

The Ambassador of Tunisia, Dr. Mohamed Sahbi Basly, receiving a memento from the president of the Chennai chapter of the Indo-Tunisia Friendship Association, Mr. L. K. S. Syed Ahamed, at the inauguration of the association in Chennai on Thursday. Looking on are Mr. Bhisma Narayan Singh, former Tamil Nadu Governor, and Ms. Sarguna Pandian, Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Minister.

Call to strengthen Indo-Tunisian ties

By Our Staff Reporter

CHENNAI, MARCH 29. Cultural ties between India and Tunisia should be strengthened further, Dr. Mohamed Sahbi Basly, Ambassador of Tunisia to India, said today.

Inaugurating the Chennai chapter of Indo-Tunisia Friendship Association here, Dr. Basly said culture was an area that would bring together peoples of different nations. In this context, he mentioned that a Bharatanatyam exponent from Chennai was invited to take part in a festival in Tunisia about two years ago.

On Indo-Tunisian ties, the envoy said promotion of the cause of peace and human rights was always the cornerstone of the relations between the two countries at the political level. "However, today, relations between our two countries have expanded to the economic, scientific, cultural and technological areas in a significant manner, and further growth is expected", he said, expressing the hope that the two nations would move towards a genuine partnership encompassing all fields in future.

Stressing that India's support to the struggle for independence of Tunisia would never fade away from the memory of his fellow countrymen, Dr. Basly said the most encouraging aspect he found since his posting to New Delhi in September 1998 was the

presence of "strong will and clear determination that our Indian friends have shown to work for furthering the ties".

Stating that the formation of Chennai chapter was a significant step towards bringing the two countries closer, the Ambassador said this was the fifth chapter of the association to be started. Already, the branches were established in Chandigarh, Mumbai, Kolkatta and New Delhi.

Participating in the inaugural function, Mr. Bhisma Narayan Singh, former Tamil Nadu Governor and president of the Indo-Tunisian Friendship Association at the national level, said Tunisia, located in the northeastern part of Africa, was an 'oasis of peace' in the region, because of which it made remarkable progress in different spheres of trade and commerce.

Calling Tunis (the capital of the African country) one of the fascinating cities of Mediterranean region, Mr Singh said "it is a city of elegance and a fine blend of eastern and western civilisations".

The State Social Welfare Minister, Ms Sarguna Pandian, said the association would pave the way for greater interaction between peoples of the two nations. The president of Chennai chapter of the Association, Mr. L. K. S. Syed Ahamed, said the organisation would function as an NGO.

INDIA HINDU

30 MAR 2001

Mandela is the Gandhian of our times: Narayanan

New Delhi, March 16

PRESIDENT K R Narayanan today said the world was being taken over by material greed and expressed hope that this menace would be overcome by adhering to Gandhian principles.

Presenting the Gandhi peace prize 2000 to South African leader Nelson Mandela and Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, Narayanan said, "materialism and human greed has taken over the world. In this atmosphere, the Gandhi Peace Prize (awardees) stands as a beacon of light."

Eulogising Mandela as "Gandhian of our times", he said the South African leader adopted the Gandhian principle in reconciling the nation after the victory against apartheid and leading it "out of bitterness of the past".

Stating that Mahatma Gandhi was "born in India but made in South Africa", Narayanan said he was the "greatest gift South Africa has given to India".

He said while Mandela had abolished apartheid, the Grameen bank "abolished financial apartheid" in Bangladesh by aiming to free micro-credit from the "bondage of collateral" and empowering the poorest of the poor.

Prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee welcomed Mandela as "a hero of our times" and said he was a crusader of the ideals of Gandhi who led India's powerful struggle against the mightiest world empire of those times.

On receipt of the award, Man-

dela said India, which was "a home away from home" for him, had taught several lessons on democracy, development and tolerance to "our fledgling democracy which is in the infant stages".

Stressing the need for fighting poverty and deprivation in the developing countries, Mandela said it was indeed a great effort as to how a developing nation like India could have maintained democratic traditions by holding regular elections. "India's secular state is an example for us."

On the global scene, the Nobel laureate said while there was a developed world on one hand, there was "massive deprivation" in world affairs on the other. "We cannot escape globalisation in modern times, but there are trade barriers" which hampered the spread of the fruits of development.

