irrelevant unless the fundamental confidence-building measure of a solution of the Kashmir problem is not implemented, a solution which should be acceptable to Pakistan.

He went on to say that if India did not trust

him, why did India invite him. He justified his aggression in Kargil as a response to India supporting the liberation struggle of Bangladesh and India occupying Siachen in 1984 (he ignored the fact that the Indian action in Siachen was a pre-emptive step against impending Pakistani moves in the area). No head of government or a senior government delegate holds an abrasive press conference justifying his negotiating stance in the middle of negotiations while they are still going on. Even if one agrees that Sushma Swaraj's press briefing on July 15, was somewhat one-sided, there was no need for Musharraf to address the press after the Pakistani delegation had responded to Swaraj's interview.

Parallel to this exercise, tactical moves were made to prepare the groundwork for a Pakistani publicity and diplomatic offensive against India. The Pakistan foreign minister, Sattar, told the media that there is likelihood of a joint press statement while it was clear by Sunday night that there was going to be a deadlock. Simultaneously, Musharraf undertook a lengthy one-to-one discussion with Vajpayee to give the impression that he was struggling to forge a compromise, which in fact was not the case according to the information which one has.

Musharraf's response to Vajpayee's invitation was predicated on wrong assumptions. He thought that India was vulnerable to external pressure; that the government and the security forces of India had reached levels of exhaustion where they would not be firm about responding to Pakistan-sponsored separatism and terrorism in India; he thought that the coalition led by Vajpayee is faction-ridden and that Vajpayee faces pressure from the opposition because of which he would not be able to take firm stand against Pakistani advocacies.

He felt that in this context, he would want a compromise from India within the framework of the Pakistani agenda on Kashmir. He also felt that Vajpayee could not afford to see a failure of the summit organized at his initiative. Discussions on July 15 and 16 have proved that he was completely wrong in these assumptions. His alternative gameplan that if the summit failed, he would tell the world about his reasonableness and India's obstinacy has partially succeeded. This also suits the vested interests of his survival in power with the support of the armed forces and the Islam-pasand parties who do not wish peace or a realistic compromise on Kashmir.

Although one is disappointed at the failure of the summit, in overall terms it might be good for India. We have given a clear message about our firmness in protecting our interests in face of tentative and uncertain prospects of peace with Pakistan. There is no need for India to be downcast or desperate.

# Pakistan media blames India <sup>187</sup>

Times Internet Network

The Pakistan media has absolved President Pervez Musharraf on the failed Agra talks, putting the blame squarely on India's "intransigence" on the Kashmir issue.

Leading Urdu daily, *Jang*, in a front page report headlined India ruins Agra summit said: It was the Indian intransigence which led to the deadlock and collapse of the talks.

*Dawn*, the popular English daily from Karachi, also dubbed the summit a failure and said: The tone of the summit was one-sided from the very beginning in which President Pervez Musharraf did most of the talking to the media against Prime Minister Vajpayee's deafening silence. According to a leading business daily, *Business Recorder*, the summit talks failed due to the stubborn attitude of India by not bringing the agreed draft joint agreement for signatures.

Commenting on the much talked-about breakfast meeting, *Jang* observed Musharraf emerges unscathed from lions den. The report said that Musharraf entered the lions den and emerged with his audience purring like pussycats. It went on to add, the man dubbed a "butcher" by the local press for his role in a bloody border conflict nearly two years ago won over his critics with a performance that was both soldierly and statesmanlike. An online poll on *Jang* website posed the question: Do you see any possibility of improvement in Indo-Pak relations? Of the 16,300 votes, over 52 per cent said No while 44 per cent said Yes.

Though blaming India for the deadlock, most Pakistan newspapers have reported extensively on Vajpayee's opening statement to Musharraf on India's stated stance on the Kashmir issue.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's commerce minister

Abdu Razak Dawood was quoted in *Dawn* as having ruled out extending most favoured nation (MFN) status to India unless and until major issues (read Kashmir) are resolved.

In fact, following President Musharraf's assurance in Agra that he would personally look at the issue of Indian POWs lodged at Pakistan jails, the Ministry of Interiors has at the behest of the President combing all prison to trace the POWs, a newspaper report said.

The issue that had the entire Indian and

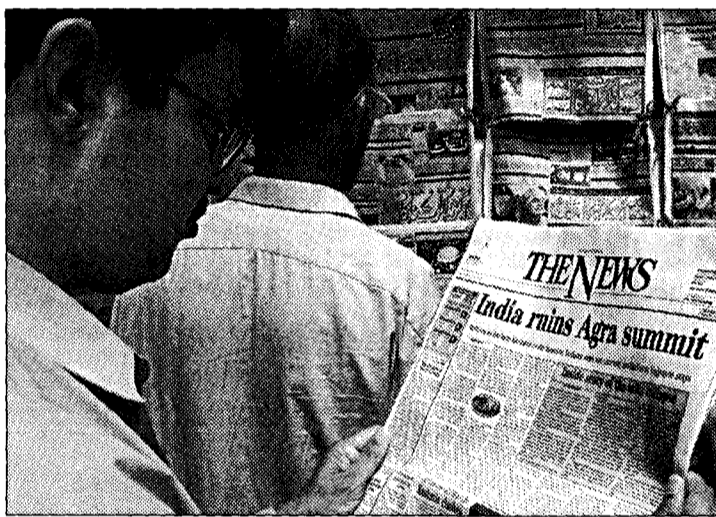
too the issue found mention only in the world news section. Closer home in Bangladesh, all the dailies seemed to have missed the late developments at the summit with only the shadow of failure looming large getting into print. *The Independent* carried a long report hinting at a "glimmer of hope" if the joint declarations were made later in the night.

Trying to give a balanced view the newspaper said: "For the Indians, it was literally a 180 degree turn on the part of Pakistan in eight hours. In fact, some of them said that the hardliners within the Pakistani bureaucracy had deliberately used strong languages in the midnight (Sunday) statement because they did not want the Agra summit to have success."

It also dwelt at length on the theory that "in the Indian delegation, the moderate Vajpayee was getting support from Jaswant Singh alone. Both Advani, Yashwant Sinha and the Foreign Ministry bureaucracy were not prepared to yield an inch to Pakistan. In fact, Sinha's hardening stance was a revelation to many. The explanation was that by supporting Advani, Sinha was trying to assuage the RSS which has been gunning for him for his liberalisation policies."

*The Independent* also ran a historical perspective on Kashmir, a series under the headline: "In quest of peace in South Asia".

Other Bangla newspapers, *The Daily Star* and *The New Nation* took early agency reports all inside, with Bangladesh issues dominating the front page. All three Bangla dailies also carried an AFP interview with former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto quoting her as saying: "Musharraf's lack of mandate is the major impediment in the Agra summit." Nepal's *Kathmandu Post* gave the Indo-Pakistan summit a skip altogether on Tuesday.



Pakistan media tripping over each other and one that has obvious ramifications in South Asian equations, however, failed to create front page ripples in the neighbourhood.

China, celebrating a double-whammy - a historic treaty of friendship and cooperation with Moscow and bagging Olympics 2008 - had little space to spare in its newspapers.

A single report in the *People's Daily* quoted the Pakistan press as saying: "India Ruins Agra Summit", a blow by blow account of Monday's hectic proceedings in Agra. In the *China Daily*

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# The legacy: India can match Pak decibel



**I**t was far from a high noon when General Musharraf sped towards Agra at six past even though the clock struck midnight. After much expectation, and courtship, the so-called "historic summit" collapsed like a pack of cards.

Even the cynics criticising Musharraf for making the journey to Agra without a mandate expected a joint declaration. There wasn't even a joint statement.

Blaming Pakistani politicians for succumbing to army pressure, some in India believed that it was better to do business with the army. They found a self-confessing powerless army chief who said he'd have to live in India in his old Neharwall house if he signed a declaration. The civilian leaders signed Simla, Islamabad and Lahore. All honourable

agreements.

Diplomacy is the art of the possible. Political leaders are trained in the art of give and take. General Musharraf is a military dictator. When he speaks, others

● Benazir Bhutto is former Prime Minister of Pakistan

jump to attention. If they don't, they are locked away. Surrounded by unelectable yes men, Musharraf, despite proclaimed good intentions, stumbled at each key test: date for elections, political victimisation, economic revival and now foreign policy.

It was startling to witness the puerile brinkmanship where the Indians called the bluff. Time was always running short — and then extended. Musharraf departed when sources leaked that the talks would continue the next day.

Musharraf made key errors in the trip. He failed to build an internal consensus of legitimate political forces. He relied on an inefficient team which failed him previously. With good advice, he could have stayed an extra day. Exhausting the other side is a pretty elementary diplomatic trick. Instead, he left in a huff.

Islamabad was keen for a declaration and New Delhi knew it. This was confirmed by a Pakistani delegate who told the *Gulf News*, "I went up to Jaswant Singh and told him he could write what he wanted, we would accept it."

This is extraordinary. It is little wonder that foreign minister Jaswant wanted another day of talks to put in his wish list when the Islamabad side offered such accommodation.

If there is a legacy to this summit, it is that New Delhi managed to match Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmir Dispute with an equally vocal and high-profile repetition of "cross-border terrorism".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



VHP lauds  
Vajpayee

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 17. - The VHP has congratulated Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee for forcefully presenting India's viewpoints on cross-border terrorism and not conceding anything to Pakistan.

The parivar has blamed General Pervez Musharraf for the failure of the Agra summit. The leaders said this was the first time India had not conceded anything to Pakistan on the negotiating table.

The BJP president, Mr Jana Krishnamurthy, strongly defended India's position and asserted that Gen. Musharraf's attitude did not favour a settlement. He cited, as instances, the General's meeting with the Hurriyat leaders despite India's objections and the address at the editors' conference.

Mr Krishnamurthy said General Musharraf's "utterances" at the breakfast meeting with editors was responsible for the summit's failure. The sequence of events made it look like the General made a deliberate attempt to scuttle the summit, Mr Krishnamurthy said. It seemed he was saying "you accept what I say or I have nothing to do with you."

## Allies back Vajpayee, Left takes diplomatic stand

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 17. - The allies in the NDA have blamed Pakistan for the failure of the Agra summit. They have backed the stand taken by Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The Left parties hoped there would be more dialogue between the two countries. But they alleged lack of pre-summit preparation on the Vajpayee government's part.

Dr Farooq Abdullah said he never had very high hopes from the summit. He admitted he was skeptical about Pakistan's intentions. Would the talks failure lead to an escalation of violence in J&K? The chief minister said the state was prepared to deal with any kind of situation.

The Samata Party spokesman, Dr Shabhu Srivastava, said his party "sees the summit as the re-commencement of dialogue between the two countries after its natural breakdown in post-Kargil period". He praised Mr Vajpayee for "remaining steadfast on the vitals of Indian nationhood". It "is grossly unfair" to dismiss the summit as a failure since "there is nothing unexpected about its outcome", Dr Srivastava said.

The summit would be a firm step forward in relations between the two countries, the JD(U) spokesman, Mr Mohan

Prakash, said. The summit has demonstrated to the world India's commitment to peace and development of the subcontinent. Pakistan's rigid attitude and its soft-peddling of the terrorism issue has once again exposed Pakistan's intentions.

The CPI-M politburo expressed disappointment "that the two sides could not come to an agreement on the issues that needed to be tackled." It hoped the dialogue and more-preparatory efforts at various levels would continue.

The Vajpayee government "did not make sufficient preparations for laying the groundwork" before inviting Gen. Musharraf, the politburo said. "While Kashmir is a major issue that had to be discussed, it's unfortunate Pakistan did not agree to discuss other related issues. That could have created a conducive atmosphere for dialogue."

A CPI press release said the party national executive passed resolution in Bangalore saying "some people at the top level played their role in seeing that the talks do not succeed".

The party national executive hoped that the Agra summit is "just an episode on the long road that will have to be traversed to reach the destination of peace and good neighbourly relations between the two countries".

STATESMAN

STATESMAN

... .. MUSTAKKAF

9/29/97 Not a PRO 01/10/97

The outcome of the Indo-Pak dialogue will be variously interpreted in the days to come. Perhaps it wasn't such a failure. Perhaps, the threads will be picked up again. Meanwhile, picture this: Prime minister Vajpayee and general Musharraf emerge from their deadlocked two-day meeting. The mood is sombre but only momentarily so. Commending the milling crowd of journalists on their enormous patience, Mr Vajpayee admits that the two have reached no agreement, but that they would be continuing the talks anyway: "Yes, we are going to talk again." The general echoes the sentiment. For the TV cameras, this is a photo-op of a lifetime and they go berserk in frenzied excitement, capturing the moment for posterity. The next day's newspaper headlines too convey hope rather than despair. In reality, Indian diplomacy bombed. After an entire day of feeding only on rumours, all that the weary press got was a terse one-line statement from an expressionless foreign office spokesperson. Left to their own devices, they pieced together stories, liberally using imagination to fill the gaps. So why did the Indian side not go on the offensive? The answer should, of course, be obvious given our obsession with secrecy. But just in case the Indian conduct left anyone puzzled, there was foreign minister Jaswant Singh's explanation the next day. "India does not conduct its negotiations through the media," Mr Singh said, clipped accent, stand-offish manner and all. Unfortunately for him and the foreign office he represents, this only added to the picture of the Indian side as painfully stiff and formal.

Nobody, but nobody will argue that negotiations must be conducted in the glare of TV cameras. Secrecy is unarguably an essential part of diplomacy, but diplomacy is also as much about revealing as concealing. A clever foreign affairs spokesperson will know just how much to give away, and by this yardstick, India completely lost the propaganda war. Contrast this with the PR blitz from general Musharraf. That the Pakistani president cast a spell on the Indian editors was all too apparent from the televised screening of the big event. He came across as frank, even if at times brutally so, and certainly very focused. So much so, many of our distinguished editors could barely conceal their admiration for the general; some were clearly won over to his point of view. Contrast this with Atalji's minimalist style. With his long pauses and stretched Urdu poetry, the biggest of crowds are admittedly no challenge for our prime minister. But that is not the stuff diplomatic PR is made of. It demands quick reactions, a friendly manner and an ability to appear convincing. Which, needless to say, is not an Indian strong point. Far worse is our politicians' insistence that diplomacy is synonymous with secrecy. Little wonder that Tuesday's edition of *New York Times* quoted only Pakistani sources for its story on the failure of Indo-Pak talks. If only the Indian foreign office would look at how summits are conducted elsewhere. In the US, background and deep background information form a vital part of pre-summit briefing; the official spokesperson either sits in on the summit or makes it a point to be fully informed. In short, the antithesis of our own MEA spokesperson.

OPERATION SALVAGE BEGINS

# Foreign ministers dub summit a 'start', not a failure

**By Seema Guha**  
The Times of India News Service  
AGRA: India and Pakistan went into a salvage mode on Tuesday with external affairs minister Jaswant Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Abdul Sattar maintaining that the Agra summit was not a failure. In separate press conferences in Agra and Islamabad, they maintained that the dialogue between the two leaders would continue.

"I don't characterise it as failure. It is yet another step in the march to improve bilateral relations,"

said that there was "difficulty in reconciling our basic approaches to bilateral relations. India was unable to agree with Pakistan's 'unifocal approaches', namely its insistence that Kashmir is the central issue". Mr Sattar more or less confirmed this when he admitted that "relations between the settlement of the Kashmir question and the normalisation of relations" were the reason for the two sides not being able to agree on a joint declaration.

In his remarks, Mr Singh said India "made abundantly clear" to Pakistan that the promotion of

external affairs and defence minister Mr Jaswant Singh said in Agra on Tuesday morning. Later in the afternoon in Islamabad, Mr Abdul Sattar declared that while the summit was "inconclusive" it could not be termed a



President Pervez Musharraf leaves for Agra airport on his way to Islamabad on Monday night.

failure. Both sides maintained that the talks had made progress in evolving a structure for a dialogue process and that the threads would be picked up sooner rather than later. But while Mr Singh refused to divulge the details of what went wrong, Mr Sattar claimed they had twice come close to an agreement on a mutually acceptable joint declaration. Indeed, he said, had there been enough time, "the residual paragraph could have been worked out".

However, the substance of the two ministers' remarks indicates that there remain real differences between the two sides. Mr Singh

"cross-border terrorism and violence are unacceptable and must cease". In Islamabad, Mr Sattar put a different spin to this. Through a s o m e w h a t i n g e n u o u s sleight-of-hand, he suggested that there was only a Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and that no "cross-LoC terrorism" had been discussed.

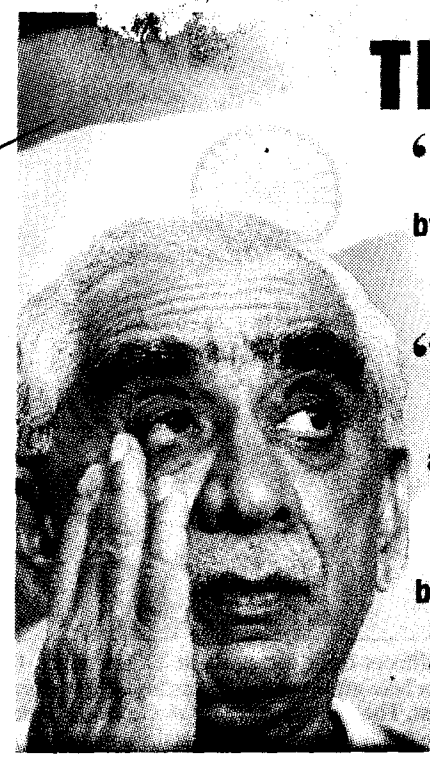
India also acknowledged that the adequate spade-work, which inevitably leads to the success of a summit, had, on hindsight, not been done. But Mr Singh put the blame squarely on Pakistan. India, Mr Singh said, had repeatedly told Pakistan that officials of the two sides should meet and work out the agenda. "We tried this to the very end," he said. But Pakistan had insisted that there should be no fixed agenda and that the two principals should set the tone.

► See Edit: Not a PRO, Page 10

## Gloom in Valley, but Hurriyat is hopeful

**By M. Saleem Pandit**  
The Times of India News Service  
SRINAGAR: A pall of gloom descended over the Kashmir Valley following the breakdown of Indo-Pakistan talks in Agra.

While the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders expressed their disappointment over the failure of the talks for which they blamed the hardliners within the NDA government, they said they hoped that the dialogue would be resumed in September when the two leaders meet at the UN General Assembly in New York. However, security agencies and people here now apprehend an escalation in militant activities. Expressing his disappointment, APHC chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat said that the people here were expecting another 'Taj' symbolising the restoration of peace in the subcontinent, but "hardliners" in the country had stalled the peace process.



