

# South China Sea solution on hold

Agence France Presse

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (Brunei), July 29. — South-east Asian foreign ministers today put off plans to sign a document to help resolve disputes on overlapping claims to South China Sea territories, the Malaysian foreign minister said.

"It cannot be signed here. There's a lot of changes in the wording," Syed Hamid Albar said after a meeting of ministers from the 10-member Asean.

Asean officials had earlier said that they had broken the deadlock for a declaration to be signed by the ministers, paving the way for a possible landmark code of conduct with Beijing over the disputed South China Sea territories.

But Malaysia and Vietnam had argued over the wordings of the document's title, with Kuala Lumpur saying it should be a "declaration on the conduct of parties" in the South China Sea and Hanoi wanting it to be called "declaration on a code of conduct." Vietnam felt the inclusion of the code of conduct would be more binding on members while Malaysia raised legal complexities. Eventually, Vietnam relented to Malaysia's idea but officials needed time to refine some of the terms in the document before it was signed by the ministers and handed over to China for approval, officials said.

**Sinha:** Mr Yashwant Sinha leaves for Brunei tonight to attend the annual meeting of the Asean regional forum on Wednesday with issues relating to terrorism high on the agenda, SNS adds from Delhi.

THE STATESMAN

30 JUL 2002

Lanka govt, Tigers agree on key issue at Bangkok talks

# Rights focus before aid meet

SCOTT MCDONALD

Colombo, Dec. 9 (Reuters): The Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tiger rebels, riding a wave of breakthroughs in peace talks to end 19 years of war, plan to tackle human rights issues in their next meeting, a senior Cabinet minister said today.

Progress on resolving human rights problems connected to the separatist war is seen as key to a major donors' conference planned for Japan to raise aid to rebuild Sri Lanka.

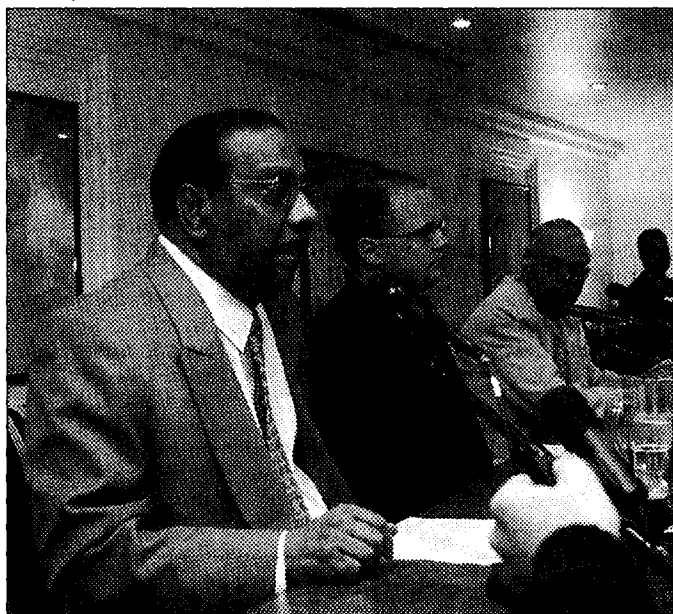
"Human rights is going to be one of the major topics to be discussed," constitutional affairs minister G.L. Peiris said of next month's peace talks set for a resort outside Bangkok.

"We think that the discussions of human rights is going to be very important because they will lay the foundation for the donors' meeting that is scheduled to be held in Tokyo in May of next year," Peiris told a regular news conference.

The government and the LTTE — fighting for a separate Tamil state — have been accused of widespread human rights violations.

The Tigers run a ruthless one-party state in the area of northern Sri Lanka they control and have been accused of using child soldiers in the war that has killed 64,000 people and displaced more than one million.

But in peace talks held last week in Oslo, the government and LTTE agreed to work out a



(From left) Chief Tamil Tiger negotiator Anton Balasingham, Norwegian mediator Vidar Helgesen and Sri Lankan government chief negotiator G.L. Peiris in Oslo. (AFP)

system of regional autonomy within a federal framework.

The accord on a federal model with limited self-rule for Tamil areas is a big step toward ending the war in the Indian Ocean nation and comes after the rebels dropped a cornerstone demand for independence for the north and east of the island.

The rebels have already visited Switzerland to study the federal system there, and will also look at models in Canada, Australia, Germany and India, Peiris said.