Speaking on the occasion, Grameen bank general manager D C Barua spoke of the financial support his organisation had provided to the rural poor and especially empowered women in terms of education and technology. The bank's model, he said, had been adopted by several countries the world over.

The Prime Minister had earlier said the bank had put into practice development banking at the grassroots level and changed the lives of the poor in Bangladesh. The jury for the Gandhi peace prize carries Rs 10 million in cash, a citation and a plaque.

Cold logic

New Delhi, March 16

"I AM afraid that I am an unemployed person and that too, an old man. So I will speak a little longer than five minutes," South African leader Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela said as he began his speech at Rashtrapati Bhavan today. This evoked laughter among the audience. Mandela said he was recovering from a cold, "but I don't want the cold to dictate so I am going to force my voice to obey me."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 MAR 2001

There is much to learn from India: Turkish intellectuals

By Kesava Menon

ANKARA, MARCH 3. "What can they teach us," asks Dr. Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, professor at the Department of International Relations at the Bilkent University here, referring to the current condition of Pakistan. "There is so much that we can learn from India," she continues.

Her comment reflects an emerging perspective of the sub-continental situation among non-establishment analysts in Turkey. This view, though still far from being the dominant one, is diametrically opposite to that of the Turkish establishment which, at best, sees a symmetry between the sub-continental rivals and, at worst, is still steeply tilted towards Pakistan.

Surprisingly, given the current international context, one of the elements she finds most interesting about India is its one-time commitment to the non-alignment policy. It is not as if she thinks that the old-style non-alignment policy is still of perfect relevance to today's world. But, in opting for it India had shown a unique innovation and that ability to think for itself was of particular value.

Alluding to Turkey's interminable struggle to find a place for itself in the European Union, and the internal conflict over its own soul that it has stirred, she wonders whether the more independent path that she thinks India is following did not offer a better

way. However, from the wistful manner in which she expresses herself on the subject it is clear that this mode of thinking is still the exception rather than the norm.

Dr. Sezer and other analysts of her ilk came out far stronger in their reading of the specifics of the sub-continental situation. When they compare Pakistan and India, they see regression on the one side and progress on the other. Pakistan, in its slideback from democracy, its pandering to ultra-religious forces, its economic mess and in its failure to promote women's rights, is seen to have fallen far short of the promise it once held.

These shortcomings of another Muslim majority State that declares its intention to modernise itself while retaining its basic religious-cultural ethos appear to have provoked deep thought and concern among this section of the Turkish intelligentsia. After all, Turkey also is trying to modernise itself while retaining its cultural ethos and the apparent failure of a country that was once considered a partner in the enterprise awakens doubts about Turkey's prospects of making a similar transition. It is akin to a person saying, "If my brother has failed in this enterprise is there something inherent in our genes that will make me fail too".

It is probably due to this comparison with its neighbour that India is seen in a rosier light than is warranted. Even the systemic

weaknesses that led to a higher toll in the Gujarat earthquake did not appear to mar this picture of India. Two years ago, the Turkish Government did not do a good job in managing the aftermath of a devastating earthquake and such lapses are deemed unavoidable for developing countries such as Turkey and India. After such similarities, what stands out is India's achievements in information technology, the standards of its educational and research institutions and its relative economic stability.

Establishment and non-establishment thinkers in Turkey do agree on one matter — India's emergence as a power whose influence is only bound to increase. As mentioned in an earlier piece, the establishment does not appear to have fully weighed up what they should do about it. Among independent analysts, there are some who ponder over the extreme possibilities of a close relationship between India and Turkey.

Mr. İlnur Cevik, Editor-in-Chief of the *News* (till recently the only English newspaper in the country), talks of the complementarities. Turkey's expertise in certain areas (such as construction and pipeline projects), its customs union with Europe and its special ties with Central Asia when combined with India's huge economic potential and its pool of skilled manpower could help create a new balance of power in Asia, he points out.

THE HINDU

2000

Morocco, India to work for closer ties

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 27

INDIA AND Morocco have agreed to intensify bilateral engagement by holding regular consultations both at the political and official levels.

The decision to impart a qualitative new character and long-term perspective is integrated into the Delhi Declaration signed between External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and his Moroccan counterpart Mohamed Benaissa today.

The declaration was the high point of the first visit to India by King Mohammed VI, who took over as Head of State in 1999. Within a short time, the young King has earned the respect of the international community for his determination to reform the country's economy.