# The moaning after

'Complex negotiations and discussions hang by a thread. I don't want to say how close we were or far we were'

'The caravan of peace will continue on its march and on some auspicious day, it will reach its destination'

'When it comes to bilateral or international issues, we do not and cannot negotiate through the media'

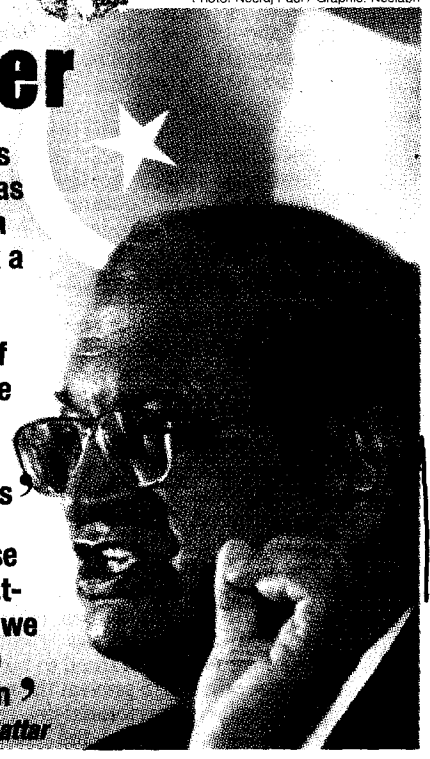
— Jaswant Singh

'The draft which was considered will serve as a valuable foundation for a full agreement at a future meeting'

'President Musharraf was happy to meet the Hurriyat leaders and hopes India will give them travel documents'

'We think no purpose will be served by fault-finding. Unfortunately, we did not arrive at the expected conciliation'

— Abdul Sattar



# How the Agra summit lost its way

**By Siddharth Varadarajan**  
The Times of India News Service

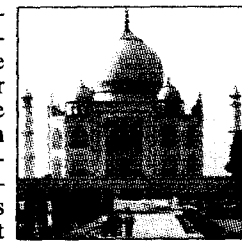
AGRA: Providing the first Indian account of why the negotiations between the two delegations eventually broke down, a senior member of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's team in Agra told *The Times of India* there was simply no vocabulary that could bridge a gulf that was conceptual, not lexical.

"Pakistan is interested in discussing the 'status' of Kashmir", he said, "while we are interested in discussing the 'situation' there," that too only in terms of the effects of cross-border terrorism. "How

do you reconcile these two?"

No matter how the competing drafts were parsed, dissected and rewritten, the combined semantic inventiveness of diplomats failed to overcome this hurdle to the satisfaction of their political masters. In the end—after more than two hours of closed-door deliberations—Mr Vajpayee and his cabinet colleagues shot down the final draft because it linked the normalisation of bilateral relations to a "settlement" of the Kashmir question.

According to Indian and Pakistani officials involved with the Agra process, the plenary session on day one had been an



unproductive and even dour affair, with both sides reiterating their stated positions. Nevertheless, a tentative decision was taken to produce an Agra Declaration which, if substantive enough, would be followed by a joint press conference. After the second Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting that day, which apparently went very well, officials were given

the go-ahead to begin drafting the declaration. Working through the night, the officials produced by 3:30 a.m. a draft with six bracketed portions where alternative formulations on contentious issues like terrorism and the involvement of the Kashmiris were spelt out. This was sent to the two principals for discussion at 11 a.m.

But in the meantime, Gen Musharraf's breakfast meeting with Indian editors intervened. Some of Mr Vajpayee's cabinet colleagues were upset that a closed-door meeting was televised.

► Release of statement okayed, Page 7

# India, Pak focus on gains in Agra balance sheet

**By Dileep Padgaonkar**

NEW DELHI: The spirited efforts made by the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan on Tuesday to give an optimistic spin to the Agra summit will go some way towards softening the widely held impression that the Vajpayee-Musharraf talks collapsed. Not only did Jaswant Singh in Agra and Abdul Sattar in Islamabad dismiss out of hand the very suggestion that the talks had ended in failure, but both also bent over backwards to make precisely the opposite claim.

The talks, they argued in substance, had helped both countries to better understand their respective positions and that, in turn, had laid the foundations of a constructive engagement in the future. Both expressed their 'disappointment'—a truly telling understatement—that the two sides could not affix their signatures on a jointly agreed text. But neither sought to pin the blame on the other. And even when both enumerated the reasons why an

agreement had eluded them, both ensured that there was not a trace of acrimony, bitterness or recrimination in their remarks.

Clearly, they were eager to persuade public opinion in their own countries as well as key world capitals that they intended to act as mature and responsible nations and not, as has often been made out to be, like brats itching for a brawl. Such persuasion will not matter a whit to the Cassandras in both countries. But it will

reassure the overwhelming majority of people who support the idea of a continuing dialogue with Pakistan that regardless of a setback here or there, the Vajpayee-Musharraf talks are indeed a prelude to better things to come.

It would be naive, however, to ignore the flip side of the official endeavour to convince the world that the talks did bear fruit. It is obvious, in retrospect, that the summit would not have ended quite the way it did—without even a

bland joint statement—had it been prepared with greater care and managed with a more robust imagination.

Some official-level talks would have helped to keep expectations in check. The success of the summit was made almost entirely dependent on the 'personal chemistry' between Mr Vajpayee and Gen Musharraf as if national interests and concerns and ideological predilections could be swept aside as of little consequence.

Pre-summit discussions could also have helped the leaders of the two countries to get a keener insight into each other's political cultures. GenMusharraf's breakfast meeting with editors revealed that he is not quite familiar with the functioning of the press in a democracy. As a soldier, he has known only two ways to deal with the world—to obey or to order. He is ill at ease with dissent. That is why his candour is mistaken for abrasiveness.

► Continued on Page 7



## Jaswant sober

■ To say that everything has collapsed in Indo-Pak relations is wrong. It will be picked up. There is now a better understanding.

HS  
187

## Sattar shrill

■ India essentially failed to show the flexibility needed to make the declaration possible—the flexibility to acknowledge Kashmir is an outstanding issue...



# India, Pak play down failure

## Windows still open for Delhi

Vinod Sharma & Udayan Nambudiri  
Agra, July 17

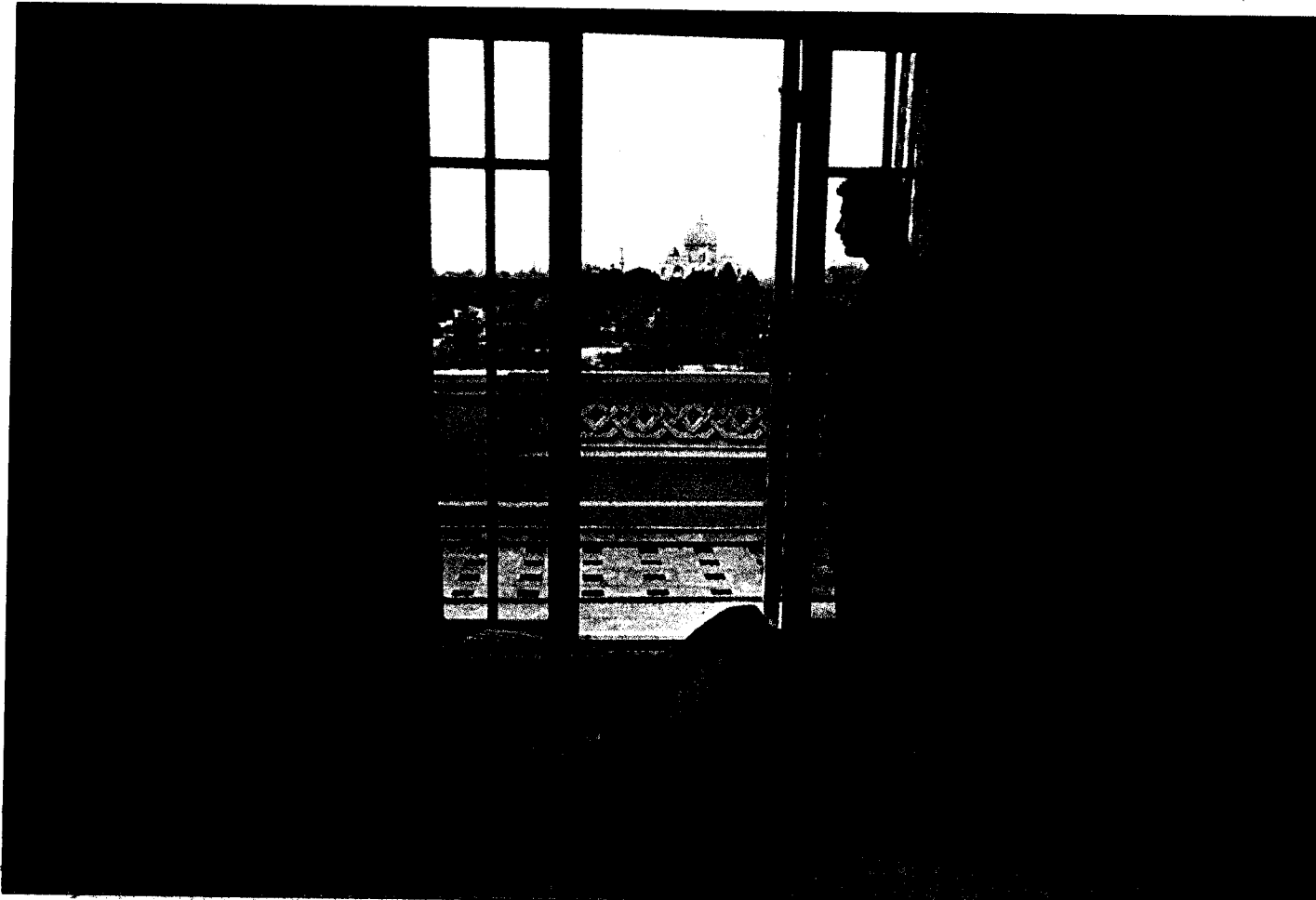
AFTER THE summit, the plateau. At a press meet, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh today put out the obvious explanation for the failed talks: Pakistan's refusal to acknowledge India's position that cross-border terrorism was unacceptable.

But collapse of the summit has not dampened hopes on the Indian side. "I am not disheartened to take a single incident as a fixed mark forever," the minister said. The "caravan of peace" would move on despite differences, he added.

Singh's dignified response was in sharp contrast to Major General Rashid Qureshi's (Musharraf's spokesman) finger-pointing exercise. Not to be dragged into the blame game, Singh held out hope for further summit-level talks. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's acceptance of Pervez Musharraf's invitation to visit Pakistan would stand, he said.

He stonewalled queries on what had transpired between the two sides yesterday, but confirmed that the General's diatribe at the breakfast with senior Indian editors had quered the summit pitch.

The Indian delegation, on the whole, was discreet. The only



MORNING AFTER: A view of the Taj from the Kohinoor suite of the hotel, where Pervez Musharraf stayed, a day after the summit.

ALJAY AGGARWAL/HINDUSTAN TIMES

retaliatory step it took was releasing the text of Vajpayee's opening statement at the first plenary of July 15. But even this was forced by Musharraf's decision to convert an off-the-record breakfast meet into a media coup.

Singh's remarks made it clear that there were very fundamen-

tal contradictions at the summit. He expressed surprise that the Pakistani delegation, unwilling to be guided by precedent, had wanted their head of Government to meet his counterpart without even a working document to guide the two leaders.

The failure to come up with a

joint declaration was rooted in the positioning over Jammu and Kashmir. Singh described Pakistan's approach as 'unifocal' — Musharraf unwilling to put Kashmir with other issues, especially cross-border terrorism, in the same basket.

India also refuted allegations that Musharraf had been pre-

vented from addressing the Press on Sunday night. "We never stopped the President or anyone from meeting the press," Jaswant Singh said.

Vajpayee today apprised his council of ministers of the details of his talks with Musharraf. He was assisted by Jaswant Singh.

## Inconclusive but not a flop: Sattar

Mubashir Zaidi  
Islamabad, July 17

PAKISTAN TODAY said the Agra summit was "inconclusive" but could not be termed a failure. Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar told a Press conference here that both sides had come very close to adopting a joint declaration.

"Twice yesterday, it appeared that we had succeeded in arriving at a mutually acceptable formulation. It is unfortunate that it was aborted," he added.

The draft, which had been considered, would serve as a "valuable foundation" for the two leaders for reaching a "full agreement" at a future meeting. "President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee succeeded in covering a lot of common ground in the draft declaration," the Foreign Minister said.

Flanked by military spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi and Information Secretary Anwar Mehmood, the minister said Musharraf had left India optimistic about prospects for better relations between the two countries.

Giving details of the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting, he said though time had not allowed substantive discussions on any specific issue, "valuable progress" had been made in Agra on evolving a structure for a sustained dialogue process that would address Jammu and Kashmir,

peace and security, and terrorism and drug trafficking at the political level.

"Economic and commercial cooperation, Siachen, the Wullar barrage, Sir Creek and promotion of friendly exchanges at various levels would be addressed at the level of high officials," he added.

On the Musharraf-Hurriyat meeting, Sattar said Musharraf had welcomed the opportunity to meet the Hurriyat leaders and hoped that India would accord them travel documents to visit Pakistan "for consultations".

Vajpayee had accepted Musharraf's invitation for a return visit and the two leaders were expected to meet in New York in September to continue their efforts to thrash out an agreement, he said.

On the PoW issue, Sattar said the first administrative order Musharraf had passed on his return from India was to the Interior Ministry. The President had ordered his officials to search for possible Indian PoWs in Pakistani jails, he added.

"We have already checked twice with all the jails but found no clue of any Indian POW as claimed by the Indian authorities," an interior ministry official said. It was difficult for Pakistan to keep prisoners of war for so long as it was bound by the Geneva Convention, he was quoted as saying by the daily Dawn.

## How commando Pervez hijacked the summit

Brahma Chellaney

BEHIND THE blame-fixing game over the collapse of the Taj Mahal diplomacy is a central reality: The expectations and calculations with which India made a dramatic U-turn in its Pakistan policy and invited military dictator Pervez Musharraf have come wrong.

It was India's initiative, but the summit got hijacked by Pakistan, which waged diplomacy through the media in the style of wartime public relations. Musharraf, the commando by training, outmanoeuvred and outfoxed India.

Musharraf dominated the media side of the summit, tried to get the better of India in the negotiations and, when India did not wilt under his commando-type tactics, returned home proudly, having rebuffed even a short, anodyne joint statement. He wanted a joint statement only on his terms, as he did not want to meet the fate of Pakistani rulers who set in motion a process for their ouster after signing agreements with India at Tashkent, Simla and Lahore.

New Delhi will not admit it, but the failed moonless diplomacy by the Taj is a serious setback to its diplomacy. It will not be easy for India to schedule another Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting even on the margins of the UN General Assembly unless a repeat of Agra can be avoided.

Agra is testament to how abrupt, personality-driven changes in foreign policy that catch establishment professionals by surprise can backfire. While a new era of cooperative relations on the subcontinent will greatly aid India's inter-



AP PHOTO

ests, it can hardly be ushered in through a big, blind gamble.

Any scheme to resume talks with Pakistan should have been structured in a step-by-step framework, with a summit meeting being offered as a reward for flexibility and joint work at lower levels. However, by conceding a summit without even testing the waters, India not only squandered leverage, it also generated misperceptions in Pakistan that it was exhausted from battling jihad and under international pressure.

Musharraf has returned home triumphantly, having delivered his message directly to Indians and been accorded legitimacy by Delhi. For an army man who trained Nagas up to 1971, aided Sikh militancy, and masterminded Kargil and the IC-814 hijacking, the treatment he got in India was akin to the

famous poornakumbam offered to Emperor Aurangzeb by the Delhi Brahmins. An invitation from today's political Brahmins helped Musharraf to usurp the presidency, demonstrate his diplomatic skills, shed his quasi-pariah status, and put the international spotlight on Kashmir.

Clearly, India miscalculated that Musharraf was ready to be an Anwar Sadat and cut a historic peace deal. The U-turn did not take sufficient account of Musharraf's domestic constraints, overrated the external influences on him, and misjudged the risk-taking commando turning a new leaf.

A summit designed to help India and Pakistan get over their bitter past and get on with building a cooperative and peaceful future has shown that the past still matters more for the latter.

## It's still hands off for Washington

S Rajagopalan  
Washington, July 17

THE US says it won't get involved in setting the agenda for future Indo-Pak dialogue. For that matter, it is emphatic that it never had anything to do with the Agra summit or its agenda.

"We're not a party to these talks. We're not going to specify what the agenda is," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said, when questioned on the Pakistani contention that the Kashmir issue should be resolved before other issues can be discussed.

No one here is surprised that Kashmir indeed turned out to be the sticking point in Agra.

The proceedings in a sense were true to script, with Pakistan making clear its intentions in the run-up to the summit. For that reason, the US is not viewing the summit's failure in excessively negative terms, he said.

Yet, there is a degree of disappointment, not overtly expressed though, that the two sides failed to agree upon a joint statement.

Russia did not see the Agra summit as a failure. A foreign ministry spokesman said in Moscow that the "frank" discussions between the Indian and Pakistani leaders were a "step forward", reflecting the two countries' desire to settle bilateral differences through negotiation.

"The mutual desire of the two countries to continue their dialogue and acceptance of Musharraf's invitation to visit Pakistan by Prime Minister Vajpayee are no less important results of the Agra summit," PTI quoted the spokesman as having said.

'DISAPPOINTED, NOT DISHEARTENED'

# Ready to pick up the thread, says Jaswant Singh

By C. Raja Mohan

AGRA, JULY 17. The morning after an exhausting summit with the leadership of Pakistan ended inconclusively here, India signalled its determination to stay the course and seek peace and reconciliation with Pakistan.

Seeking to dispel the widespread perception of a failure of the Agra summit, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, today said the two nations covered considerable ground during the last couple of days in finding a framework to deal with their bilateral differences.

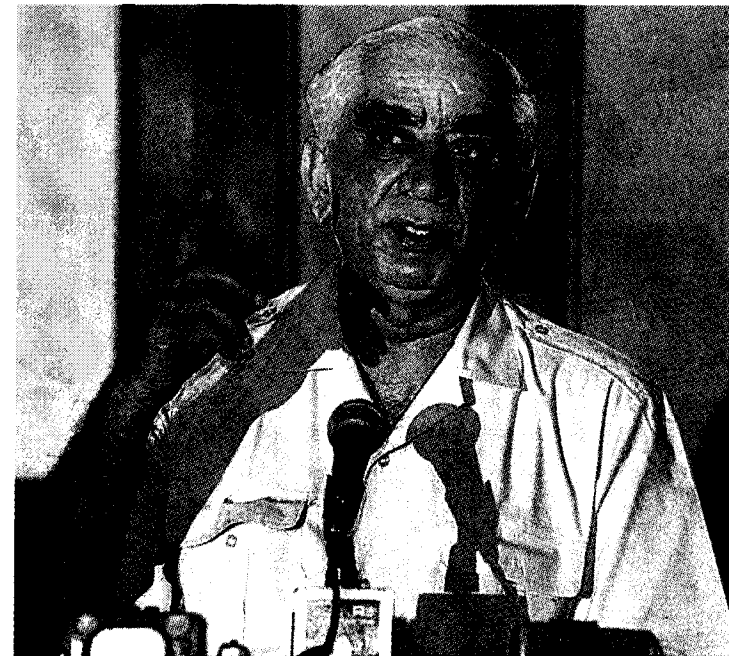
India might have been disappointed, but was not disheartened by the turn of events here last night. That was the principal message from Mr. Singh as he told a crowded press conference that India would continue to engage Pakistan at many levels.

The extensive talks at Agra between the Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, according to Mr. Singh, "provided an invaluable opportunity" to both sides to understand each other's "concerns and compulsions".

In suggesting that the summit was one more step in the quest for peace with Pakistan, he articulated a sentiment that was later reciprocated in Pakistan by his counterpart, Mr. Abdul Sattar.

On the question of who backed out of signing the "Agra Declaration" in the closing stages of the summit, Mr. Singh did not point a finger at Pakistan. Instead, he referred to the complexity of the negotiations with Islamabad.

Mr. Singh proclaimed India's readiness to "pick up the



The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, addressing a press conference in Agra on Tuesday.

— Photo: Shanker Chakravarty

threads" from Gen. Musharraf's visit and strive to realise "peace, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan".

The decision to stay engaged and not blame each other for the unfinished nature of the business at Agra may be part of an understanding between the two leaders when Gen. Musharraf had a long conversation with Mr. Vajpayee when he called on him to bid farewell last night.

The inability to finalise the "Agra Declaration" was because of "the difficulty in reconciling our basic approaches to bilateral relations", Mr. Singh conceded.

India's conviction that "narrow, segmented or unifocal approaches will simply not work".