A small donors' conference was held in Oslo — Norway is mediating the peace process — last month and raised \$70 million, and Peiris said the Tokyo meeting would be larger and include international bodies such as the World Bank.

Donors have been hesitant to give to Sri Lanka because past peace bids have collapsed, leading to renewed violence, but the current talks have raised hopes of a lasting peace.

The next two rounds of talks in Thailand in January and Feb-

ruary will also aim to map out details of a system of power sharing.

## Annan hails efforts

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan has lauded the progress achieved in the talks in Oslo and said he hoped the peace process between the Lankan government and Tamil Tigers would be completed through future negotiations.

In a statement released by his spokesman in New York, the secretary-general welcomed the conclusion of the third round of Sri Lanka peace talks.

"It is his earnest hope that further progress toward a lasting settlement acceptable to all communities will be made in future rounds," the statement said, hailing both parties for their commitment to peace.

THE TELEGRAPH

10 DEC 2002

# Security, SAARC dominate PM-Gayoom talks

By V. Jayanth

India South Asia Net  
10-1-2001 ✓

**MALE, SEPT. 23.** Terrorism, security and South Asian regional cooperation apparently dominated the one-to-one talks between the visiting Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Maldives President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, here today.

The two leaders, who met for about 40 minutes, later held delegation-level talks at the Presidential office, overlooking the Indian Ocean, amid unprecedented security for a bilateral visit. Issues of mutual concern, regional cooperation and global problems came up for discussion during the talks.

Apart from expanding the bilateral cooperation, India and the Maldives agreed to work together on regional and global issues of mutual concern. If terrorism was on top of India's priorities, global warming and environmental protection were the major concerns of the host.

At a lunch hosted in his honour by Mr. Gayoom, Mr. Vajpayee said: "Some irrational political motivations are hindering our efforts for closer economic integration within SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). As I had said at the SAARC summit in Kathmandu, India is willing to extend, unilaterally if necessary, the maximum possible economic and trade concessions to the least developed countries within SAARC. We cannot let growth and development remain hostage to petty political jealousies."

Later, at a civic reception, Mr. Vajpayee under-

scored the need for continuing the "global war against terrorism."

"As with the environment, no island is immune from the problems of terrorism. A year ago, the reach and destruction of international terrorism showed itself on the global stage. Our region has suffered from the ravages of terrorism for decades before that. Both India and the Maldives have committed themselves to join the war against international terrorism."

Mr. Vajpayee said that "it is a global war calling for partnership primarily among democratic so-

**India to take up digital mapping of Maldives: Page 12**

cieties, which are most threatened by the bigoted ideologies that drive terrorism. India and Maldives have a cooperative role both in our region and on the global arena as democratic societies against international terrorism."

Mr. Gayoom also responded to India's concerns. At the lunch he hosted for Mr. Vajpayee, he said that *trans-national terrorism endangers peace and the stability of many countries and called for closer cooperation.*

In a pre-visit interview to the Maldivian journalists, Mr. Vajpayee called for updating the SAARC Convention on Terrorism. Incidentally, India has signed an agreement to 'gift' a P-18 radar to the Maldives. Maldivian personnel are being trained by the Defence Ministry, and the radar would be installed in the archipelago and made operational.

24 SEP 2001

THE HINDU

# PM, Gayoom discuss bilateral ties

Press Trust of India

MALE, Sept. 23. — Giving a new dimension to bilateral relations, India and Maldives today agreed to intensify cooperation in Information Technology, tourism, human resource development, health, infrastructure and other key areas.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, who is on a four-day visit here, held wide-ranging discussions with President Maumoom Abdul Gayoom on the entire gamut of bilateral issues besides exchanging views on the regional and global situation, including the important contemporary global concerns on terrorism, environment and sustainable development.

After a ceremonial welcome by the mayor of Male, Mr Ismail Shafeeu, the prime minister had a one-on-one meeting with President Gayoom which was followed by delegation-level talks.

During the parleys, the focus was on imparting a new dynamism to the economic content of the multi-faceted relationship between the two countries, officials said.

Observing that India and Maldives enjoy a very special relationship, the prime



Mr MA Gayoom at a banquet with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee in Male on Monday. — AFP

minister said India would be happy to extend all possible assistance to promote the economic development of this island nation.