India is one of the leading foreign investors in Morocco with a \$ 230 million joint venture between Chambal Fertilizer and a State-owned company already going on stream to produce 330,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid annually. An agreement for a large hotel project is also under

implementation.

Another important part of the King's two-day official visit was the holding of the first meeting of the joint economic commission established between the two countries. Pharmaceuticals, information technology, plastics and textile yarns were identified as possible areas of collaboration. In the Delhi Declaration, Morocco has joined India in condemning terrorism in all forms. Morocco has backed the Indian-sponsored convention on international terrorism at the UN. Both countries have expressed concern at the deteriorating situation in West Asia.

India is simultaneously cultivating good relations with Algeria, the other North African power with which Morocco is now in the process of building close ties after years of dispute over Western Sahara.

Last year India withdrew the recognition it had granted to the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic back in 1985. King Mohammed VI endorsed India's bid for a permanent seat on the security council of the United Nations.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 FEB 2001

Morocco backs ceasefire efforts

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 27. Morocco today backed India's ceasefire initiative in Jammu and Kashmir and expressed support for the Lahore declaration and the Shimla accord for building a cooperative relationship with Pakistan.

This was stated in the Delhi Declaration signed here by Morocco's Foreign Minister, Mohammed Benaissa, and the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh. Mr. Benaissa is part of the Moroccan delegation which is headed by 38-year-old King Mohammed VI.

Sources here attach considerable importance to the expression of unambiguous support by Morocco, a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), for the Lahore and Shimla agreements. The Moroccan side also condemned terrorism in all its forms and agreed to work for the finalisation of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism in the United Nations.

Council seat

During talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, King Mohammed VI, expressed support for India's presence in an expanded U.N. Security Council. The two sides decided to regularise political and Foreign Office consultations. The West Asian peace talks also figured in the discussions and both sides expressed concern at the deteriorating situation in the region.

Sources here said the reversal of India's decision on the recognition of the Polisario regime in Western Sahara, bitterly opposed by Morocco, had contributed to the turnaround in the relationship between New Delhi and Rabat. India is also cultivating what are described as moderate states with large Muslim populations. Special effort has been mounted to build closer ties with Indonesia, Oman, Iran, Turkey, Alge-

ria and Egypt. The two sides signed three agreements on cultural exchanges, veterinary sanitation and plant protection.

Earlier in the day, they agreed to raise bilateral trade turnover to over \$1 billion from the present \$450 millions by diversifying the trade basket.

Addressing the first meeting of the India-Morocco Joint Economic Council, the Minister of State for Commerce, Mr. Omar Abdullah, said New Delhi was keen on using Morocco's strategic geographical location to increase trade in three directions — access to European Union markets, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world. Emphasising the tremendous scope for increasing export of India's manufactured products to Morocco, he urged the council to launch major initiatives in this direction. With Morocco's support and involvement, he said it should be possible to increase exports to at least \$150 millions by the year-end from the present \$29 millions.

Notice on actor

MUMBAI, FEB. 27. The Suburban District Collector of the metropolis has served a legal notice on the film star, Mr. Shahrukh Khan, for recovery of property dues to the tune of Rs. 3 crores for his palatial bungalow at Bandra.

The notice has been served under the Maharashtra Land Revenue code, in which the Collector had asked the superstar and Mr. Satish Dubash, the original owner of the bungalow, to pay Rs. 3 crores by March 31, or the property would be attached, sources in the Collectorate said.

Following reports that Mr. Khan had purchased the bungalow for Rs. 6 crores, the Collector initiated an inquiry. — PTI

THE HINDU

28 FEB 2001

Morocco teams up for terror war

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Feb. 27: King Mohammed VI of Morocco urged Pakistan to settle its outstanding dispute with India in the spirit of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.

A joint "Delhi declaration" signed by foreign minister Jaswant Singh and his Moroccan counterpart Mohammed Benaisa, said: "The two sides recognised the serious threats posed by the growing threat of international terrorism. They condemned terrorism in all its forms. They reiterated their resolve to work together to strengthen international efforts for an early finalisation of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism."

Though in the past Morocco

had favoured a bilateral solution to India-Pakistan disputes, this is the first time it has become party to a document which stresses that the Kashmir problem should be resolved peacefully in the spirit of Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.