The other unbridgeable differences at Agra were related to India's concerns over Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism, Islamabad's reluctance to lend full support to past agreements between the two nations signed at Shimla and Lahore, he said.

Despite these differences, Mr. Singh said the India will continue to promote the peace process with Pakistan. He said India invited Gen. Musharraf to explore the prospects of an accommodation.

The Foreign Minister rejected as a "canard", the allegations that senior ministers in the Union Cabinet were working at cross purposes during the talks between Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Vajpayee. He also dismissed the accusation that India was not fully prepared for summit-level talks with Pakistan, and that the invitation to Gen. Musharraf was "premature".

Responding to a question whether India believed it could do business with Gen. Musharraf, whose perceptions differed so widely from those of India, Mr. Singh said India would have to deal with the "world as it is" and not on *hqw*, "it ought to be".

Mr. Singh declared that India will "fully implement" all the unilateral good-will measures announced by the Government before Gen. Musharraf arrived here last Saturday. "When put in place," Mr. Singh added, "they will make an important contribution to our relations".

Hizb, Lashkar threat: Page 13  
U.S. reaction: Page 14

The differences were sharp on three issues, in particular the relationship between Kashmir and the normalisation of bilateral relations.

All indications here are that Pakistan was unwilling to discard its emphasis on a sequential approach in which normalisation would only follow the resolution of the Kashmir problem. India, in contrast, argued for a simultaneous movement on all issues.

**'Unifocal approach won't work'**

Emphasising the "totality of the relationship" between the two neighbours, Mr. Singh declared

## Inept handling by Govt., says Cong.

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 17. The conciliatory tone of the Government notwithstanding, the two principal parties — the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress — today blamed Pakistan for the failure of the Agra summit. While the BJP held the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf's aggressive attitude responsible for the failure, the Congress blamed Pakistan's "inflexible and intransigent approach" for the "disappointing outcome". The party also criticised the Government's "inadequate preparations" and its "inept handling" of the summit.

The Congress spokesperson, Mr. S. Jaipal Reddy, said the Government's handling had "weakened the projection of India's case regarding the blatant sponsoring of terrorism by Pakistan".

The Government did not have a structured agenda and lacked a focused approach.

The Congress also found fault with the Government's approach. "Our media management was miserable and the diplomatic naivete glaring," said Mr. Reddy. The long spells of silence on the Government's part even in the face of a Pakistani media barrage "had allowed an impression to gain ground that the Government was speaking in different voices and operating at different wavelengths".

**BJP faults Musharraf**

The BJP president, Mr. K. Jana Krishnamurthi, summed up the meeting as "arguments plenty, agreement nil" and said this need not cause any surprise although regrets may be there.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal

Behari Vajpayee, had been taking steps to make Pakistan realise the need and friendship between the two countries. "If Pakistan had not taken the Kargil route, perhaps the Lahore-Agra ride could have been fruitful," the BJP president said.

Recounting the sequence of events, Mr. Krishnamurthi said it appeared that Gen. Musharraf came with a one-point agenda — "we say and do what we want; you accept it". The BJP also took exception to Gen. Musharraf converting an informal meeting with prominent editors into a press conference and saw it as a "gross transgression of diplomatic norms".

If Gen. Musharraf had the summit's overall interest in mind he would not have made the comments at the breakfast meeting. This, Mr. Krishnamurthi said, made one

# Summit inconclusive, not a failure: Sattar

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 17. Contesting the assessment that the Agra summit was a "failure", Pakistan today calmed that the process of the normalisation of relations initiated at the historic city of the Taj Mahal was alive and kicking.

Addressing a crowded press conference here hours after the return of the President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, and his entourage, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, said the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf were expected to meet on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in September in New York to pick up the threads left behind at Agra.

"The Agra summit remained inconclusive but it did not fail. In fact, the two leaders succeeded in covering a broad area of common ground in the draft declaration. That will provide a valuable foundation for the two leaders to reach a full agreement at their next meeting," the Minister said.

However, Pakistan had not given up its position on any of the ticklish bilateral issues, he said adding the stumbling block in adopting a draft declaration was the settlement of Kashmir issue.

The Minister, in a gentle but categorical tone, advocated the cause of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference as the sole representative of the Kashmiris and the need to provide it a seat at the negotiating table for resolution of the Kashmir tangle at a future date. Refusing to concede India's concerns on "cross border terrorism", he termed the turmoil in Kashmir an "indigenous struggle".

During his press briefing, Mr. Sattar was at pains to emphasise



tered form. The contentious issues among the eight points in the CDP are to be elevated to a political level.

Describing the summit as "inconclusive", he mentioned the "rapport and goodwill" developed between Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Vajpayee during their one-to-one meetings and the farewell meeting which lasted for over 90 minutes. Mr. Sattar also praised Mr. Jaswant Singh for his effort to make the summit a success.

On the view expressed by an influential section of the military establishment that an "invisible hand" (supposed reference to Mr. L. K. Advani) "sabotaged" the summit, Mr. Sattar refused to comment.

The first two paras of Mr. Sattar's 625-word statement summed up the Musharraf regime's assessment of the summit:

"Gen. Pervez Musharraf has returned from India optimistic about prospects for better relations between Pakistan and India. Considerable progress was made in summit-level discussions and in evolving the text of a declaration. It is unfortunate that the expected consummation did not materialise. Nevertheless, the President remains convinced that the existing goodwill on both sides can and will achieve mutually desired results.

"Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Vajpayee share a common vision of peace, progress and prosperity for their peoples in the 21st century. The President has complimented Mr. Vajpayee for the gracious initiative to invite him for the resumption of dialogue between the two countries after a hiatus of nearly two years."

## PoWs: Musharraf orders probe

By Our Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD, JULY 17. The Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has ordered a probe into allegations that Indian prisoners of war (PoWs) have been languishing in jails here for 30 years.

At a news conference here today, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, said, "the President has initiated administrative action to ascertain whether any person, as PoW, is still in any Pakistani jail."

The issue was raised at the Agra summit talks between Gen. Musharraf and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and during a meeting with select Indian editors, Gen. Musharraf said he would personally look into the matter.

India says Pakistan is holding 54 of its soldiers captured during the 1971 war, which

resulted in the independence of Bangladesh. New Delhi had raised the issue a few days before the summit meeting and urged Islamabad to ensure the immediate release of all PoWs. The latter's immediate response was there were no PoWs in Pakistani jails. Obviously New Delhi was not satisfied with the reply and deemed it necessary to bring it up at the summit.

Today, Mr. Sattar said a probe had been carried out about 20 years ago and at that time prison authorities in all four Pakistani provinces denied the existence of any Indian PoWs. "We will check again," he said.

Talking to Indian editors, Gen. Musharraf said, "we would be mad to keep PoWs for 30 years. I am a soldier. I know what it means for the families of the missing soldiers."

# SUMMIT AFTERMATH

## Lack of facts at Agra started media speculation

BY SEEMA MUSTAFA

Agra, July 17: The news that the talks had failed disappointed 1,000-odd journalists assembled at the media centre waiting for, what the majority had begun to hope would be, a major breakthrough. Pakistani officials informed their journalists that the summit was over and the news spread like wildfire in the Mughal Sheraton with the first reaction being of astounded disbelief.

This was not without reason. For the second day of the summit had gone well. Despite the highly-controversial breakfast meeting between Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and a select group of editors, the

summit appeared to be going well. It was as if the day had absorbed the negative impact, and the two official delegations had decided to look ahead.

Shortly after lunch the news filtering out of the cordoned off Jaypee Palace, where the summit was being held, suggested that the journalists could get ready for a joint signing of the Agra declaration by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf. In fact, so certain was this, that the journalists were soon quibbling over the fact that at least for this event the print media which had been kept out of all venues should be allowed access.

Soon after, it was apparent to all those waiting over cups of

coffee, intense political discussions and lewd jokes that the signing had been delayed. Even then there was no hint that the declaration was in trouble. The journalists were aware that there had been some difficulty about describing Kashmir as a core issue, and a reference to cross-border terrorism but that these had been ironed out. Early evening, the information was that the issues had been resolved to a great extent, and the draft had been sent for typing.

Some journalists even insisted that photocopies were being made. The minutes turned into hours and there was suddenly a deep silence. Even the Pakistani journalists who had been kept well briefed by their officials,

unlike the Indians, had no idea as to what had happened.

Around 7 pm or so the news was that it would not be an Agra declaration but a joint statement signed by the two leaders. This could not be immediately confirmed as the officials remained inaccessible. Within two hours the picture had changed dramatically. From a joint statement it became: the talks have failed. The source was again Pakistani officials. It was confirmed by the Indians. Journalists went into frenzied action.

And slowly the final picture emerged from sources across in Jaypee Palace. Incidentally, a television channel claiming to take credit for breaking the news was being a little exagger-

ated as it was the first to know along with 1,000 others.

The news was that the talks had failed, that there would be no statement at all, that General Musharraf was preparing to leave for Islamabad and would call upon Mr Vajpayee to bid him farewell. The easy atmosphere at the media centre became surcharged. Journalists rushed to stand outside Jaypee Palace as it was made known that the General would like to address a press conference just before leaving. The tension there was palpable particularly as he did not emerge from the hotel for a full 80 minutes.

A Pakistani woman columnist was strident, "He has been placed under arrest, they do not

want him to speak to us." Others too looked apprehensive.

Rumours that the Pakistani delegation had asked the Indian side to allow their driver to take General Musharraf to the airport began making the rounds. Another designed to arouse anger in the Pakistani camp was that Mr Vajpayee had kept General Musharraf waiting as he was having dinner. The explanation was more simple. India did not want the General to interact with the press and despite his repeated requests, insisted that it could not be allowed because of security reasons. A grim faced guest of Prime Minister Vajpayee drove out of Jaypee Palace with Indian officials having got their way.

## 'Centre should do homework before the next summit'

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, July 17: The Congress supports the continuation of talks between India and Pakistan even though it is disappointed by the outcome of the Agra summit.

The Congress, which has held Pakistan responsible for the failure of the summit, wants Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to call for an all-party meeting to explain what factors had led to the negative outcome.

"We are of the view that intransigence and inflexibility of the Pakistani delegation is responsible for the disappointing outcome of the summit," said the party spokesperson S. Jaipal Reddy.

Deputy leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, Mr Madhavrao Scindia, also expressed disappointment over the outcome of the summit but stated that he was not surprised as the "government approached the summit without the required groundwork or preparatory work."

"They did the same thing at Lahore where the bus yatra was undertaken without homework or

ground work," he said and added that it was unfortunate that the talks were not successful.

Mr Reddy further said: We are deeply disappointed to note that the government's handling of the summit was characterised by shoddy preparation, lack of homework and an ad-hoc approach. This has weakened India's case regarding the blatant sponsoring of terrorism by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

"We had no structured agenda, what is worse, we had no focused approach," he added and said the lopsided briefing by information and broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj gave President Pervez Musharraf an excuse to indulge in tough talk and get away with it.

Replying to a question whether Mr Vajpayee should visit Pakistan especially when Pakistan was firm on considering Kashmir the central issue, Mr Reddy said: "We are always for continuation of talks. If there has been no breakthrough, we cannot allow talks to break down. The government this time should do more homework, more spadework and more footwork before flying to Pakistan.



UNITED IN HATE: Supporters of Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf burn an effigy of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee during a demonstration in Karachi on Tuesday. (Reuters)

## 'Sushma's comments did sizeable damage at summit'

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, July 17: There was an air of despondency among the media and intellectuals following the failure of the Indo-Pak summit to come up with at least a joint declaration.

Senior journalists said even though a beginning had been made, the fact that even a bare joint statement could not be arrived at between the two countries was quite unfortunate.

Even while hardliners in Islamabad came out with statements like "General Musharraf has conducted himself very well during the summit. He has stuck to his stand," cynics in the capital observed that if anybody was expecting a miracle to happen during the summit, they were just being foolish and too optimistic.

Mr K.M. Chenoy, JNU lecturer, asserted that the statements of I&B minister Sushma Swaraj did a sizeable amount of damage

because it increased the pressure on Musharraf.

Mr Chenoy added that it was a serious lapse which led to a sharp reaction from President Musharraf at Monday's breakfast meeting with editors.

He added that this was not a minor summit and any breakdown in relations between the two nations would lead to more bloodshed. Terrorist outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba have already issued threats to target government offices in

Kashmir.

Mr Chenoy added that some people felt that there could have been a positive spin on the talks, had there been more time. He said that the talks were not really a failure and added that the fact that both countries have avoided blaming each other was significant. People who are saying that the talks had failed were really expecting too much from them.

Mr Chenoy said now there was a major role that Opposition

parties would have to play. The extent to which the Centre can compromise depends upon the national atmosphere created for the next round of talks between India and Pakistan, he said. External affairs minister Jaswant Singh was at great pains to emphasise that the talks had not failed and the fact that President Musharraf had invited Prime Minister Vajpayee to Islamabad showed that a beginning had been made and had set in motion a process. Media crit-

ics felt that it was unfortunate that no structure for the discussions between the two leaders had been made.

Mr Chandan Mitra, editor of the *Pioneer* in an interview to a TV channel said that it would be a good idea to have a structure in place at the bureaucratic level in order to save the talks from failing again, before Mr Vajpayee went to Islamabad later in the year. Mr Jaswant Singh said Mr Vajpayee would go to Islamabad by the end of the year.

# Let third party in, no way: India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

AGRA, July 17. — Mr Jaswant Singh today dismissed suggestions of third party mediation on the Kashmir issue. "Three is a crowd," he said. But he did not specify if by "crowd" he meant the Kashmiris or a third party in the India-Pakistan relationship.

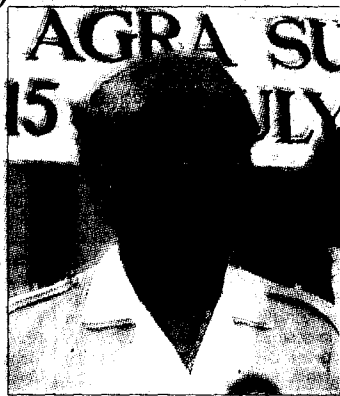
Pakistan has been harping on the involvement of Kashmiris in the talks as a third party, giving cognisance to their right to self-determination. But India has consistently rejected such a suggestion.

Islamabad's insistence on a trilateral dialogue has been negated quite often. At the breakfast meeting with editors, Gen. Pervez Musharraf said the Kashmiris needed to be involved in the dialogue

process to ensure any progress on the "central" issue.

India feels otherwise. Mr Singh said: "We have a better understanding of the government of Pakistan. Two parties (India and Pakistan) are more than adequate. Three is a crowd".

Pakistan wanted to involve the All Parties Hurriyat Conference as a third party in the dialogue with India. In fact, Pakistan's rigidity over inviting Hurriyat leaders to Paki-



Mr Jaswant Singh talks to journalists in Agra on Tuesday. — AP/PTI

stan high commissioner, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi's, tea party in New Delhi on 14 July, snowballed.

Pakistan ignored India's objection on this issue. India does not see APHC as the sole representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It condemned the Pakistani

government for inviting the Hurriyat leaders while ignoring the elected government in the state.

The government is con-

cerned about the feelings of the J&K people. The sincerity and seriousness is reflected in Mr KC Pant's appointment as its interlocutor.

Even after calling off the six-month-long cease-fire in the state, India did not derail that process. As an internal mechanism, Mr Pant continued to hold talks with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speculation has been rife that USA might mediate in the dialogue process like it did in West Asia. The USA has been more than willing to do so but India has strongly objected to it.

"No attempt has been made to bring in a third party. India and Pakistan are enough to deal with India-Pakistan relationship," Mr Singh clarified.

THE STATESMAN

# Diplomacy is not conducted through media: Jaswant

NILOVA ROY CHAUDHURY & H BULLA DEVI/  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

AGRA, July 17. — The foreign minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, today refuted allegations that General Pervez Musharraf was not allowed to hold a press conference late yesterday night. Diplomacy should not and cannot be conducted through the media, he said.

The alleged heckling of the MEA spokesperson, Ms Nirupama Rao, by Pakistani journalists last night further clouded the issue of media mismanagement. The Pakistani scribes were apparently "furious" at what they thought was an official Indian ploy to not allow Gen. Musharraf address a final press conference.

At today's press conference, Mr Singh said Gen Musharraf's press conference could not be arranged because of security problems. Security officials had said they needed 90 minutes to sanitise a press conference venue, Mr Singh said. Apparently, that time was simply not available given

Gen. Musharraf's already fixed time of departure.

If this explanation seemed suspiciously bland to some, Mr Singh's other arguments appeared too lofty. He refused to divulge reasons for the collapse of the talks. There was need to maintain confidentiality in such matters, he said.

But it was clear that the government was peeved at the way in which Gen. Musharraf had tried to score brownie points by forcing issues through the media.

Reading from a prepared text, Mr Singh said: "As a mature and responsible democracy, we negotiate to improve bilateral relations with our neighbours, not to indulge in public relations." This was his first official interaction with the media since the summit began three days ago.

As regards public relations exercise, the honours clearly went to Pakistan, which, through judicious use of the media, came across as more straight-talking and even reasonable.

"It's our belief that when it comes to bilat-

eral relations between sovereign nations, we cannot negotiate through the media," Mr Singh said. Responding to Gen. Musharraf's statements at the breakfast meeting with editors, he said, "That is not how diplomacy is conducted."

Repeated questions on this widely publicised and telecast breakfast meeting elicited the response "we don't want to comment such a meeting" and the understanding was "it was meant to be off the record." Caught off-guard by the decision to televise the breakfast meeting, the government yesterday released to the media Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's opening statement at the plenary session on 15 July.

Mr Singh defended the action. It was important to maintain confidentiality in negotiations. But Pakistan had chosen to go public on certain issues. It was important to make certain things clear to the public, he said.

Defending Mrs Sushma Swaraj, Mr Singh said, "She speaks with the full authority of

the government of India" and "there is no question of her speaking out of line." "What she said was a matter of public knowledge."

Mrs Swaraj's statements, highlighting other issues (nuclear risk reduction, trade, cross-border terrorism and trade) that came up in the one-on-one talks between Gen. Musharraf and Mr Vajpayee and not Kashmir, was bitterly criticised by the Pakistani delegation members.

Speculation is rife that her comments were partly responsible for Pakistan hardening its postures to a point where not even a joint statement could be agreed upon. An official, however, said, "That was a typical Pakistani escape route."

Trying to couch the entire lack of access and official information (on which a large number of questions were addressed) on the ground of confidentiality, Mr Singh said, "When negotiations concern the high road towards peace, we cannot conduct negotiations through the media, much as you would like it."



General Musharraf leaves for Agra airport on Monday after talks with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee. — AP/PTI



# Talks failure may intensify ISI activities in North-East

DIPANKAR ROY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

**GUWAHATI, July 26** — There was no great optimism in Assam about the outcome of the Indo-Pak summit at Agra. But some of those who conduct counter-insurgency operations in the state, did keep their fingers crossed.

"Success of the talks would probably have reduced ISI-backed activities in the state," a security official here said on

condition of anonymity. "But the way the summit has ended may bring by General Pervez Musharraf's body language as he left his hotel last night — gives rise to fears that the ISI may go on the overdrive with their help to various militant outfits not only in Assam but in other northeastern states as well," he said.

Interrogation of four Harkatul-Mujahideen militants who were arrested here a few years ago revealed the ISI's keen in-

terest in the northeast. The militants said that the Pakistani agency was seeking to cut off the northeast from the mainland and create an Islamic state.

"Pakistan has its unfinished agenda in Kashmir from the days of the Partition but in the northeast it has no such stake. The only aim of the ISI in this region could be destabilisation and towards this end they would help any group," the official said. "We will have to be prepared for a possible escalation in the

level of violence by militant outfits, particularly those who have ISI patronage," he said.