Both leaders felt that there was tremendous scope for giving a major boost to cooperation in the tourism sector.

"As close and trusted

friends, we must maintain the tradition of frequent high-level dialogue to enrich our relationship and enhance our cooperation," Mr Vajpayee said at a luncheon hosted in his honour by President Gayoom.

Mr Vajpayee said: "India has always been and remains

committed to assisting in the progress and development of Maldives. We shall not waiver in this resolve".

Observing that ongoing projects were proceeding satisfactorily, he said the two sides also looked ahead to "newer areas" of future collaboration. >

24 SEP 2002

# India to take up digital mapping of Maldives

By V. Jayanth

MALE, SEPT. 23. India is to undertake digital mapping and hydrographic surveys of the Maldivian land mass and coastlines, besides assisting the Indian Ocean State in setting up an information technology village, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, announced here today.

Accepting a civic reception and a Key of Male here this evening, Mr. Vajpayee said a team from the Department of Space, Survey of India and the Indian Navy's Hydrographic unit would carry out the study and survey to help the Maldives map its future and estimate its potential in the fisheries sector. It could also help in its environment protection programme.

The Prime Minister said the Tata Consultancy would undertake a project to computerise the postal service network in the archipelago. This would be a model of Government-Industry partnership that could be duplicated in other development areas.

Mr. Vajpayee, along with the Maldives President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, participated in another function to lay the foundation stone for the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies here. Though started in 1987, the institute, functioning in a guest house, could not meet the growing needs of the tourism industry. With Indian help and expertise, this would function in a new building and double its capacity to 200 students per course.

Mr. Gayoom stressed on its significance to the Maldives, given its focus on tourism and the need to train young men and women in meeting its needs.

Briefing the media on the one-to-one talks between the two leaders and the delegation-level discussions, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson,

Nirupama Rao, said the Maldives had sought Indian assistance in the "greening and development" of the Hulhumale island, where about 50,000 people would be resettled over the next 25 years. Indian companies were invited to participate in the housing projects too.

SL said the Maldives President was keen on signing a science and technology agreement with India. Accordingly, New Delhi would draft such an agreement and send it to Male for approval, before the two Governments could sign it.

In response to Mr. Gayoom's request for Indian expertise to set up what he called an 'Internet village', the Maldives was

asked to send a delegation to Hyderabad and Bangalore to see for itself the facilities and developments, so that it could give a concrete shape to its proposal. Similarly, India would also assist in the development of e-governance here, to link various Ministries and agencies.

Ms. Rao said the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Properties in Lucknow had restored the 'Fen fushl' mosque in Male and had now been asked to take up similar restoration of the 'Dharumavantha Raasgefaanu' mosque, also in Male. (Mr. Vajpayee took credit for the laboratory being located in his parliamentary constituency)

As far as the Indra Gandhi Memorial Hospital here was concerned, the Government of India had agreed to set up another operation theatre, provide tele-medicine links with Indian health institutions and help develop it as a teaching institution. India would offer two additional seats in medicine to students from the Maldives, in addition to the present two.

As Mr. Gayoom noted in his banquet speech "An ocean brings our people together. In the past, the monsoon winds brought friends, merchandise and profit. Today, the airwaves and satellite signals exchange real time sounds and sights of both our cultures".

The Maldives Home Minister, Ismail Shaffieeu, who presented the Key of Male to Mr. Vajpayee, later told Indian journalists that the ocean state was keen on expanding aviation ties with India — more flights to more cities, to bring more Indian tourists to the island resorts. At present, Indian Airlines operated services only from Thiruvananthapuram and it was essential to provide flights out of New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai.

## Gayoom appreciates Vajpayee's poetry

By V. Jayanth

MALE, SEPT. 23. Apart from praising the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's "wise and sagacious" leadership, the Maldives President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, took time in his banquet speech to commend Mr. Vajpayee's poetry.

"Your eloquent and inspiring poetry invokes a spirit that is relevant today not just in India but also the whole world," he said.

The verse he quoted from Mr. Vajpayee's poem was:

"One flame in every heart,  
One song in every lip,  
One aim in every mind  
And one dream in every eye."

## ISLAMABAD BLAMED FOR POLL VIOLENCE

# Pak. must end support to terrorism, says PM

By Sandeep Dikshit

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22.** Blaming Pakistan for the militant attempts to disrupt elections in Jammu & Kashmir, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said a conducive atmosphere for talks could be conceived only if Islamabad completely dismantled the infrastructure for supporting terrorism.