The significance of the joint statement lies in the fact that it can help Morocco — which claims to have played a moderating role at the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) on anti-Indian resolutions — be more vocal about any attempt by Pakistan to use the OIC as a forum to fight its battle against Delhi.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit the country in February 1999. A year later, his Moroccan counterpart Abder-

Rahmane El Youssoufi visited India.

However, these regular exchanges between the two sides took place only after Delhi assured that it would re-assess its stand on the Prolesarian Movement.

A year later, India announced its decision to de-recognise the Saharawian Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The Moroccan king's visit should be seen in that context.

The visiting head of state of Morocco, who had wide-ranging talks with Vajpayee, defence minister George Fernandes and Jaswant, stressed on the commonality of views between the two sides and agreed to put in place a structure for closer political interaction between the two sides.

In the evening, King Mo-

ammed VI held discussions with President K.R. Narayanan and was guest at a presidential banquet.

The two sides signed three agreements for cooperation on plant protection, veterinary sciences and cultural exchange programmes.

The Moroccan king agreed with the Indian leadership that deterioration of law and order in West Asia was a cause for concern and stressed that Delhi would play an important role in establishing peace in the region.

Both sides felt that violence in West Asia must stop and expressed support for a "just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region" on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and on the principle of "Land for Peace".

THE TELEGRAPH

20 FEB 2001

King of Morocco arrives for talks

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 26. In the continuing season of India's engagement the Arab world, the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, arrived here this evening on a six-day visit.

The consultations of King Mohammed VI with the Indian leadership tomorrow will be capped by a political declaration. Morocco, which follows a moderate path at home and abroad, is likely to join India in rejecting international terrorism, extremism and separatism in all forms.

Political relations between India and Morocco had taken a big leap forward last year when the Government withdrew recognition to the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic. The Saharwis have been fighting for years to gain independence from Morocco. The reversal of the Indian position followed an extended diplomatic campaign by Morocco.

Rich in phosphates, Morocco is emerging as an important political and economic partner of India in the Arab world. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, had visited the Kingdom on the far Western fringes of the Arab world in 1999.

Morocco has a free trade agreement with the European Union, and is likely to become an Associate Member of the grouping in the next few years. It is widely seen as being more successful among the Arab nations in coping with the trends of globalisation. King Mohammed VI, who took charge after his father's death last year, has begun a cautious liberalisation of the domestic political system.

Besides a substantive discussion with Mr. Vajpayee, King Mohammed VI will also interact with the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, the Vice-President, Mr. Krishan Kant, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes. The Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, and the BJP president, Mr. Bangaru Laxman will also call on the him.

THE HINDU

27 FEB 2001

Hrithik sucked into Durban photo fracas

Mumbai, Jan. 24 (PTI): After the fury over Hrithik Roshan's allegedly derogatory remarks against the Nepalese people has subsided, the Bollywood superstar is in the vortex of a new controversy over unauthorised use of his photograph in a Durban newspaper.

Hrithik's father, filmmaker Rakesh Roshan, today dashed off a letter to Kishore Morar, member of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), saying his son was neither associated with any political party in the world nor was permission sought by the *Post* to use the star's photograph.

In its November 29 edition, the paper used Hrithik's photograph, allegedly sponsored by the Opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) to get political mileage in the local government elections.

"I strongly feel that no political party of any nation should indulge in the unscrupulous practice of misusing the name and position of any celebrity for political motives. Honestly, I fail to put in words the mental torture we are going through because of the publication of Hrithik's photograph without our permission," Rakesh said.

Earlier in a letter to Rakesh, Morar had sought a meeting with him to discuss the implications of publishing the photo in the light of a potential negative impact on race relations that the matter has sparked among fraternal communities striving to establish a united democracy.

After Rakesh asked the newspaper to apologise, the *Post* published an announcement by

Hrithik, saying that he was in no way associated with the DA and did not support any political party in South Africa.

However, Rakesh, in his letter has expressed inability to meet Morar in Durban because of his prior engagements and Hrithik's busy schedule.

But he requested the ANC member to visit Mumbai and conclude the matter to the satisfaction of both parties and "settle this unsolicited controversy for ever".

"It is heartening to observe that the ANC and people of your country have understood our stand and appreciated the same," Rakesh said.

According to industry sources, attempts were being made to malign the actor because of his unprecedented success and growing popularity.

THE TELEGRAPH

25 JAN 2001