Assam's leading secessionist group, Ulfa, allegedly enjoys the blessings of the ISI. Muslim fundamentalist groups like the Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam, Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam and some others are also said to receive support by way of training in subversive activities and weapons from the ISI.

The Ulfa, in fact, had gone out

of its way to support Pakistani incursion into Kargil. The outfit had called upon the soldiers from Assam, who were fighting in Kargil, to return because the invaders were "freedom fighters" like themselves (Ulfa).

To the outfit's dismay, the people of the state directed their ire at the militants for this. Besides, it was alleged then that the Ulfa was passing on information about troop movement from Assam to Kargil to the ISI.

The official said that the Ulfa

started targeting oil installations like pipelines and depots only at the instigation of the ISI.

"The Ulfa had never attacked such targets before coming into contact with the ISI and had even tried to resist pressure for some time before succumbing," he said. The NSCN (I-M), which is now in the dialogue mode with the Centre, too, is said to be close to the ISI.

The outfit's general secretary, Mr Thuingaleng Muivah, was arrested in Bangkok with

forged travel documents after he arrived there from Karachi.

Infiltration of ISI agents or sympathisers into Assam is helped by the presence of a large number of Muslims living along Indo-Bangladesh border whose nationality is alleged to be dubious.

It is said that the ISI carries out its northeast operations, including providing passports and sending militants to Pakistan for training, through its bases in Bangladesh.

THE STATESMAN

## AFTER AGRA WHAT?

Summit comes unstuck 5/16

THE greatest utility of the Agra summit has been the airing of fundamental differences, which were known beforehand. Why hold a summit at all, when little preparatory homework appears to have gone into it? Two things are clear. One, personal chemistry and bonhomie alone do not dissolve deep-seated differences but over time, it can help. Two, a summit with an unstructured agenda, which the Pakistanis insisted on, was a bad idea. By the time of Pervez Musharraf's televised breakfast, he appeared to have thrown in the towel already. Billed initially as an informal chat with Indian journalists, the general turned it into a press conference revealing, on his part, a military mindset: blunt, candid, intransigent, inflexible. He had a one-point agenda — Kashmir. His response to a question about confidence building measures was characteristic of his approach: he answered that the biggest confidence building measure was Kashmir itself, when the measures being referred to are precisely about building trust between the two sides so that they can resolve Kashmir, an established summiteering procedure. It makes little sense, for example, why India and Pakistan cannot agree on nuclear risk reduction measures, regardless of disagreement on Kashmir, given that missile flight times between the two countries are numbered in minutes, and an error in judging each other's intentions could have catastrophic consequences. For Musharraf to hold all of this hostage to resolving Kashmir is to beg the question: it is precisely because of Kashmir that wars have been fought between India and Pakistan, and confidence building measures on the nuclear question necessary. Musharraf also suggested that one of the steps to resolving Kashmir would be to negate previous agreements, which is consistent with his earlier interview to a Gulf newspaper that Shimla and Lahore need to be scrapped. There is a fundamental question here: if agreements arrived at between India and democratically elected governments of Pakistan are to be scrapped, what is the guarantee that an agreement arrived at with Musharraf will be respected by his successors, particularly when his hold on both legitimacy and power appear tenuous? Musharraf appeared to be addressing a constituency at home rather than negotiating a dispute to which there is another party, an impression corroborated by PTV replaying the footage again and again for the home audience.

If, however, Musharraf broke a cardinal summiteering rule by addressing a press conference in the middle of negotiations, it must be admitted that he had a precedent: Sushma Swaraj. One may never know what possessed Swaraj to shoot her mouth off about issues being discussed — by not mentioning Kashmir she unwittingly created a public relations problem for Musharraf. The stinging response from the Pakistani side appears to have stymied the Indians into silence on the second day — no official spokesperson appeared to clarify Indian positions, allowing the Pakistanis to walk away with the media victory. It is no use proclaiming loftily, as Jaswant Singh has done, that the Indian side has no use for public relations. The Pakistani delegation may not have come to Agra with a valid case, but was able to run rings around the MEA people on the diplomatic front.

Both sides seem to agree that more meetings will be held. This is welcome.

# The note that soured the summit

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri  
New Delhi, July 16

GREAT EXPECTATIONS had been the theme of the Agra summit. It took one note from the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, to General Pervez Musharraf on Sunday afternoon to make Bleak House the more appropriate title.

The morning sessions had gone down well. There was much bonhomie; Musharraf was jovial and relaxed during the one-to-one meeting with Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the morning. It helped that the 90-minute between the two leaders had been dominated by Pakistan's favourite topic: Kashmir.

After lunch, however, things began to turn sour. The two sides exchanged their respective drafts of the joint declaration. They were miles apart. Islamabad wanted the Hurriyat to join the talks at an "appropriate" time. India raised the Kashmiri Pandits.

Pakistan generally insisted all other issues had to be linked to Kashmir. India made the traditional case for letting relations move on several fronts. This led to the 3 pm joint Press statement saying both sides would have a second one-to-one and delegation level meeting.

In the early afternoon, however, Sushma Swaraj went on television saying that the two countries had discussed four issues but avoided mentioning that

Kashmir had been among them. By late afternoon, the talks were still making little headway, but the atmosphere remained convivial.

Then Sattar passed a note to the General. The note is believed to have said that the public back home in Pakistan believed that the Agra summit was giving short shrift to Kashmir - Musharraf had to do something. And the Sushma Swaraj statement, by then being broadcast over PTV, exacerbated this sentiment.

At this point, Musharraf's geniality evaporated. Islamabad lodged a strong protest with the Indian side. The Pakistani delegates suddenly developed one-word vocabularies. The word: Kashmir. The atmosphere quickly became charged. Members of the Indian team responded to Pakistani nagging by iterating that the state was an integral part of their country.

A side meeting between Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and his Pakistani counterpart, Abdus Sattar, also failed to make any progress. Pakistani officials quietly began telling people in the media that Kashmir was the only game in town.

Thus, when Vajpayee and Musharraf holed themselves up again just after 7 pm, the summit had metamorphosed into something very different. Though the Indian side was at pains to disavow Swaraj's statement, the two leaders failed to make any

progress. Plans to issue another Press statement at about 9 pm were dropped. Vajpayee dropped plans to raise various confidence-building measures. The summit was curdling too rapidly.

The talks were now in crisis. Another round of talks was held late at night to try. That something was on was clear when the normally punctual Jaswant Singh came late to the Governor's banquet that night and the MEA spokeswoman, Nirupama Rao, arrived late to the dinner hosted for the Press by her ministry.

But even these last minute talks were unable to break the impasse. It was the traditional argument of Kashmir versus cross-border terrorism.

Vajpayee and Musharraf, recognising hopes for an earth-shaking breakthrough were over, spoke with each other. The general's position was clear. I cannot go back to Pakistan without some sort of concession on Kashmir by India, no matter how small. Without it, the summit is dead. There can be no joint declaration, statement or anything else.

The Indian Prime Minister turned to his delegation. They were instructed to find a face-saving gesture, no matter how small, for the General. Great Expectations were over. This was now a Great Salvage Operation.

The Pakistani delegation then took the opportunity to release, at midnight, a badly drafted

Press statement attacking Swaraj's statement. It avoided tarring or feathering Vajpayee. But it said of Swaraj's interview, "She had omitted to mention the extensive discussions between the two leaders on Kashmir." It complained that the two countries had in fact spoken of Kashmir for 90 minutes. It said Musharraf had said, "Pakistan was willing to discuss those issues as well but no other issue could be addressed unless the core issue was discussed and resolved."

With all hopes of even a middling breakthrough on Kashmir gone, Islamabad concentrated on telling the audience back home in Pakistan that Musharraf had never had any intention of selling them out on Kashmir. The attack on Swaraj was part of this. The subsequent stress on Kashmir at the General's breakfast with the editors next morning continued the campaign. The general even showed a copy of the midnight Press statement to the editors.

While Swaraj was the source of much abuse among observers in Agra, the more sober argued that it was more likely that once Pakistan decided that the summit was going down badly at home, its delegation decided to find a reason to turn the tables on India and bring Kashmir back centre stage. Hence the remarkable 10-hour gap between Swaraj's statement and Pakistan's midnight response.



Information and Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj speaks to the Press at Agra on Monday.

Agra, July 16

TERMINING PAKISTAN'S criticism of her statement as "over-reaction," Information & Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj said today that the perception that she deliberately did not mention Kashmir as having figured in the summit discussions was wrong.

"Pakistan's perception that it was a deliberate omission on my part not to mention that Kashmir was discussed is not true," she said. She said it was obvious that Kashmir was being discussed, "but the fact that outstanding issues too had been taken up was a positive factor and I focused on that."

To a question about Pakistan objecting to her statement, she said, "it is an over-reaction."

Shrugging off the Pakistani charge that she had indulged in breach of trust by talking to the media, Swaraj said, "If I wanted to do that, I would have made negative remarks. I did not."

The minister's remarks yesterday after the first round of talks on a number of issues evoked a sharp response from Pakistan which said Musharraf had focused on the "core" issue of Kashmir and that she had "omitted" reference to the contentious issue having come up. "I was trying to illustrate the positive aspects," Swaraj said. Asked if Pakistan's comments were in bad taste, Swaraj said it was a question of perception. PTI

# 'Let's grasp this opportunity to create lasting peace'

Following is the text of the statement by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at the commencement of the official-level talks on Sunday:

Excellency, I extend to you and your delegation a warm welcome to this ancient and historic city of Agra. I hope that your stay here will be comfortable, and that our deliberations will take our relations forward positively and constructively.

Through the past five decades, India has held firm in its abiding desire for peace and friendship with Pakistan. We remain committed to the establishment of trust and confidence, to developing mutually beneficial cooperation and to addressing all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. We believe that the core concern of our peoples in their struggle against poverty, want, hunger and deprivation.

We have always taken a compre-

hensive view of India-Pakistan relations, because it is our conviction that we must progress where we can, even as we address the more complex issues. We believe that, rather than operating in segments, we should take a broad based approach across the spectrum of possibilities in our relationship.

It is with these perspectives that we announced a few decisions in advance of your visit, aimed at addressing some of the mutual concerns of our peoples. They relate to peace and security, to the development of people to people ties, and to promote contacts by facilitating travel.

Excellency, we have already had a frank discussion on important matters. We look forward to a further detailed exchange of views on all issues including that of Jammu and Kashmir. You are fully aware of our views on this subject and we have heard yours. We cannot deny that there are vast differences

between us on this. We are willing to address these differences and to move forward. But for this, it is important to create a conducive atmosphere. The terrorism and violence being promoted in the state from across its borders do not help to create such an atmosphere. We will counter them resolutely. Let no one think that India does not have the resolve, strength or stamina to continue resisting terrorism and violence. But, they do not promote meaningful dialogue.

We firmly believe that a framework to address the differences between us on Jammu and Kashmir would have to include the issue of cross-border terrorism in its ambit. We can also look at other confidence building measures to further encourage this process.

The subject which we have identified for the composite dialogue between our two countries cover a wide range. Progress on them can meaningfully contribute to the welfare and security of our people.

We believe that the time has come to resume our engagement on the entire range of these issues.

Excellency, I wish to refer to certain additional specific matters:

We have consistently for over two decades urged Pakistan to release the 54 Indian PoWs that we strongly believe remain in your custody. This is a human problem. I would urge that Pakistan takes urgent and purposeful action to end the agony of the families of these soldiers.

We know that some terrorists and criminals, guilty of crimes like the bomb blasts in Mumbai in 1993 and the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight, are living in Pakistan. We have requested Pakistan that they should be arrested and handed over to us. They have to be brought to justice.

We have recently issued instructions to our coast guard to take into custody Pakistani fishermen, who inadvertently stray into our waters, but to turn them back after due

warning. A similar reciprocal gesture on Pakistan's part would lead to a permanent resolution of this recurring problem.

Pilgrims to religious shrines in both countries have to be facilitated and their sentiments respected. The presence of known terrorists who have been allowed to stay in Sikh gurdwaras in Pakistan is a matter of grave concern to our Sikhs. We have formally requested your authorities that these terrorists be handed over to us to face due process of law in connection with crimes for which they are wanted in India. I wish to specifically reiterate this request to you. While on the subject of religious shrines, the upkeep of Hindu temples and the treatment of Hindus pilgrims is also a matter of concern to us.

The enhancement of trade ties would be mutually beneficial, we seek no unilateral advantage. Trade and industry circles have constantly urged both governments

to respond to the desire for greater interaction. We are willing to take further major steps in this direction. We have already announced a reduction or elimination of tariffs on 50 tariff lines to encourage Pakistani imports to India. I propose that a group of experts of both countries be constituted to recommend measures to increase bilateral trade, economic and technical interaction.

Excellency, our vision for the future of India-Pakistan relations has to construct a durable road map for the future based firmly on the lessons of its often troubled history. We should respond not only to our immediate need for peace and progress for our peoples but also to an international environment that increasingly stresses inter-dependence and cooperation over conflict and discord. Let us grasp this fresh opportunity to create the lasting peace and amity which has eluded us for these past 54 years. Thank you.

## We will never forget view of the Taj: Pervez

Agra, July 16: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, who spent two days at the luxurious Amar Vilas Hotel here, said he and Begum Sehba "will never forget the magnificent view of the Taj Mahal" from the rooms of their Kohinoor presidential suite. "May our stay here augur well for the future relations between Pakistan and India," Gen. Musharraf wrote in the visitors' book at the hotel.

"This beautiful and magnificent hotel has been a witness to the unfolding of historical events," he said leaving behind his impressions of the last two days when he held hectic parleys with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Obviously enchanted by the architectural splendour of the hotel overlooking the Taj Mahal, the Pakistani President said "I appreciate the warmth, hospitality and efficiency of the entire hotel staff. We will never forget the magnificent view of the Taj Mahal." The presidential suite, where every room including the luxurious bathroom, overlooks the Taj which is 600 meters away. (PTI)



TALKING TOUGH: Information and broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj explains her stand to reporters in Agra on Monday over the controversy about her statement on Sunday on the one-on-one meeting between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf. (PTI)

DEBATE

ISSUES

INDO PAK

- ↳ Is the Kashmir problem now closer to resolution?
- ↳ Is a No War Pact useful and practical?
- ↳ Has tension in South Asia been vastly reduced?
- ↳ Will Indo-Pak economic co-operation increase?

**Amitabh Mattoo**  
School of International Studies, JNU

THE real value of the Agra summit and the Agra declaration may lie in its packaging. Even without a substantive resolution of any of the major irritants that divide India and Pakistan, can a widespread impression be created that both sides are seriously attempting to move towards peace and stability? In some ways, a façade may be more important than the real structure as long as it can be sustained. What the ordinary Indian or Pakistani wants is a sense of direction from the political leadership.

But despite the initial euphoria surrounding the summit meeting, the last day has provided us with a reality check. India-Pakistan differences are substantive, and there can be no quick fix. Throughout Monday, the negotiations - at the highest level - have mimicked a roller coaster.

Let us, however, face facts. Kashmir is as near a real solution as it was before the Agra summit. But if Islamabad were to see reason there could be a way out. Indeed, India and Pakistan, by the mere act of agreeing to discuss Kashmir seriously, could be put it on the back burner. As the bilateral talks continue in the future, travel and trade restrictions across the Line of Control could be eased, there could be a substantial devolution of power to both Kashmiris, and militant violence could gradually ebb if Pakistan switched off material support to the jihadi outfits.

Over time, as peace and prosperity return to Kashmir, the dispute would stop arousing the passions that it does today. Most Indians, Pakistanis and Kashmiris could, hopefully, even forget what the dispute was originally about. But this is dreaming. There is no guarantee that Pakistan will in reality rein in the Frankenstein monster that could eventually destroy the country. And if General Musharraf did so, would he need to simultaneously take an extended leave on his Neharwali haveli?

No-war-pacts are words on paper, which mean little in reality unless backed by trust, confidence and political will. The Shimla Pact was a no-war-pact; it explicitly prohibited the use of force to

resolve bilateral disputes. That did not prevent Pakistan from carrying out a proxy war in Kashmir or a fighting a limited war in Kargil. Pakistan's definition of a no-war-pact excludes its subversive acts in Kashmir from being included in the agreement. What use then is such an agreement? More important is to create mechanisms of closer cooperation and collaboration between the two armed forces. That could gradually remove distrust between the two institutions that war with each other.

It is too early to say whether we have turned the corner. Let us remember that General Pervez Musharraf is an army



dictator with no popular mandate to negotiate with India. The army may be the powerful institution in Pakistan, given the long history of praetorian rule in the country, but it also has the greatest vested interest in continued conflict with India. Indeed the survival and sustenance of Pakistan's armed forces depend on enmity towards

India. We must also remember that the experience across the world, as well as the latest scholarly evidence, suggests that democratic partnerships alone can make peace that is stable in the long term.

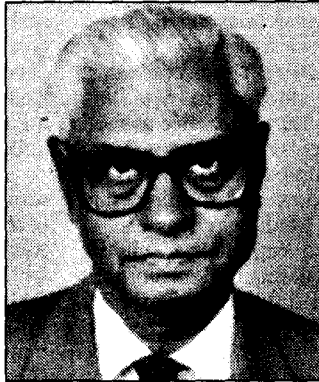
It is unlikely that there will be any dramatic economic gains, although the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline should be transacted and could have a multiplier effect. In any case, rapid economic integration between asymmetrical economies - like India and Pakistan - may create pockets of affluence, but could increase social unrest and accentuate bilateral tensions.

The reality is that it is unreal to think in terms of dramatic breakthroughs in India-Pakistan relations. Single summits cannot create peace in the subcontinent, and the media hype surrounding the Agra summit was unreal and unnecessary. Real peace can be achieved only piece by piece. It is this power of incrementalism that needs to be emphasised. Only by taking small steps at a time can cooperation be learnt and gradually furthered. What is most critical, therefore, is not for just Prime Minister Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf to meet again, but to institutionalise a dialogue at multiple levels on the whole gamut of issues dividing the two countries.

**K Subrahmanyam**  
National security specialist and commentator

ALL summits, even when they succeed, are only partial successes; the degree of success depending on what kind of follow-up takes place. No single summit can solve all issues between two countries. That requires a process of prolonged engagement involving frequent summits and ministerial meetings. One shot summits with significant results occur only after a war when one party is defeated and has to accept the terms imposed.

The Agra summit is a follow-up of the Lahore one, the long interval in between being caused by the Kargil aggression and the military takeover in Pakistan. This summit's achievements are more or less the same as those of Lahore; Kashmir will be discussed and so also the other issues. The two significant aspects of



this summit are the sustained attempt spanning three one-to-one meetings for General Musharraf to establish his credibility with Mr Vajpayee and the recognition that it needs a peace process between the two countries to make progress to solve issues dividing the two countries over the last fifty three years. Both these results should not be scoffed at. Otherwise there was no expectation of great breakthroughs being achieved immediately out of this summit. Part of the problem is in this age of 24 hour news channel on TV a summit tends to be converted into an entertainment show and media hype builds up expectations in an artificial manner.

The core achievement of this summit is the establishment of communications and a degree of personal rapport between the Indian prime minister and the Pakistani General who led the Kargil aggression. Pakistan badly needed this confidence building exercise since the Kargil aggression had completely destroyed the mutual confidence between the two leaderships. Further General Musharraf's second takeover as President even while his foreign minister was reassuring the US secretary of state about progress made in Pakistan's return to democracy, has created a second massive credibility problem for General Musharraf - this time with the

USA. We would know only after some time how far General Musharraf's attempts to create confidence in Mr Vajpayee and, through that exercise, in the US, have succeeded. If it were to happen even in a modest measure, the summit would have achieved something for Pakistan.