"An appropriate climate for dialogue can be created if support for terrorism is completely curbed. But the disruption of the elections in J&K does not suggest that Pakistan has changed its manner of thinking," the Prime Minister said, shortly before embarking on a visit to the Maldives. Mr. Vajpayee was responding to a query on India's strategy to cool tensions in the region if the State Assembly polls were held successfully.

Meanwhile, taking a cue from the Prime Minister's statement as well as media reports emanating from Pakistan suggesting that State support to jihadis operating in J&K had resumed from July, the Army said it had killed over a dozen militants since yesterday. It did not comment on the casualties suffered by its troops but reports suggested that half-a-dozen jawans were killed a few days ago in a single encounter.

Army officials claimed to have killed three terrorists in south Kashmir where four attempts in a week have been made on the life of the sole woman Minister in the Farooq Abdullah Government. Five militants were reportedly killed elsewhere in the Valley. Across the Pir Panjal range, an equal number were shot dead in two encounters.

### Red carpet welcome in Male

By V. Jayanth

**MALE, SEPT. 22.** The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, arrived here today on a four-day official visit. The visit has been described as an attempt by "close neighbours" to have a very special relationship. Apart from economic cooperation, the Prime Minister will endeavour to forge a closer political coordination in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and other international organisations.

Over the next three days, the Prime Minister will hold one-to-one meetings with the Maldives President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, and other leaders.

Male rolled out the red carpet for Mr. Vajpayee with Mr. Gayoom personally going to the airport to receive him and his delegation.

Mr. Vajpayee inspected a guard of honour and was introduced to the Maldivian Ministers, top officials and foreign diplomats. The Indian High Commissioner to the Maldives, S.M. Gavai, and the Chief of Protocol, Abdulla Hameed, invited the Prime Minister to disembark.

As part of India's continuing effort to "deepen and strengthen" bilateral ties with its neighbours



The Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, being received by the Maldivian President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, at the Male airport on Sunday. — PTI

and reaching out to fellow-members of the South Asian community, the Prime Minister is undertaking this visit at the invitation of the Maldivian President.

Mr. Vajpayee's visit comes as a climax to a conscious build-up in bilateral ties under the present NDA regime. It began with the visit of the Minister of State for External Affairs, Omar Abdullah, in October 2001, followed by the visit of the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, in July this year, soon after he took charge.

The Maldives, Foreign Ministry officials explain, has assumed significance on many fronts. Known as the 'land of the atolls', the archipelago is not only strategically located in the Indian Ocean, but is also part of the SAARC, CHOGM and the OIC. Mr. Gayoom has steered the country from 1978 and remains the only Head of State among the founders of SAARC.

Though India was among the first countries to recognise the Maldives, when it became independent in 1965, bilateral relations began to warm up in the 1980s. The attempted coup in the archipelago in 1988, by a Sri Lankan Tamil militant group, which India helped to abort, could be described as a "turning point" in ties. From then on, there have been a string of high-level bilateral visits and Mr. Vajpayee's adds to this exchange.

New Delhi's help has been multi-faceted. Apart from the military assistance provided in 1988, India provides regular training for the Maldivian military and police personnel. The focus shifted to human resource development, then health care and gradually moving into economic and technical cooperation.

# Maldivian Foreign Minister calls on Vajpayee

By V. Jayanth

**MALE, SEPT. 24.** The Maldivian Foreign Minister, Fatullah Jameel, today called on the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at the Kurumba island resort and exchanged views on a whole range of issues from terrorism to Iraq.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, Nirupama Rao, said Mr. Jameel "reiterated the Maldives' strong opposition to terrorism and said there was no justification for any act of terrorism, which is a global challenge". He supported India's efforts for strengthening the SAARC Convention.

On Iraq, Ms. Rao said the two sides agreed that any action against any sovereign country must be within the U.N. system.

Mr. Jameel also conveyed his country's position that the criteria for expansion of the U.N. Security Council must be determined quickly and should reflect current realities.

He hosted a lunch for the Indian delegation, in which the Union Ministers of State, A. Raja and Vinod Khanna, partici-

ted. The Maldivian Ministers for Tourism, Health, Information and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs were also present.