The summit should have taught General Musharraf that Kashmir valley cannot be wrested from India either by proxy war and terrorism nor by other means. He would have also known that on the issue of Kashmir there is total political consensus in the country. Continuation of proxy war in Kashmir

would only further isolate Pakistan internationally especially in the light of unilateral concessions announced by India. Till now in the last 15 years no Pakistani General has had the kind of exposure to the Indian reality as General Musharraf has had during this summit. Nor did the Pakistani public through the satellite

TV as happened during this summit. General Musharraf was also left in no doubt about what credibility the self-styled Hurriyat leaders commanded among the Indian political parties. It was also a great education for the General in Indo-Islamic history and the composite Indian civilisational heritage, since he had earlier expressed some bizarre ideas about Indians and Pakistanis not sharing history or culture. Only the future will tell us whether the General benefited out of these lessons in history given to him at not insignificant cost to the Indian taxpayer. If he draws the right lessons perhaps the expenditure will be worth it.

There are no immediate spectacular gains for India out of this summit. It is a kind of venture capital investment. If the General starts engaging himself in a steady sustained peace process with India this summit will go down in history as a fruitful beginning. The General appears to have made a good beginning.

The summit buys time and space for him to restore Pakistani credibility with India and the world. It has bought time for India to improve its capabilities to fight proxy war more effectively and to engage different parties and strands of opinions in Kashmir in a politically meaningful peace process.

**C Uday Bhaskar**  
Deputy Director, IDSA, New Delhi

THE Agra summit is still in the last lap at the time of writing this comment, and the final declaration is still to be officially announced. Monday's developments that included the articulation by the Pakistani President and his spokesperson have been consistent in reiterating the centrality of Kashmir as far as Islamabad is concerned. The Indian position that seeks a composite approach has also been underlined. But on the basis of what has been revealed till now, one could perhaps aver that the Agra summit has achieved a fair amount - what is germane for whom and to what degree.

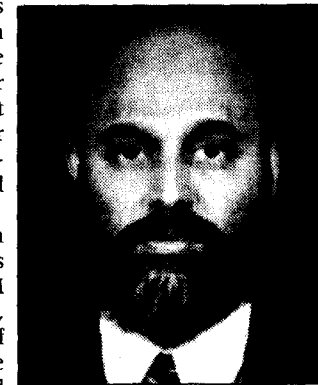
In its genesis, when the invitation was extended by PM Vajpayee in end May, the decision in itself marked a collective gain for the estranged and bitter Indo-Pak relationship which was still mired in the bloody aftermath of the 1999 Kargil war. And while this was a reflection of the determination and commitment of the Indian PM to translate his vision of 'insaniyat' or abiding humanism to intractable reality, the invitation to Agra was a fillip to then General Musharraf who was still the military ruler aka as the CEO. In setting the Agra framework, one could opine that the General gained by way of consolidating his position within the troubled Pakistani polity when he elevated himself to the position of President.

Axiomatically, the Agra invite also marks the lifting of the ostracism that characterised General Musharraf at many levels. In that sense even if the Agra summit fails, there would be some tangible gains at a macro level. Whether the Kashmir problem is closer to resolution will depend on the final outcome of the summit and the tenor and language of the final declaration. But the fact that the Indian PM has accepted an invitation to visit Islamabad is a positive indicator - but the caveat of how General Musharraf approaches the contentious K word is indeterminate as of writing.

But again there is little doubt that the kind of media focus that Kashmir has received over the last few days in the media - both print and electronic

will ensure that civil society is better informed about some "core" realities that have perhaps been obscured till now in Pakistan - for instance the legal status of the state of J&K, the exact content and sequence of the UN resolutions on the subject and their relevance in 2001. Kashmir is a very complex tangle and will not get resolved soon but the Agra summit may have helped to clear some stubborn cobwebs and encourage a greater degree of introspection on both sides to manage the issue in a more positive manner.

Post-Agra, the Pakistani state and society will have to make a major decision about the degree of centrality that they wish to accord to Kashmir in the consolidation and evolution of their collective identity and core interests. The central question is how helpful is Islamabad's current stance on Kashmir to the Pakistani national interest - and who is defining this determinant?



A no-war pact as suggested by Pakistan would not serve the Indian national interest - more so when Islamabad is unwilling to make a commitment that it would not support cross border terrorism (CBT). But by holding this summit, the perception of regional tension may have reduced to an extent. The very fact that the high level political contact between Delhi and Islamabad has been resumed is a tension reducer. However it would help further if the summit could lead to a resumption of the nuclear and missile CBMs that have been mooted at different times in the Indo-Pak relationship - most recently in the 1999 Lahore declaration. A post script would be not to prefix these CBMs with the Lahore tag since that would be reminiscent of the Nawaz Sharief regime, which is anathema to the current dispensation in Islamabad.

If the summit leads to some political *modus vivendi*, then economic co-operation between India and Pakistan could be a beneficiary.

Again on current evidence as relayed minute by minute from Agra, it appears that General Musharraf is stoutly resisting this kind of a broad bandwidth approach. Cautious optimism that was the mood pre-Agra is turning into reluctant pessimism. Inshallah that one is proved wrong.

# Did the summit achieve much?

*The Indo-Pak summit comes at a time when tensions in the region are sorely in need of de-escalation. Have the leaders of the two sides behaved like mature statesmen or have they just parried empty words at each other like super-bureaucrats? We present three eminent views:*

# DEAD END



Vinod Sharma & Udayan Nambodiri  
Agra, July 16

PRESIDENT PERVEZ Musharraf left for Islamabad a little before midnight tonight after the two sides failed to agree on key issues and the Agra summit seemed to have reached a dead end.

The late night press briefing had no word on what transpired when the two leaders met for over an hour in the last round of talks, but official sources said India was disappointed over the "total failure" of the summit and there would be no joint statement.

Pakistan blamed India for the summit's "failure", saying the hosts had failed to agree to certain "crucial" proposals con-

tained in a draft agreement. "President Musharraf waited for the Indian response for signing the agreement. Since it was not there, the President has decided to leave", Pakistan Government spokesman Ashfaq Ahmed Gondal told the media.

The spokesman said, "Jaswant Singh had earlier agreed to incorporate changes asked for by Pakistan before lunch but despite waiting for long, these changes were not agreed to by the Indian side."

The draft "was changed twice after Musharraf and Vajpayee had approved it. This did not stop here and even for the third time changes were sought to be made after the two leaders had cleared the statement. There seems to be an invisible hand delaying the statement," Presi-

dent Musharraf's spokesman Maj Gen Rashid Quereishi said.

Earlier, as the summit creaked to an end, it was clear that only the conflict of centralities would survive it. After two days of concentrated discussion, India and Pakistan couldn't agree on a set of words that would describe their respective core concerns — cross-border terrorism and Kashmir — well enough to satisfy both.

Pakistan said the summit had failed. But India sounded a shade more optimistic, leaving the media confused.

The MEA spokesperson said she was disappointed to convey that no joint agreement could be released.

Though Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf met one-on-one again late at night, salvaging something from

the talks proved too difficult a task. The meeting lasted one-and-a-half hours.

Musharraf had taken his whole delegation to Jaypee Palace Hotel after several meetings during the day had failed to end the standoff.

The conflict was over how the content of the proposed joint declaration would reflect each country's core concerns.

The finalisation of the joint declaration had to be postponed first from 7.30 to 8.30 p.m., and then to 9.30 p.m. Soon the deadline passed and it was clear that the declaration was dead on arrival.

According to information from the Pakistani side, the first draft of the joint declaration had said that a solution to the Kashmir issue would pave the way for

normalisation of ties between the two countries.

It was also decided that annual summits would be held and the foreign ministers of the two countries would meet biannually to discuss peace, security and confidence building measures, Kashmir, narcotics and terrorism.

India then wanted a commitment in the declaration that both sides would try to contain cross-border terrorism. Pakistan countered with a demand for an Indian commitment that the Kashmir issue would be solved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

These clauses being unacceptable, it was decided that the earlier draft would stand.

But the Indian side came back saying the Cabinet would not accept the earlier draft.

There was no confirmation of this version of events from the Indian side. The problems had begun during the delegation-level talks on Sunday evening.

The process recovered after a one-on-one meeting between Musharraf and Vajpayee late on Sunday evening — which delayed the Uttar Pradesh Governor's banquet. But a Pakistani statement attacking Information Minister Sushma Swaraj, issued at midnight, vitiated the atmosphere again.

The coup de grace came, however, at Musharraf's breakfast meeting with editors on Monday morning. The Indian side had not objected to an informal exchange of views but was appalled to discover that the meeting went out live on PTV and a recording was made avail-

able to Indian TV channels.

Summit norms never allow for one side to unilaterally call a press conference. The Indian side blamed Sattar for not advising Musharraf against this breach of protocol. Musharraf stuck to his Kashmir theme song and came across as inflexible and tactless at the breakfast.

Angered by his stand, the Indian side dug in its heels. If Musharraf had hoped to pressure India, he failed. Till late into the night, both sides haggled over the wording of the joint statement. No matter what phrases the Indian side chose, Abdul Sattar would reject them. Finally, it became a game of chicken. Our plane is ready, Sattar said, give us an agreement and we'll go. Fine, said the Indians, you can go when you like.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# So what next?

Pramit Pal Chaudhari  
Agra, July 16

A LITTLE before midnight, President Pervez Musharraf's motorcade pulled out of the Jaypee hotel's premises. Musharraf was headed for the airport — and Islamabad — but everyone was left wondering where Indo-Pak relations were headed after the failed Agra summit.

One possibility is the Shimla Miracle. It is often forgotten that the 1972 Shimla talks were also publicly declared to have failed by Indira Gandhi's principal secretary, PN Dhar.

However, at the last minute, Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto held their famous "walk on the ridge" in Shimla.

Their few minutes together were enough for them to come to a last minute settlement that was signed in the middle of the night.

As long as Musharraf and Vajpayee talk, this could be repeated — perhaps even by telephone.

However, such an agreement would tend to carry a burden of threadbare legitimacy. A problem that has bedevilled Shimla ever since.

Another possibility is a holding action. India and Pakistan announce the barest of joint statements — or even two separate statements saying the same thing, basically saying nothing except that the two will hold future summits.

The primary purpose of this would be to save the three future summits — Vajpayee's visit to Islamabad, the side meeting at the United Nations General Assembly in September and the SAARC summit in November. The hope would be that the two would have better luck then.

The third possibility is: Total Warfare. Musharraf leaves

Agra with empty hands. There is no follow-up, the three future summits are called off or just allowed to die a natural death.

The General responds in a well-worn Pakistani manner: He pumps up militant activity in Kashmir to pre-Lahore levels.

Weapons, militants and RDX flow not only into the mountain state but into other parts of India like North Bengal or even southern India.

He resumes intense shelling along the Line of Control. This would be necessary to send militants across the border.

The sub-continental proxy war moves into high gear. India reimposes its diplomatic freeze. This would most likely bring Washington back into a South Asian fray that it has tended to stay away from.

Related reports and photographs on Pages 9, 10 & 11



Pervez Musharraf leaves for Islamabad.

## Just blame it on Sushma

Vinay Menon  
Agra July 16

EVERY SUMMIT has a fall guy. The only difference in Agra was that it had a fall girl. It was hard not to feel sorry for Sushma Swaraj who went from media darling on Sunday to becoming the woman who wrecked it all on Monday.

Her predicament was the consequence of three entirely separate factors. One: the Foreign Office and the PMO kept such a tight lid on the progress of the negotiations that nobody knew what was going on. When she told her bosses that the media demanded to know from the Information and Broadcasting Minister how things were going, they fobbed her off with vague generalities. An unthinking Swaraj repeated these generalities.

Two: The Pakistanis were perturbed by reports from back home that the Kashmir issue was being ignored at the sum-

mit. They needed to make a statement that reassured the constituency back home. And what better way of doing that than to attack Swaraj's vague generalities?

And three: The delegation-level talks hit a rough patch on Monday when a senior Minister

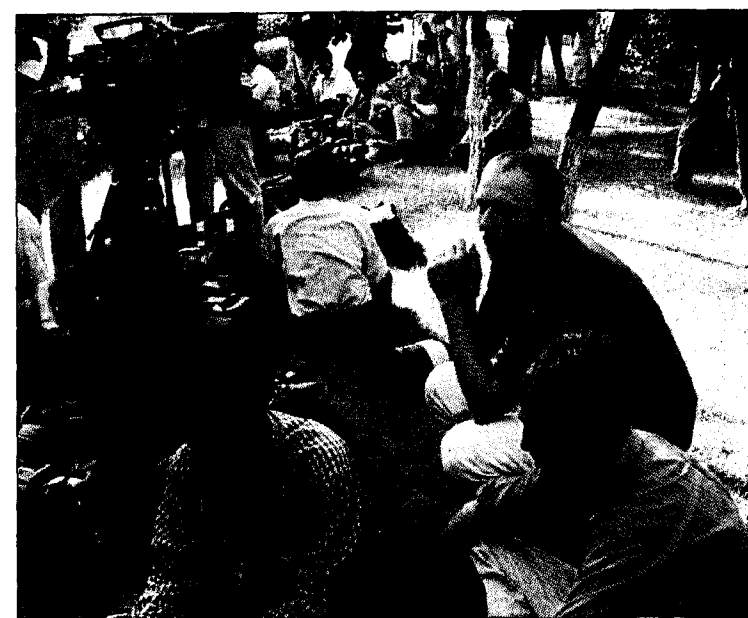
aggressively restated India's we-will-not-be-moved position on Kashmir. Unable to publicly express their anger at the Minister (the talks were secret, after all), the Pakistanis looked for a soft target to re-emphasise their commitment to Kashmir.

All three factors led inexorably to one conclusion. Blame it on Sushma; you can get your message across without attaching A B Vajpayee, L K Advani or any of the big guns.

If there is a moral to the story, it was this: Ministers should remain Ministers and spokespersons should remain spokespersons.



Fall girl



Cameramen keep vigil at the media centre in Agra as the talks drag on.

## A mouthful of Kashmir for breakfast

Vir Sanghvi  
Agra, July 16

THE PAKISTANIS ate their Eggs Florentine and gave curious looks to the other option on offer: uttapams. The man himself tried to enjoy his breakfast but none of the Indian editors and TV personalities invited to Agra's Amar Vilas would give General Musharraf much of an opportunity to bite into his chicken sausages. Only Pakistani Foreign Minister A Sattar was unaffected by the appetite-curdling solemnity of the occasion. He began eating the moment he sat down and chomped his way through the morning.

It had been billed as an occasion for Indian editors to get to know the General. Four years ago, Pakistan's President Farooq Leghari had hosted a similar breakfast at Delhi's Dum Pukht restau-

rant. But on that occasion, there were no TV cameras present. This time too, those who noticed the solitary PTV camera assumed that it was there for the purposes of record. Nobody on the Indian side recognised that we were the studio audience for the newest show in town: Breakfast With Pervez.

The star however, knew exactly what he was doing. Upset by reports that his domestic constituency had felt he was downplaying the Kashmir issue, the General dragged Kashmir into everything. Did he sabotage the Lahore agreement? Never mind that, we have to solve Kashmir. Would there be more talks? Yes, but there's no point talking unless we talk about Kashmir. Would he like some more coffee? That's not the point; not coffee but Kashmir. (Oh, all right, I made the last one up but you get the general idea.)

The Indian journo was either grimly satisfied by the surfacing of the obsession with Kashmir (hawks) or worried that the summit was clearly not going the way they had hyped it (peaceniks). With High Commissioner Ashraf Qazi playing facilitator, Musharraf allowed everyone who had a question to ask it. Those who did not have questions were allowed to make speeches, offer advice, tell him how the summit should be run and re-assure him that they thought that he was warm and cuddly.

The General clearly liked what he heard. He had made only one blunder — suggesting that the Indian press was constrained from talking about (yes, that again!) Kashmir — and he listened as journo after journo lectured him on democracy and freedom of the press. He handled most of the questions easily after a weak start against a Chandan

Mitra googly. He was a little perturbed by M J Akbar's query as to whether he would rein in the terrorists if the summit failed. My reference to his role as architect of Kargil drew a speech about how hurt he was at not being trusted (the poor dear!) but no explanation about Kargil. Pranoy Roy's incisive question about the legitimacy of a dictator lecturing us on the will of the people threw him. But all the rest were thwacked to the boundary.

And how did we feel at the end of it all? My guess is that some of us would have been less effusive if we knew that we were going to be on TV in two countries. But as for Musharraf, he's chosen his role: straightforward military man eager to improve relations but baffled by India's unwillingness to talk about Kashmir. And he played that role to perfection.

# Agra stuck in rut of history

## Musharraf flies back minus document

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Agra, July 16: History, President Pervez Musharraf will realise after tonight, is not easy to make. It's as difficult to break.

Years of mistrust and suspicion prevailed at the end of the summit at Agra, described by President K.K. Narayanan the other day as a city of love and reconciliation, as hour upon hour of talks between Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and between the respective delegations did not yield the document the two sides had hoped would lay the ground rules for future interaction.

The summit ended without a joint declaration that would have tied the leaders down to certain positions.

Even the modest expectation of a joint statement that would have simply said that Musharraf and Vajpayee discussed so and so issues also did not come at the end. "I am disappointed to inform all of you that although the commencement of the process and beginning of the journey has taken place, the destination of an agreed joint statement has not been reached," foreign ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao said in her one-sentence statement after Musharraf and his entourage left for Islamabad.

Musharraf's historic trip now appears to have simply ended with the promise of another trip some time in the unmentioned future by Vajpayee to Islamabad.



NIGHT SHOWS THE DAY: Pervez Musharraf and Jaswant Singh at a cultural programme in Jaypee Palace on Sunday night. (AFP)

Depending on what the various expectations were from the summit, the Agra exercise could be called an utter failure or a modest step forward and all the other gray shades in between.

It marks the resumption of the process of dialogue with a built-in continuity that lies in the probable return visit by Vajpayee. Given the collapse of the talks, there's a question mark over whether or not and when that visit will take place. Agra provided a platform where the two leaders got to know each other and assessed the domestic limitations of each and within those parameters the extent to which they can go.

As it appeared, they cannot go too far because, finally, the talks on a declaration broke down over familiar terrain — the acceptance, or lack of it, of the "centrality" of

Kashmir in the negotiations and cross-border terrorism, or violence as the Pakistanis call it.

Through the day today and through much of last night, possibilities swung back and forth between a joint statement and a declaration, finally to simply freeze.

At 1.30 pm, the third draft of a declaration went to the Indians but never came back, according to the Pakistanis. But there was still hope that the situation could be salvaged. Pakistan foreign minister Abdul Sattar amended the draft further. That, too, never came back.

Word was out late afternoon that there will be a joint signing ceremony, suggesting that a declaration was under way.

Finally, at around 10.30 pm, Musharraf decided to pay a courtesy call on Vajpayee before taking

off for Islamabad. He left in the black limousine a while before midnight and not through the front door.

But the possibility of a declaration had most likely receded in the morning itself after Musharraf's breakfast meeting with Indian editors where he first spoke extempore and then fielded questions, as in a full-fledged news conference. It was meant to be a response to information minister Sushma Swaraj's claim yesterday that the two leaders had discussed the nuclear issue, cross-border terrorism, trade and prisoners of war. She was silent on Kashmir.

This morning, Musharraf said for the most part he and Vajpayee had discussed Kashmir alone. He reaffirmed Pakistan's oft-stated position that without Kashmir there can be no dialogue.

While Musharraf was holding the meeting, Vajpayee was closeted with his deputies, L.K. Advani and Jaswant Singh. They were called out to be informed of the President's action. A meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security was held where it had become more or less clear that the hardliners were having the final say.

Soon after the telecast of Musharraf's interaction, hawks had convinced Advani that India should not make any compromises unless Pakistan accepted cross-border terrorism.

Initially, Abdul Sattar and later the high commissioner to India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, shuttled between Jaypee Palace and Amar Vilas hotels carrying words and fresh copies of the draft. Senior officials of the two sides had been negotiating with each other

until early morning. "Our officials sat up till four in the morning. The foreign secretary is still sleeping," Musharraf had told the editors.

Since morning, Vajpayee and Musharraf met and made their foreign ministers meet several times more to try and give shape to a document.

Indications from the Indian side suggest that Pakistan was insisting on a formulation that termination of the Kashmir issue must pave the way for normalisation of relations. This was not acceptable to the Indian side and that, too, when Pakistan refused to give the same kind of focus or link cross-border violence with the Kashmir issue.

FROM IDREES BAKHTIAR

Agra, July 16: Pakistan blamed India for the "failure" of the talks even as President Pervez Musharraf's courtesy visit to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee late tonight stretched to nearly 90 minutes before the entourage left for the flight back to Islamabad.

Pakistan Television has been showing a slide repeatedly announcing that Musharraf will address the press shortly after landing in Islamabad.

The official spokesman for the Pakistan government and its information secretary, Anwar Mahmud, was the first to lay the blame on India's door. He did not elaborate.

Later, the director-general of the Associated Press of Pakistan, who also doubles as an official spokesman, Jamil Mufti, said the draft of an agreement for a joint declaration was drawn up and submitted to Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh at 1.30 pm. The officials said that one after the other, two amendments were suggested from the Indian side. They were incorporated by the Pakistani officials who took the draft with them.

"The Indians took the draft with them to get it typed and they did not come back. Instead there was a telephone call informing us that Vajpayee has gone to lunch and that we can also have lunch," the spokesman said.

The President and his men waited till about 3 pm. Musharraf then sent foreign minister

Abdul Sattar and foreign secretary Inamul Haq to find out what was happening. The Indians said the draft was still being studied and suggested yet another amendment.

The Pakistanis said they had already agreed to two and no other change would be acceptable. They also asked how long they would have to keep waiting. This was around 4 pm. The Pakistani officials were told that information was on its way. But none was forthcoming despite waiting for five hours.

Musharraf then decided enough was enough and told his men he would return to Pakistan after a farewell call on Vajpayee. But what was expected to be a 10-minute meeting stretched to nearly 90 — almost as long as the first encounter between them yesterday.

As if to allay speculation triggered by Musharraf's prolonged stay at Jaypee Palace, Pakistan government spokesmen said India was to blame. One spokesman even said: "Vajpayee wanted to sign the declaration but Advani did not let him."

The officials said Musharraf had also formally asked for permission to address a news conference, but was not allowed. But the government said they would require some time to make security and other arrangements.

### QUOTE

**"I ignore Kashmir, I better buy back Neharwalli haveli and stay here"**

PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

### Hizb threat

The Pakistan-based Hizb-ul-Mujahideen warned that the breakdown of the summit would lead to escalation of violence in Kashmir, adds PTI.

## General takes Kashmir and Atal by the horns

### President performs, guns blazing

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Agra, July 16: Mr Vajpayee, you are an honourable man. Mr Vajpayee, you are a courageous man. Mr Vajpayee, you are a statesman. Mr Vajpayee, be also a realist.

"Kashmir is the main issue. Unless that is accepted, there can be no movement."

As apprehensions of the storm raised last night by information and broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj's statement that cross-border terrorism, the nuclear issue, trade and release of prisoners of war were discussed at the summit lingered at the break of morning over Agra, President Pervez Musharraf took, what he called, "the bull by the horns" at a breakfast meeting with Indian editors.

Before the food was put on the table, he laid out his cards neatly one by one, playing the ace again and again. It had to be Kashmir first, but certainly not the last.

"I am a realist," he said. "I have never said that refuse to talk about other issues." (But) I have seen the information minister peaking on TV, talking of everything... and not word on Kashmir."

"I can tell you now that the most part of my meetings with the Prime Minister was spent discussing Kashmir," he said.

In a measure of the damage Swaraj's statement led to the first interaction between the leaders of two countries after two years, the President laid the onus of upholding the dignity of the occasion, which, he obviously felt, had been sullied



Musharraf at the breakfast meet. (PTI)

by her remarks, on the "big neighbour".

He said: "There is a sincere and honest way of approaching things. There has to be unity between mind, heart and tongue."

If he shoved a lecture on propriety down the Indian side's throat, left somewhat dry after his masterly performance, the general also laid down a stage-by-stage approach to tackling the "main" — he was no longer calling it the "core" — issue. In clear terms, he enumerated five steps (see chart on Page 6) that he hoped would lead to a resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Again, stressing the fact that he was a realist, the President said he would go back from the summit satisfied, if he and Vajpayee could progress at least until stage two. "Step one was initiation of dialogue, which has already been achieved. I thank Prime Minister Vajpayee for this courageous decision."

The rest of the four steps — what he called "entering troubled waters" — he left for a future date to be tackled.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ▶

## The voice behind Sushmaspeak

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Agra, July 16: Conspiracies are not new to Agra, given its Mughal antecedents. Aurangzeb had conspired to put his father Shah Jehan in incarceration at Agra fort across the Yamuna from Taj Mahal.

The buzz of a plot is again humming within 2 km of the Taj at Jaypee Palace where the Indian delegation is staying.

Did Sushma Swaraj make a slip of the tongue, or did she let a few words slide off her tongue? The words — that Pervez Musharraf and Atal Bihari Vajpayee discussed almost everything but Kashmir — made the summit take a vicious midnight turn away from its main purpose.

Neither the government nor anyone in the BJP would admit that Sushma's statement was a programmed plant in the media by the Indian delegation. "They think we did it deliberately. It (Kashmir) was not a deliberate omission. No question of denying such an issue. I was only highlighting the positive aspects," she herself said today.

Sources said she was asked to give the impression that the first 90-minute talk between the two leaders was very positive and that she could mention the issues without going into substance.

The pat explanation then would be that she simply succumbed to the insistent questioning by the media thirsting after some news about the summit amid a complete information blackout. It would also presume that she did not realise the importance of what she was saying.

Sushma Swaraj is nobody's fool.

Those that are prepared to give her the benefit of the doubt are dismissing it as a simple faux pas.

Rumours swirling at the media centre here even suggested that the lady was upset with the stir she had "unwittingly" created. If she was, it was not evident as she flitted about, like yesterday, at the media centre.

If there was indeed a conspiracy, in which Sushma was a mere pawn or was privy to the plot, what did it seek to achieve?

One, it was a way of telling Musharraf that hardliners within the BJP would not brook any compromise on Kashmir, that Vajpayee — like the Pakistan President — had to work under severe internal compulsions and could go only this far and no farther. And, if push came to shove from the Pakistan side on Kashmir, the summit could even end in disaster.

Keen on showing a measure of success, Musharraf — this line of argument suggests — might have been ready to bend a little more. It was not clear if his calling Kashmir the "main" and not the "core" issue and readiness to describe it as an "issue" and not a "dispute" at his morning meeting with Indian editors had anything to do with the sequence of events unleashed by Sushma yesterday.

In that case, Vajpayee would be a party to the plot. It would also suggest that the long first meeting did not really go as well as thought, that the two leaders were still grappling with the historical deadlock over Kashmir.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ▶

# Bull by the horns

► FROM PAGE 1

Upping the ante for the talks that were to follow with the Prime Minister, he said all he expected from Agra to emerge was an acceptance from India of the fact that Kashmir was a dispute where three sides were involved — India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people.

This means that the Pakistan side would be looking at the summit as a success if the final document acknowledged this longstanding Islamabad demand, couched in whatever diplomatic niceties.

India has never accepted Kashmir as a dispute and has described it as an internal matter where Pakistan has no role to play. Musharraf was not ready to accept it as a "problem" since that presumes it is again an internal problem. There are suggestions that the Indian side in the negotiations had offered the words "unresolved problem" as an alternative to "dispute" to be put in the final document.

"Let us not behave like an ostrich," Musharraf said. This was a situation where he could not do business with India. "There seems to be a constraint on government officials and the Indian media in talking about Kashmir."

In order to arrive at step two, the President was prepared to be flexible.

"Okay, you are sensitive about calling it a dispute. I'll call it an issue." "But I cannot live in make-believe. I am not saying anything that is not real."

Confidence-building measures in peripheral areas would be futile without addressing the main

## STEP BY STEP

- Step I: Initiation of dialogue
- Step II: Acceptance of Kashmir as a dispute with three sides being party to it
- Step III: Search for a solution
- Step IV: Negate certain solutions, for which national consensus is needed on either side
- Step V: Discuss the options left

issue. "What confidence building measures? The biggest confidence-building measure is Kashmir."

He admitted that there were compulsions for Vajpayee to raise other issues and he sought understanding in return. "There are compulsions on my part to talk about Kashmir. If I ignore Kashmir, I better buy back Neharwali haveli and stay here."

The President then described his domestic considerations. He spoke of the mistrust that the people of Pakistan had about the Indian government. "The extremists will say (about the summit) that they have not interacted. They have not discussed the main issue. We need to kill that suspicion."

In spite of the seemingly wavering tone on Kashmir, the President seemed to suggest that he was keen on progress. "An atmosphere has been created. I think, I believe the public wants a solution."

"The summit is historic. The gains from it should also be historic," he said.

# The voice behind Sushmaspeak

► FROM PAGE 1

The other scenario is that, fearing that the Prime Minister in his eagerness to achieve a breakthrough might yield too much ground on Kashmir, a section of the government and party tried to sabotage the talks through Sushma, who is known to be close to L.K. Advani.

It can be said now that some people had an inkling that the Indian side would come out with a deliberate statement to suggest that Kashmir was not being discussed at all and that the summit was going very badly.

A senior journalist known for his proximity to the ruling party hinted on a television channel that the summit was almost lost, though he stopped just short of calling it a failure.

On the Pakistani side, too, there are suspicions — which at least one senior media commentator gave voice to — that it was a deliberate leak.

For those who believe Sushma's action was part of a conspiracy, her statement was the culmination of a series of actions aimed at reining in the enthusiasm for the summit and keeping it within the limits of acceptance for hardliners in the BJP and outside.

The first of these actions was Advani's plain speaking with Musharraf. Advani went to the heart of the matter for hard in the government by go. as far as to accuse Musharraf of sheltering Dawood Ibrahim, an unheard of, protocol-wise, a home minister to discuss an individual fugitive with a head of state.



# We cannot brush Kashmir under the carpet, says Musharraf

By Malini Parthasarathy

AGRA, JULY 16. In what turned out to be a unique attempt to appeal directly to the Indian public and presumably intended to inject fresh momentum into a stalemated negotiating process at Agra, the visiting Pakistani President reiterated his case at a breakfast meeting with senior journalists and editors, that unless India acknowledged that Kashmir was the main issue of contention between the two countries, no progress could be made. "If we do not face issues squarely, catch the bull by the horns, if we don't put the horse before the cart, we cannot move forward," he said. Talk of moving forward on trade, economy, culture, while "you are killing each other" suggests a "make-believe world", he maintained.

It was evident that General Musharraf's meeting with editors and senior journalists this morning which, it turned out, was aired on television shortly after, was now seen by the disappointed Pakistani negotiators who had spent the whole night in intense discussions which had yielded very little as a possible opportunity to ventilate the Pakistani side of the picture to a wider Indian audience via the journalists present. The interaction with the Pakistani President also offered an information-starved media perhaps the first glimpses of the direction in which the talks were proceeding, of which there was absolutely no clue all of the previous day, with no briefings taking place on the Indian side. The General at his affable best also wasted no time in putting forward his arguments without mincing words. Indicating the stalemate already in evidence that morning, General Musharraf said that India and Pakistan needed "to turn the corner" and that "every country has its principles, its dignity, its honour to guard". He argued that as the bigger country, it was India which had to ensure the honour and dignity of the smaller country, Pakistan.

## Criticises Sushma's remarks

But what showed most starkly that things were not proceeding smoothly on track at that stage, was General Musharraf's pointed and public criticism of the Minis-



The Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, speaking during a breakfast meeting with Indian newspaper editors in Agra on Monday. — PTI

ter for Information and Broadcasting, Ms. Sushma Swaraj, for her remarks on television the previous night. He expressed his regret that she had suggested that the bilateral discussions had been on trade, cross-border terrorism and the nuclear issue. "But not a word on Kashmir!" he said, in spite of the fact that most of his discussion with the Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee had been spent on Kashmir. "We have to confront reality as it is, we must not brush it under the carpet." A degree of flexibility, openmindedness, understanding each other's problems, were prerequisites for forward movement, he asserted.

The Pakistani President's remarks served to highlight the fact that at that point the obvious gap in the positions of the two sides remained unbridgeable. He hastened to add that he recognised that one must "never close the door shut in diplomacy" and that the process of dialogue must continue. Indicating that even if the current round of talks had failed, he was ready to continue the dialogue process, he said that the two sides "would continue the dialogue process, continue to adjust our mutual stances on the issues involved..." He also praised the Prime Minister for having invited him and said that he respected him for the dignity with which Mr. Vajpayee put forth the Indian position, his statesmanship in initiating the dialogue

process and the understanding that he showed "towards our concerns". But, "we need to translate this into some form". He said that the officials of both sides had been working through the night until 4 a.m. that morning to narrow the gap in the perceptions.

## Will look into POWs issue

The Pakistani President made a specific mention of the Indian request to return Indian POWs in Pakistani prisons and noted that the Prime Minister had made a specific reference to a case of an old couple who believed their son had been incarcerated in Pakistan since 1971. He had assured Mr. Vajpayee that he would personally involve himself in this matter. But it was clear that the General could not resist linking these "sad stories" to what he saw as the cause — Kashmir.

In the course of his responses to questions from the senior journalists present there, he made clear his preferences in terms of the negotiating sequence. While he saw "Step One" of the process being the initiation of a dialogue, he saw the next step, "Step Two" as he called it, as the "acceptance of the reality that Kashmir was the main issue that had to be resolved." In this, he said that there would have to be a structure of dialogue into which would have to be put in "an urgency". In other words, he was calling for a time frame for the structured dialogue

on Kashmir. He reiterated that the people of Pakistan suspected that there was "a design" behind the Indian reluctance to acknowledge Kashmir as the main issue or as a dispute. He was even prepared to drop the insistence on the use of the word "dispute" in relation to the Kashmir issue and go along with India's preference for the word "issue", as long as there could be some forward movement on the issue. He underlined again that while he was not against moving forward on other issues such as trade and commerce, that could not happen when "political activity is at zero point", there would have to be progress on all issues in tandem. "No leader in Pakistan can allow the sidelining of Kashmir."

Asked how he saw the fact that he was perceived in India as the "architect of Kargil" and how he expected India to get over the trauma of Kargil, General Musharraf recalled the sense of pain and hurt in Pakistan from Indian actions in relation to the Mukti Bahini in 1971, and to the Siachen controversy. "Hurt and pain have been caused to both sides, we have to forget the past and move forward."

## 'I have majority support'

General Musharraf was not disconcerted when he was asked as to how he could show such concern for the "will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir" when he did not seem to be worried about the will of the people of Pakistan. He maintained that it was he who was introducing democracy to Pakistan, which had never existed before. Noting that elections would be held next year, he said that his present position had been "thrust" on him and he had the support of the majority of the Pakistani people.

While at the end of this breakfast session with the Pakistani leader, there might have been the sense that there were no real surprises, the same themes being aired, there was also the indication that General Musharraf had a surprising new determination to do his best to persuade the Government and the people of India that time it was to recognise the urgency of the Pakistani perception.

THE HINDU

MUSHARRAF LEAVES, SAYS INDIA: NEW JOURNEY HAS BEGUN, DESTINATION NOT REACHED

# Kashmir, cross-border terrorism derail talks

By C. Raja Mohan

**AGRA, JULY 16.** After teetering on the brink of a political breakthrough in the last couple of days, India and Pakistan today stepped short of defining a new road-map to transform their bilateral relations.

Fundamental differences over Kashmir and cross-border terrorism turned out to be too strong to let both the countries reach a broad accommodation of each other's core political concerns.

As a result, the attempts to craft an "Agra Declaration" that would have helped India and Pakistan embark on "the high road to peace and prosperity" collapsed late tonight.

The second attempt in two years by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to improve relations with Pakistan did not succeed. Indo-Pak relations may now get worse before they get better.

A spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs expressed India's "disappointment" that although a new journey has begun with Pakistan, "the destination of a joint statement has not been reached".

The two leaders met six times in Agra over the last couple of days, and drove their delegations. Gen. Musharraf delayed his departure by nearly 10 hours and cancelled his visit to Ajmer. In the end, an understanding proved elusive.

Earlier in the day, the revelation that an "Agra Declaration" was in the works raised hopes that history would again be made in this city that had been at the heart of a glorious chapter of the collective past of the sub-continent.

But as the two delegations battled to overcome differences on Kashmir and cross-border terrorism, a despondent night fell over Agra reflecting the depth of the political divide between India and Pakistan. While they could not grasp at an "Agra Declaration", India and Pakistan could not even produce a routine joint statement that would have recorded an agreed story of the Agra summit.

According to Indian sources, the draft "Agra Declaration" had nine articles, and would have constituted a significant advance over the Lahore declaration signed by Mr. Vajpayee and the then Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, in February 1999.

Unlike the Lahore document, the draft "Agra

Declaration" sought to focus specially on the problems of Jammu and Kashmir and cross-border terrorism.

While details on how the talks broke down were not revealed by the officials, the nature of the problem is not difficult to divine. According to informed sources, India was prepared to accept Pakistan's demand for an acknowledgement of the "centrality" of the Kashmir problem in bilateral relations and offer a mechanism to address it seriously. But India, in return, wanted some movement in Pakistan's position. If it were to be "central", India seemed to say, it must also be "bilateral".

In agreeing to an expeditious addressal of the Kashmir problem, India might have wanted a burial of all elements that smacked of "internationalisation" of the Kashmir issue such as the U.N. resolutions on Kashmir. But Pakistan appears to have insisted on emphasising the "right to self-determination" for the Kashmiri people.

On the question of a framework for negotiation, India perceives a clear linkage between Kashmir and international terrorism. India is ready, according to sources, to elevate the discussion on

Kashmir to a political level and promise a continual negotiation.

In return for addressing Pakistan's core political concern, India wants Pakistan to deal seriously with the questions of cross-border terrorism. In his presentation at the plenary level exchanges between the two delegations on Sunday, Mr. Vajpayee emphasised that "a framework to address the differences between us on Jammu and Kashmir would have to include the issue of cross-border terrorism in its ambit".

Pakistan has never acknowledged its support to cross-border terrorism. But Gen. Musharraf has argued that once substantive talks on Kashmir are initiated, they would "have an indirect effect" on the level of violence in the State.

In short, he is linking the reduction of violence to progress in resolving the Kashmir dispute. But India would want the commitment from Pakistan to be a little more credible than that. India also does not want to negotiate on Kashmir with the gun pointed at its head. No wonder then that the differences on this subject had been so difficult to resolve.

In the end, it turned out to be a difficult choice

for Pakistan. New Delhi appeared to offer new formulations on Kashmir — the definition of the problem as well as a mechanism to address it. But Pakistan might have found it difficult to reciprocate.

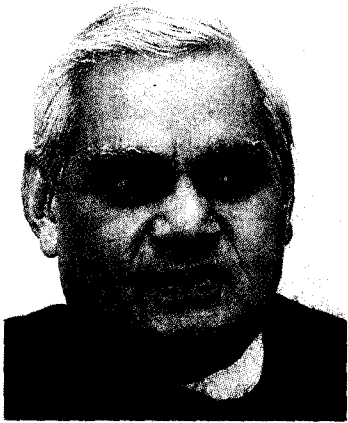
There were less controversial elements in the draft "Agra Declaration" which are said to have focused on nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures, the Siachen issue, trade and economic cooperation, and expanding people-to-people cooperation. The declaration is also said to have a separate paragraph on narcotics and international terrorism.

The draft declaration also apparently talked of a sustained high level political exchanges, including annual meetings between the heads of government and biannual meetings between the Foreign Ministers. It remains to be seen if these proposed exchanges can be sustained in the wake of the unsuccessful Agra summit.

Gen. Musharraf left for Islamabad shortly before midnight after a meeting with Mr. Vajpayee, but there was no word as to what transpired at their over an hour-long interaction.

# We will counter terrorism: PM

180-1 By Neena Vyas 17/7  
AGRA, JULY 16. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has over the last two days of the summit talks here been asserting the need



"to include the issue of cross-border terrorism" in the "ambit" of the Kashmir issue.

In fact, he let it be known that India was determined to counter "terrorism" from "across the border" and it had the stamina to continue to resolutely deal with the continuing violence. The message was clear — India would not be deterred by the daily violence in Kashmir. It had been meeting it and could respond to it effectively. That was not the way the issue could be resolved.

In the opening statement at the start of the first round of one-to-one discussions on Sunday, the issue was raised. This was clear from the copy of the statement released to the press here today. Curiously, the statement which was withheld from the press on Sunday was

made available today, perhaps to "counter" the Musharraf onslaught that came at the breakfast meeting with Editors here this morning.

The statement reiterated India's stance that there was a need to resolve all outstanding issues to establish peace and friendship with Pakistan. The "core concern" of the peoples of the two countries was their struggle against poverty, want, hunger and deprivation, Mr. Vajpayee said. The statement

**5 soldiers killed as militants attack army camp: Page 11**

more than made clear that India was not running away from a discussion on Kashmir. The emphasis, nevertheless, was on a "broad approach" across a "spectrum of possibilities in our relationship."

The Prime Minister pointed out that in the run-up to the visit of the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, India had announced decisions on encouraging people-to-people ties, facilitating travel and addressing some other mutual concerns. This was to create a conducive atmosphere.

While not denying differences in the views of the two countries, Mr. Vajpayee said that India was "willing to address those differences to move forward." He asserted the need for a "framework to address the differences between us on Jammu and Kashmir, which would have to include the issue of cross-border terrorism in its ambit. We can also look at other confidence-building measures to further encourage this process." The points he mentioned related to the re-

lease of prisoners-of-war (a human problem), the arrest of the Kandahar hijackers who should then be "handed over to us", the problem of fishermen from both countries inadvertently straying into the waters of the other (on which India expected a reciprocal gesture to the announcement already made it), the upkeep of Hindu and Sikh religious shrines in Pakistan, enhancement of trade between the two countries, and finally a road map which could take the future bilateral relations forward towards peace and amity. It was an opportunity that they must grasp, an opportunity to create the peace that had eluded both for 54 years.

## ALL IN THE GAME



DU

## U.S. for sustained Indo-Pak. engagement

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JULY 16. The United States has said that it strongly supports sustained engagement between India and Pakistan at senior level as the best way to address long standing disputes.

In taking note of reports that the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, will be visiting Pakistan, the Bush administration has said that it has reason to hope that the Agra summit will be the start of such a continuing process.

"We strongly support sustained engagement at a senior level between India and Pakistan as a best way to address long-term bilateral disputes and make real progress toward reduction of tension and resolution of differences through peaceful means," a State Department official told *The Hindu*.

Referring to the reports of Mr.

Vajpayee's acceptance of a return visit to Pakistan, the official said the administration has "reason to hope this meeting will be the start of such a continuing process". The Bush administration was closely following the extended summit in Agra between the two leaders.

Privately, some have been taking a positive outlook to the goings on in the last three days. Media reporting of the summit has been along factual lines with some reports on Monday taking note of the sharp differences between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Gen. Pervez Musharraf's meeting with senior editors of Indian publications has also been taken note of.

Even before the summit got under way, administration officials were making the point that the leaders of India and Pakistan would have to sustain the momentum of high-level talks; and the argument had been that discussions involving senior bureaucrats will not be getting anywhere.

The Bush administration has been making the point that there was a lot going for Pakistan in the summit. For instance, Washington has made it known clearly that it was for the early lifting of post-1998 sanctions against India; but this was not to be the case as far as Islamabad was concerned.

In an interview to Reuters prior to the summit, the Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Richard Armitage, argued that the outcome of the summit could have an impact on the sanctions debate with respect to Pakistan. Mr. Armitage said that the hope was that the summit "leads to some sort of process of discussion between India and Pakistan and obviously something like that could have an effect" on the sanctions debate in this country.

# When

By Neena Vyas

AGRA, July 16. The propaganda war, a euphemism for disinformation, unleashed by both India and Pakistan on the sidelines of the summit talks here between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has nearly ruined the outcome.

It seemed that the two governments were unable to resist the temptation of addressing their "home" constituencies even while the two delegations were struggling to find common ground. And, there were disturbing signs of discord within the Indian team as well, with Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Information and Broadcasting Minister, definitely the heroine of this other power game, for it seemed that at least the External Affairs Ministry did not know she was to brief the press or give an interview on the talks "before" the official statement yesterday.

Since July 14 the drama has unfolded act by act, scene by scene. And even hours before the curtains were to come down on the summit, a "statement" by the Prime Minister was released on an unsuspecting media. Some television channels carried it as "breaking news" when in fact it was a statement read out yesterday as his opening comments at the start of the talks. It was as if the prosecution were stating its case and releasing it as "news" when the courtroom was awaiting the final verdict. It was that statement which spelt out India's concerns

# propaganda played

in eight points, including trade, people-to-people contacts, cross-border terrorism. In short a "composite dialogue". This was perhaps the final act in the propaganda war, a response perhaps to Gen. Musharraf's widely televised breakfast meeting with editors here this morning.

Peeved by Pakistan ignoring India's request that the Hurriyat leaders not be invited to the tea reception hosted by the Pakistan High Commissioner in Delhi on July 14, it seems a plan was drawn up in Delhi itself — before leaders left for the Agra summit — to use the services of Ms. Swaraj to bombard the media with "positive" information.

If Act I belonged to Pakistan, which used the Hurriyat controversy effectively, Act II definitely was India's. On Sunday, even before any official statement on the progress of the talks was made available to the press, Ms. Swaraj jumped the gun, listing before cameras issues raised at the summit — the nuclear issue, the question of release of prisoners-of-war, cross-border terrorism and trade. Not a word on Kashmir.

(It became apparent later in the day that in fact quite a lot of time was spent that morning discussing Kashmir, which Pakistan continued to insist was the "core" or the "main" issue.) The official statement about 40 minutes later was cautious and diplomatic, but the damage was done. After all, a Cabinet Minister had categorically spoken about issues raised, and Kashmir



**The Information and Broadcasting Minister, Ms. Sushma Swaraj, addressing mediapersons in Agra on Monday.** — AP

was not one of them. All hell broke loose in Islamabad, and the Pakistani team (that was Act III) responded here late at night with a statement saying Kashmir had been raised persistently by Gen. Musharraf.

Some officials here have confirmed that Mr. Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister, was "livid with anger" at the total impropriety of what Ms. Swaraj had done, although today, when asked, she stated categorically, that her speaking on television had been "cleared". Cleared by whom, is

# spoilsport

the big question. If the Prime Minister was not trying to sabotage his own summit, who was it? Who can say, but what is certain is that the Sushma episode went according to plan, but it was difficult to tell who was the director of that act.

It is believed that Ms. Swaraj was summoned by the Prime Minister who wanted to know from his Information and Broadcasting Minister as to what — or who — prompted her to make an appearance before television cameras at a critical moment in the summit.

Act IV: Today Ms. Swaraj went around television studios "explaining" that she did not deliberately omit mentioning the discussion of Kashmir, "that was obvious, Kashmir was being discussed, why else did we invite Gen. Musharraf?" She said she had only said the other issues she mentioned were raised. "I never said that Kashmir was not raised." She claimed she was trying to keep up the optimism about the summit, and "be positive."

But many people here, including political analysts, feel that the frank manner in which Gen. Musharraf spoke about the contentious issues between India and Pakistan at his breakfast meeting with editors today may have been the direct outcome of the Sushma folly. (He had referred to the Sushma episode during that meeting). That was Act V, and Gen. Musharraf was the hero and director of that episode.

# A step back in the hi-tech age

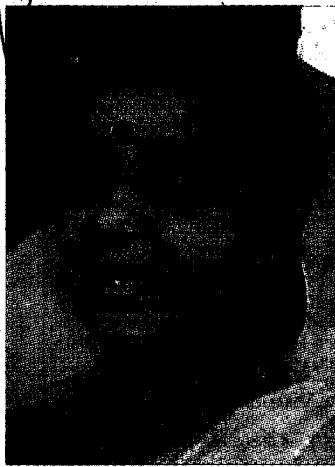
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

AGRA, July 16. — This may be the electronic age, but the babus in the Indian government appear to live in prehistory, only occasionally managing to respond. The way the government's media managers have managed (mismanaged?) the coverage of the most important summit in recent years is a study in how not to conduct events.

General Pervez Musharraf today stole the initiative from the PMO and foreign ministry by converting a breakfast meeting with journalists into a press conference. In the hour-long interface, telecast nationwide, he summed up the course of his talks with Mr Atal Behari Vaj-

payee. He appeared reasonable despite iterating his stand forcefully, and he got all those present to accept what New Delhi doesn't accept: that Kashmir is a point of dispute between the neighbours. All other minor problems would be sorted out only if the Kashmir issue was resolved, he said.

In the afternoon, India woke up to the General's media coup.



Mrs Sushma Swaraj

But how did it respond? It only circulated a four-page document, the text of the Prime Minister's opening statement at the summit plenary session yesterday. But why was the text not distributed yesterday? There was no comment.

The other instance of the media mismanagement is the absence of the foreign ministry's spokesperson from the

media centre. Her understudy's steady response to any query is: "Your guess is as good as mine." Most Indian officials kept their mobile phones switched off because they were "busy attending meetings". A senior foreign ministry official said: "We don't conduct summits through TV channels".

An analyst said there has rarely been such a "complete lack of any official information. Everyone is asking what's happening, and nobody seems to know. All those who know are secluded."

Mrs Sushma Swaraj, tried to fill the gap yesterday, but her comments only prompted the Pakistani delegation to issue a

■ See SUSHMA: page 8

## SUSHMA: *In bad taste*

(Continued from page 1)

late-night statement iterating Islamabad's stand on Kashmir.

General Musharraf told journalists in his breakfast meeting that he had seen the I&B minister's interview and that "she talked of everything but Kashmir, when the bulk of the time was spent discussing Kashmir."

His principal information officer, Mr Ashfaq Ahmad Gondal, said Mrs Swaraj's statements were "in bad taste" and had created "bitterness".

Mrs Swaraj, however, said she spoke in her "capacity as I&B minister and with full responsibility. There has been a difference of perception by the Pakistani officials. Any child knows the conversation would have focused on Kashmir, but I was expressing my pleasure that the discussions

had proceeded beyond that issue also."

The minister was not a member of the Indian delegation, but she was flown in to Agra reportedly to manage the media crew.

The opposite is the scene in the Pakistani camp. Mr Gondal kept supplying the updates every few minutes. He was the first to announce that Gen Musharraf had called off his Ajmer trip.

He said the President would have an one-to-one talk with Mr Vajpayee for the fourth time this afternoon. For an hour, he held out the hope of a media briefing by the General.

The foreign ministry's external publicity officials didn't "have a clue" and said the joint declaration was being worked on. They were no even certain whether there would be a "joint statement" or a "joint declaration."

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# Pervez hero, Atal zero after talks: VHP

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 16

1717  
THE VISHWA Hindu Parishad (VHP) today said the Indo-Pak summit could not be described as a success as it had failed to meet certain expectations. Instead, it had ended up projecting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf as a "hero" on the international scene.

The Sangh affiliate also criticised Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for showing "undue haste" in accepting General

Musharraf's invitation to visit Pakistan and stressed that the latter could not be trusted.

Acharya Dharmendra, a member of the VHP's central Margdarshak Mandal, urged the Prime Minister not to accept Pakistan's invitation till the country established its good faith by agreeing not to raise the Kashmir issue in future and ensuring protection of the rights of the Hindu and Sikh minorities residing there.

Reacting to General Musharraf's statement that Kashmir

was a central issue for the dialogue, he said it was the only issue on which no talks should be held at all. While accepting the Pakistani invitation, Vajpayee must ensure that it is not done at the cost of reducing the strength of Indian security forces deployed in Kashmir or Siachen, the Hindu leader who sat on a two-day fast here protesting the summit talks, said.

VHP senior vice-president Acharya Giriraj Kishore said Musharraf had been unnecessarily projected in an exaggerated

manner by the Indian authorities and the media, which had made an "international hero" out of him. Vajpayee, on the other hand, could turn out to be a "zero" in the whole affair, the VHP leader said while expressing his displeasure with the liberal outlook displayed by the Prime Minister.

He also defended Information and Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj's controversial statement which attracted strong criticism from the Pakistani delegation.

## Summit to Summit

When a long evening of crucial summiteering separates the writing of an editorial and its publication the following morning, it is best that hazardous predictions are entirely avoided. More so with the example of the Simla summit before us. Pundits declared the 1972 Muree meeting between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto a failure, relying on inside information that talks had irretrievably broken down. What they didn't reckon with was the ingenuity of the two leaders, who decided that they must meet by themselves without the aid of their respective bureaucratic entourages. Result: What was deemed in the media as a failure turned out, in fact, to be a success. It is a different matter that Bhutto never could implement what was informally decided at that meeting: To gradually endow to the LoC with the characteristics of a permanent international border. Over a quarter century has elapsed since, and India today hosts another summit between the two countries, though, this time in entirely different circumstances. In 1972, Pakistan was on the defensive, having lost not just a war with India but the entire territory of East Pakistan. Significantly, while Indira insisted that Kashmir should be discussed, it was Bhutto who skirted the issue. The logic of recounting that bit of forgotten history here is to dispel the popular notion that India is averse to discussing Kashmir. But why go that far? In Lahore two years ago, India and Pakistan jointly agreed that they would "intensify efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir."

The indications from Agra, as we go to press, are happily positive. Like Indira and Bhutto many years ago, the Indian prime minister and the visiting general dispensed with aides and exchanged views in a one-on-one that extended for over an hour and half. That general Musharraf felt confident enough to invite Mr Vajpayee to Pakistan suggests a determination to end the talks on a constructive note. Should this optimism, in fact, prove true, then a new chapter will have begun in the so far troubled Indo-Pak relations. Sceptics will, no doubt, scoff at all the fuss: After all, any agreement at Agra can only amount to resuming a process that was started in Lahore. True, but Kargil dissipated much of the confidence built in Lahore. In that sense, the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit is an achievement in itself. Kargil happened even as Mr Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif were enclosed in a warm embrace. That general Musharraf is seen as the author of that invasion came as additional discomfiture to both sides. Yet, against all the pessimism, not to mention the extreme rhetoric on both sides, the signals from Agra seem positive. Mr Vajpayee's handshake with the general was admittedly a little stiff, but the crowds that turned up for a glimpse of the general were almost as enthusiastic as those that thronged the whereabouts of Bhutto and Benazir in Simla. The general contributed to the positive atmospherics by visiting Rajghat and proclaiming his faith in the ideals of non-violence. President Narayanan perhaps best summed up the mood when, in his banquet speech, he spoke of Indo-Pak cooperation as envisioned by Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Not many people may know that in his speech to Pakistan's constituent assembly on August 11, 1947, Jinnah outlined a completely secular vision for the new country. A little bit of Gandhi and a little bit of Jinnah may be the way to the future. Hopefully...



# Kargil II, waged with precision on screen

FROM SUJAN DUTTA

Agra, July 16: Pervez Musharraf and his team have scored a Kargil at the Agra Summit, this time in the media. Pakistan's spin doctors have won for their General precious mileage that has left Indian media hounds gasping — and grasping — for information.

The sight of Musharraf tackling questions from the crème-de-la-crème of Indian journalism, the timing of the late night statement that put Kashmir first on the agenda of the summit and a near total blackout of official information till even seven hours after his meeting was beamed to international audiences, barely moved Indian media managers here. Late in the afternoon, a full day-and-a-half after the first meeting, the government distributed copies of the preliminary statement made by Vajpayee in his first 90-minute meeting with Musharraf.

"There are compulsions on my part to talk about Kashmir. If I ignore Kashmir, I better buy back Neharwali haveli back and stay here," Musharraf told the editors, flooring them with his candour.

"They have taken the pants off the Indian side. For us there is a total information vacuum," summed up Vinod Mehta, editor of *Outlook*.

From Kargil to Agra, Musharraf, thus far identified in the mainstream media as architect of the 1999 war that killed hundreds of young Indians, has undergone a metamorphosis. If he is not being lionised, he is not being demonised either.

In the weeks following the summit, this could turn out to be the biggest loss for the Vajpayee administration that must be preparing to take the flak from the far Right. Already, Jammu and Kashmir Panthers' Party chief Bhim Singh has circulated a statement that held the Prime Minister responsible for providing Musharraf with such a platform, a day after the general had also

7/16 1999

**'I HAVE SEEN HER TALKING OF EVERYTHING ... AND NOT A WORD ON KASHMIR'**



Musharraf greets Sushma Swaraj at the President's banquet a day before the Indo-Pak spat over the minister's statement. (AFP)

got his way in meeting Hurriyat leaders.

But Musharraf was only looking over his shoulder, mindful of the noise that he might have to face back home, if the summit ended on a win-win note for India.

"The general's meeting with editors this morning tells the Pakistani audience that he continues to be steadfast in his commitment to the Kashmir dispute. Voices in Pakistan that were worrying over whether the Taj Summit and the Indian approach will waylay him

can now be assured. Remember, Ayub Khan lost his job because he was perceived to have given in to the Indian side led by Lal Bahadur Shastri in Tashkent," a senior Pakistani pro-establishment columnist remarked.

Pakistan Television's was the only crew allowed into Amar vilas for Musharraf's meeting with editors this morning. They gave footage first to NDTV and then to other news channels.

Through the day, at the media centre and in the Mughal Shera-

ton, where most journalists are camping, hacks lazed around, monitoring television channels and turning to any and every low, middle and senior Indian official who came into sight.

It was in similar circumstances yesterday, that Union information and broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj gave her version of the summit story, minutes before the official briefing that was merely a sketchy statement to the effect that the talks were "very cordial".

But Swaraj failed where Rashid Quereshi succeeded. The Pakistani major-general, a confidant of Musharraf and his official spokesman, just stuck to the statement and refused to answer questions on the issues of the talks despite being badgered no end. The Pakistani version did come out at night and ensured that it got full play while Swaraj was beginning to appear as the spoiler who had spoken out of turn.

"The (Indian) government should not have left it to a mere MEA

spokesperson. Someone senior like Jaswant Singh at least should have been deputed," remarked Vinod Mehta. MEA officials said they were going by the book and by orders.

One MEA official, refusing to be identified, said over telephone from Jaypee Palace Hotel — the venue of the summit — "we are talking serious business and are not indulging in a PR exercise. We will give out what we have to give out when we want to give it out."

## GENERAL'S MANY FACES

### The realist

My officials tell me in diplomacy, doors are never closed. We will not close doors. We must continue to talk

### The reasonable man

If we stick to our positions, we can't move forward. There has to be flexibility, understanding of our positions

### The soldier

I'm a soldier myself. If there are PoWs in Pakistani jails, I will personally look into it

### Gives as good as he gets

If you talk about Kargil, we talk about Siachen

### He's compassionate

Asked how he felt about militants killing innocent people in Kashmir, he said it was deplorable. But calls a spade a spade — such things have happened elsewhere in the world whenever there is a "freedom struggle"

### Is he trustworthy?

If I cannot be trusted, why did they call me here?

### Doesn't shirk responsibility

I was the chief of army staff during Kargil

### He is legit

Things happened on October 12 (1999). I was thrust into this position. I thank my predecessor for that in the interest of Pakistan. He had to go. The majority of the people support me. You can come to Pakistan and see for yourself

### The democrat

I am going to hold elections next year. The local governments that are coming up in Pakistan are the most revolutionary. Democracy is being introduced by me. It never existed before

### The editors' verdict

We have not had such frank discussions with the Indian government ever

# Never close the door shut, ever, says Musharraf

## India and Pakistan try to break joint-declaration deadlock, raise hopes of a breakthrough

NEWS & AGENCIES  
AGRA, JULY 16

HOPE and anxiety hung over Agra as Indian and Pakistani camps deliberated on a joint statement till late at night. Though a face-saving formula looked remote when they wound up the talks yesterday, the prospect of a joint declaration raised hopes of a breakthrough today.

As the deliberations went on and on, indicating that the talks were deadlocked over the declaration, President Pervez Musharraf cancelled his trip to Ajmer. When this report is being filed, it is not certain what time the press conference to announce the declaration would be held and when the President would return home.

"At the moment the foreign ministers are meeting and the two principals are meeting with their aides," an MEA official said. "They are working on a final joint declaration and they will meet as long as necessary."

Earlier, Musharraf seized the high ground in a what appeared to be a deft tactical move ahead of a third face-to-face meeting with Vajpayee. The General also chided New Delhi for being sidetracked from the "main issue." "Let us not remain under any illusion that the main issue confronting us is not Kashmir," he told a briefing for

newspaper editors on the sidelines of the summit. "That is the reality on the ground, whether we like it or not," he said. "I keep talking of Kashmir, you keep talking of cross-border terrorism... we can't even agree on what to call it — a problem, a dispute or an issue!"

Musharraf was speaking hours after Islamabad soured the mood of the summit with an acerbic statement on Sushma Swaraj's failure to mention to reporters that the previous day's talks had focused on Kashmir.

But Musharraf appeared to slightly soften that stance by saying Pakistan would never close the door on diplomacy with its giant neighbour, with which it has gone to war twice over Kashmir.

"I have fought the two wars, I have been in the northern areas, everywhere, in the front, I know what it is when one fights. So this is the issue," he said.

"However, I will end by saying what I have learnt in diplomacy... never close the door shut, ever, in diplomacy. We must continue with this process of dialogue which has been initiated very well, a dialogue which has been extremely fruitful... and it is still going on."

Musharraf said he would be happy if the summit led only to both sides agreeing to continue to meet and talk on Kashmir. A declaration would be a huge step further.



Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has a breakfast meeting with Indian editors at Amar Vilas hotel in Agra on Monday —PTI

After the first meeting, on Sunday, India announced that Vajpayee had accepted an invitation from Musharraf to visit Islamabad, which was taken as a sign that the two men intended to carry on with their search for peace.

But controversy over Information and Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj's spin on the meeting for reporters broke after midnight, puncturing the air of cordial-

ity. Swaraj, who did not mention Kashmir in her account of what was discussed, defended her position on Monday in what appeared to be a climbdown.

"I don't see any reason why they should be upset over it," she told reporters. "I did not omit Kashmir deliberately," she added, saying she referred to the other outstanding issues to show the dialogue between the two lead-

ers was progressing in a positive direction.

Swaraj became the heroine of the hour last night, but soon enough the Pakistanis counter-attacked. Their Information Secretary Anwar Mehmood began to tell Pakistani journalists that the Indians were "leaking" information that was meant to be highly confidential and that both sides

## 'Skipping Ajmer bad omen'

AJMER "IT is not a good omen for Pervez Musharraf", said a leading Islamic cleric commenting on the inability of the Pakistani President to fulfil his planned *Jiyarat* (pilgrimage) to the shrine of two prominent sufi saints in Delhi and Ajmer.

"There was no invitation to him from the saints and that is why Musharraf couldn't make his planned pilgrimage to the shrine," Sayed Sarwar Chishti, Secretary of the Anjuman looking after the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti here and a descendant of the sufi saint said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Priests at the Ajmer shrine wait for the arrival of General Musharraf on Monday — Reuters

## 34 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: MILITANTS today attacked two army camps killing five soldiers and injuring 13 others in the Kashmir valley, where BSF foiled an attempt by ultras to target Amarnath pilgrims.

Elsewhere in the Valley, 22 militants were among 29 people killed in intensified anti-militant operations since last night, official sources said.

In a major suicide attack, LeT militants stormed an army camp at Magam in Kupwara district killing five soldiers and injuring eight.

Defence sources said militants, equipped with sophisticated weapons, exploded grenades and opened fire on the troops housed in the camp around 2.30 am resulting in the casualties. The troops fired back and laid a cordon around the area to nab the militants who escaped.

The LeT claimed responsibility for the attack saying one of its activists Abu Hamzah was involved in the attack.

## Musharraf assured us of support, says Hurriyat chairman

TARIQ BHAT  
SRINAGAR, JULY 16

A PLEASED Hurriyat chairman, Abdul Gani Bhat, today described his meeting with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf as "very good and encouraging" and termed the summit as a forward movement towards peace.

"It was very good. I didn't have a watch but the meeting lasted more than the scheduled time. Perhaps more than half an hour," Bhat said, adding Musharraf was very realistic and a man of will.

He termed the meeting with the General as encouraging. "It was very good and encouraging. President Musharraf reiterated to us Pakistan's support to the Kashmir movement. And he stressed

that without Hurriyat, they will not decide on the future of Kashmir."

He denied reports that the General had asked them to modify their approach in view of the developments unfolding in the sub-continent. "That is not correct. The meeting was held in a cordial and relaxed manner."

When asked on how they saw the summit unfolding now, he said, "There has been a forward movement towards peace. Concrete steps need to be taken. Our response will be positive if the declaration is positive and negative if the response is negative," he said.

But he did not elaborate on what constituted a positive response.

On the JKLF boycott of the tea

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Pak holds out hope for Indian Prisoners of War

GAURAV C SAWANT  
AGRA, JULY 16

PAKISTANI human rights activist Asma Jehangir today said that families of Indian prisoners of war (PoWs) should be allowed to travel to Pakistan and look for their kin in jails. She was speaking to *The Indian Express* soon after President Pervez Musharraf gave the assurance that he would personally look into the issue. He had, however, denied that there were any Indian PoWs in Pakistan.

During his interaction with Indian editors this morning, Musharraf had observed: "As the issue is being raised again and again, I will look into it myself for the last time... I am not mad to hold back PoWs for 30 years. I am a soldier."

Asma Jehangir said she and the Pakistan Human Rights Commission would assist families from India if they were allowed to visit

the jails. "India should also empower its national human rights commission (NHRC) to look for missing Pakistani PoWs in Indian jails," she added.

Ironically, around this time, Vipul Purohit, son of one of the PoWs, was arrested by the Agra police, for protesting outside Amar Vilas Hotel where President Musharraf is staying. The police said he would be let off only after Musharraf left. Nine other people were also held.

The aircraft of Vipul's father, Flight Lieutenant Manohar Purohit, was hit during the 1971 war and, according to his family, he had successfully bailed out.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had repeatedly taken up the issue of the missing PoWs with Musharraf during their one-on-one interaction yesterday. According to officials in the Ministry of External Affairs, Musharraf had

assured Vajpayee that all that could be done would be done at his level to trace the PoWs.

"I do not know whether there are Indian soldiers in Pakistani jails since 1971. I have so far not been able to locate even one but then we have to keep trying. This is a human rights issue and concerns not just soldiers but their families. Therefore to satisfy the families, we should together try and trace the missing Indian soldiers," said Asma.

India has raised the PoW issue with Pakistan several times since the 1971 conflict. While India returned 93,000 Pakistani soldiers (PoWs), according to an MEA spokesperson 54 Indian soldiers continue to languish in Pakistani jails.

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) does assist in locating missing PoWs but

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## CM prefers yagna to first day of monsoon session

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, JULY 16

IN A marked departure from the traditions of parliamentary democracy, the Chief Minister today skipped the opening day's proceedings of the state legislature and instead chose to attend a yagna conducted in his hometown Latur under the guidance of his spiritual guru, Sri Satya Saibaba.

As a result, the three-week long monsoon session of the legislature began without the Chief Minister. Bhujbal as the "acting CM", tabled the motion to pay homage to former chief minister Sudhakarrak Naik, former chairman of legislative council Jaywantrao Tilak, NCP MLA Subhash Kul and other former members of the assembly

who died recently. But the opposition was not impressed. "The House wants to know what kept the Chief Minister of a progressive state like Maharashtra away from the opening day of the session," opposition leader Narayan Rane sought to know.

In an earlier instance, then speaker of the assembly, Madhukar Chaudhary, had ordered that no minister should accept engagements outside the Vidhan Bhavan during the session, Rane recalled and sought a clarification from Deshmukh.

"At least, the chief minister should have remembered that the House was to pay homage Naik and Tilak who are architects of modern Maharashtra," he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Meanwhile in Kashmir: 'Core issue' claims a 9-yr-old girl

MUZAMIL JALEEL  
THAJIVARA (SOUTH KASHMIR),  
JULY 16

IF there is a roadblock in Agra — and, despite all the right noises being made there, hurdles still wait to be crossed — it threw up its ugly head today in this town near Srinagar, where the bullet-riddled body of a nine-year-old girl lay in her house, her fist still clutching the fifty rupees she'd gone to deposit for her school picnic.

Nadiya Nazir was the latest in the Valley's long history of being a place where two persons died — one accidentally and one deliberately by a militant, whichever version you choose to believe.

The third-standard student was on her way to school to deposit the Rs 50 fee when she

heard gunshots. "I saw her and took her inside my shop. There were four of us inside and we immediately downed the shutters," said Gul Mohammad Ganai, a local mason.

"We literally squeezed into a corner but she began to cry in fright. Armymen on the road heard her and shouted that militants were inside the shop. We were asked to lift the shutter; this was followed by a barrage of bullets," he said. "I saw them. They were armymen."

He said Mohammad Yousuf, a labourer who was inside, was hit in his stomach and chest and fell on him. He died instantly, but the girl was gasping for breath. "I saw blood on her face but, as I tried to pick her up, I saw bullets had made a sieve of her belly"

The Army claims Nadiya

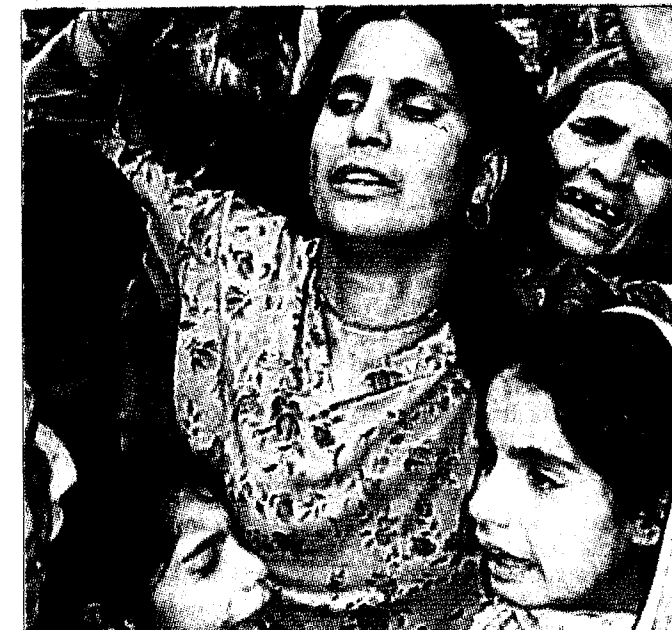
was killed in a "crossfire incident". Major-General Rajinder Singh Jamwal, GOC Victor Force, claimed Lashkar militants had opened fire on an army convoy and the girl was killed in crossfire.

"It was an unfortunate incident," he said. "But I have not an iota of doubt that a Lashkar militant, Osama, fired on us and two persons, including this schoolgirl, were killed."

The villagers, however, insist that there was no crossfire at all; a soldier fired an accidental shot, followed by the shooting of the girl and another person.

"Even if there was a militant attack, whom did they kill? Was this nine-year old child a militant?" asked Nadiya's father, Nazir Ahmad Lone.

Her mother Rafiqia was in total shock. "It seems she has



Wailing relatives of Nadiya Nazir — Express photo by Javed Shah

lost her mental balance," Lone said. "Nadiya had been demanding Rs 50 for picnic fee; I gave her the money and she rushed to school to submit it. She was so happy," he said. "A police officer came later and opened her fist and we saw the note clenched inside. It is brutal." Inside the house, an elderly woman was wailing and a group of women were trying to console her. It was Saja Begum, grandmother of the deceased girl.

"See, this is *insaaf* (justice). They killed an innocent child in her school uniform," she said. "If they (army) had even allowed us to take her to hospital, she might have lived. They didn't even allow us to go near the bodies."

A few yards away was another scene of mourning. Rela-

tives and neighbours had gathered in front of Mohammad Yousuf Ganai's house.

The daily-wage labourer was the other person killed in the incident. "He was the only source of income for his family," said Ganai's mother Khurshid Begum, 70.

She had no inkling that a high-level summit was discussing Kashmir but the younger villagers were all aware. "I couldn't even bear to look at the television screen when they showed Musharraf and Vajpayee shaking hands and smiling. It is all a farce. If they were serious we would not have been mourning today," said Ganai's relative Mohammad Ramzan. "We have no illusions. We have no hopes at all. We know bloodshed is destined for us," he said.

# Pervez miffed by Sushma's remarks

KEITH FLORY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

AGRA, July 16. — For the first few hours of Agra Day II, the soldier had won hands down the battle of media moments. Utilising his televised breakfast meeting with the Indian media, President Pervez Musharraf took Mrs Sushma Swaraj to task, bluntly emphasised the centrality of Kashmir, provided gently satirical quotes — am I mad that I'll keep a PoW for 30 years; if India ignores the Kashmir issue, I might as well buy the Neharwali Haveli and stay in Delhi — and yet came across as a man not willing to shut the door on peace.

While events later in the day — the extra round of talks, the declaration, the press conference, the change in the schedule — took the focus away from the breakfast, its impact never entirely faded.

President Musharraf came across as a blunt-spoken man not incapable of putting or understanding nuances. A man impatient with diplomatic nitpicking yet firm about not letting go of the "core issue". A man more media savvy than perhaps some of the professional politicians of India. His glowing references to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee impressed TV talking heads, even as they scrambled to interpret every less-friendly syllable of his.

Principally, the General made it clear throughout the meeting that he remained firm in his belief that in the absence of a road map to reconciliation in Kashmir it would be pointless to seek other avenues of advancement. At the same time, he said, he would prefer not to get bogged in terminology tussles like whether Kashmir was a "dispute" or an "issue".

The ground reality was that it remained central to the vexed bilateral relations, that reality had to be recognised.

General Musharraf capitalised on

the breakfast meeting with senior members of the India media to spread out his perceptions of what was needed to end years of mistrust and hostility. Since that meeting was scheduled to precede his final rounds of talks with Mr Vajpayee, he used it to clear a field of fire.

He said he could not offer immediate conclusions, there were more talks ahead, and officials were working on statements.

Declaring that the "first step" had been taken via the summit, he stressed that Agra should also witness the moving on to the second step: acceptance of Kashmir as an "issue" — he said he was willing to not call it a dispute — that had to be solved with the involvement of the Kashmiri people at some stage of the dialogue process.

The third phase was negating some of the solutions mentioned in the past so the possibilities were reduced to probabilities, and the final phase was a settlement.

While at one level it might appear that the General had been trying to blow hot and cold in the same breath, he was actually crafting an impression of being straight-forward, uncomplicated, but not uncompromising.

That he carefully chose to distinguish between the Government of India (a continuing entity) and Mr Vajpayee — upon whom he showered fulsome praise for initiating the dialogue — was not accidental.

The one point which he laboured, and repeatedly at that, was the centrality of Kashmir. If that controversy — or any other term anyone might like to use — was resolved there would be no problems over violence in J&K which India condemned as militancy but Pakistan hailed as a freedom struggle, no conflicts in Siachen or along the Line of Control.

Not even one over the PoWs of 1971, which he was a "sad story" which he



Sehba Musharraf at Agra Fort, which overlooks the Taj Mahal on Monday. — AP/PTI

would look into. So solving Kashmir would be the greatest of confidence-building measures.

The General failed to understand India's refusal to accept that "reality", the description could be modified — and he was prepared to go along with that — but how could the matter not be addressed at a meeting of the leaders of the two countries. "If I say Kashmir and you say cross-border terrorism

where are we? Should we wind up (the summit)?

He went to state that "if India thinks I can ignore Kashmir, I might as well buy the Neharwali Haveli and live here."

To talk of other confidence building measures would be futile: "Is it practical? We're killing each other. I can't live in an illusion, in a make-believe world. I try to be rational." The

## 'IF THIS MAN CAN BE TRUSTED...'

AGRA, July 16. — Having being projected as a monster has hurt. General Pervez Musharraf indicated a certain pain on that score here today. Particularly irked was he over a television commentator, asking if "this man can be trusted."

His response: "I'd like to tell this woman the question should have been asked before I was invited here." He then referred to the sub-continental tradition of treating guests with honour.

However, he went on to appreciate the India media for its extensive and generally positive coverage of his visit and the summit. The General said he had an impression that the India media was functioning under "constraints" when dealing with Kashmir. The journalists at the meeting countered by saying that he was under a misconception.

The "architect" of Kargil? He was only the army chief of the day, Pakistan had another government, he stressed. There was a strong "mujahideen" element. True, Kargil had hurt the Indian people: just as the people of Pakistan had been hurt when India armed, trained, and inducted the Mukti Bahini in 1971. Or tried to occupy Siachen. — SNS

General said he had never refused to discuss other issues, "but please understand, Kashmir is the main issue. I'll carry on saying it. I've fought two wars, I know what it means to fight."

Dealing with a host of queries he said it would be premature to get down to difficult specifics at this stage, he had outlined the step-by-step process he advocated. He declined to comment on the "third option", or any other option for that matter for that would be to enter "troubled waters."

A joint-working group, or a structure for further negotiations would be enough for him at present, provided the "importance of Kashmir" was roundly accepted. He ducked a query on whether J&K fell into India's "share" by the terms of the Acts of the British Parliament that governed the Partition process, instead he referred to the UN resolutions of 1948.

Adding that India had accepted the self-determination principle till 1958, only thereafter was the state described as an "integral" part of India.

Gen Musharraf admitted there was mistrust of both governments on

opposite sides of the border.

The people of Pakistan saw a "strategy" behind India's desire to talk on other issues, they suspected India's game plan was to drag the problem on indefinitely in the hope that its relevance would wither away.

In his view as long as there were signs of progress on Kashmir, progress could be attempted in other fields — but it would have to be "progress in tandem."

The General said Pakistan was not encouraging violence in Kashmir and he condemned the killings of innocent civilians. But that was a sad reality of all "freedom struggles" he said, Palestine being another example. He referred to the "repression" by Indian security forces, 600,000 of them were deployed in J&K.

He welcomed one editor's suggestion that the people of all sections of J&K, including what India described as PoK, be asked to formulate their perception of a solution. "We accept that, sell it to your people here" he chuckled, "for was that not what the principle of self-determination was all about?"