The Speaker of the majlis, Abdullah Hameed, who is also the Minister for Atolls Administration, also called on Mr. Vajpayee at the resort. He sought

more training facilities for parliament officials from the ocean state.

In the evening, the Indian High Commissioner, S.M. Gavai, hosted a reception in honour of Mr. Vajpayee. A cross-section of the 13,000 Indian expatriates here greeted the Prime Minister.

## 'No request for extradition'

By Our Special Correspondent

**MALE, SEPT. 24.** India has not asked for the extradition of the Mumbai-based passenger who attempted to hijack an Air Seychelles aircraft as it was about to land in the Maldivian capital of Male early this month.

According to the Indian High Commission here, the Government of India has not yet made any formal request to the Maldives for extraditing Chandrababu Sashiraj. He is detained here, along with a fellow passenger, who is suspected to have assisted in the abortive attempt. The two were overpowered by the airline's crew and the flight arrived here without a problem.

Sources here said that Sashiraj was suspected to be "mentally ill", but all aspects were being probed. At least 10 passengers were detained and questioned here. The attempt, it is said, was to hijack the aircraft to an unnamed East European country. Till the Maldivian authorities have completed their investigations, India is unlikely to step in with any request. New Delhi is expecting to be briefed about the outcome of the investigation for any follow-up action in India.

25 SEP 2003

THE HINDU

# Delhi alarm over Pak team's Bangla visit

Jaideep Mazumdar  
Kolkata, September 16

NEW DELHI is alarmed over a high-level Pakistan Army team's visit to western Bangladesh, especially along the country's border with India. The team, comprising ISI officers, visited border posts manned by the Bangladesh Army and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in end-August and early September.

Led by Maj-Gen Mohammad Ashraf Khan, the eight-member team also visited Cox's Bazar and other areas along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

"The alarming part is that the

Pakistani officers visited border posts and Islamic facilities at Pirganj, Dinajpur, Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Kushtia and Jessore. The delegation was accompanied by two senior leaders of the hardline Jamaat-e-Islami, a ruling coalition partner in Bangladesh," a senior Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) officer told *Hindustan Times*.

Dhaka, on being requested for details of this visit by New Delhi, said the Pakistanis visited the Bangladesh Army's School of Infantry & Tactics at Jalalabad Cantonment in Sylhet, near the Meghalaya stretch of the Indo-Bangla border, and the School of

Military Intelligence at Comilla, near the border with Myanmar.

"But the rest of the visit was not acknowledged by Dhaka, which means that Bangladesh has a lot to hide. The delegation visited Cox's Bazar, which is a landing area for illegal arms from South East Asia, and Inani and Himacheri, two relatively deserted beaches near Cox's Bazar. These beaches could be developed as alternatives to Cox's Bazar that has come under increased surveillance now," the officer said.

On August 30, the delegation was flown from Chittagong to Rajshahi. "They spent the next

five days moving from one place to another along the Indo-Bangla border. Apart from Bangladesh Army and BDR installations, they visited institutions run by some hardline Islamic groups, including madrasas, very close to the border. Meetings were held with leaders of various Islamic groups. These meetings were facilitated by the Jamaat leaders," the officer added.

"Of late, we have been receiving reports of Islamic terrorists entering West Bengal. This visit could be an effort to coordinate the activities of these terrorists and firming up Pakistan's support to them."

17 SEP 2002



India has been late in forging ties with the ASEAN. Now it has to make up for lost time

# Eastward Ho!

By J.N. DIXIT



ASEAN GAMES: Vajpayee and Cambodian PM Bounnhang Vorachit in Laos

PRIME MINISTER Atal Bihari Vajpayee has just concluded his visit to Cambodia and Laos in connection with the first Indo-ASEAN summit. A number of bilateral agreements were signed with Laos and Cambodia during the visit. The media, as usual, have reported positively on the visit in terms of the events attendant on it. The prognosis on India's relations with ASEAN countries has to be based on the more recent interactions between the ASEAN and India in terms of substantive relations. It is equally important to compare Indo-ASEAN interactions with the evolving relations between the ASEAN, on the one hand, and major regional powers like China and Japan, on the other.

A little bit of historical recall would be relevant in this process. ASEAN countries had invited India to join their regional grouping in the mid-Sixties as a full member but India refused in the context of the Cold War and the situation in Vietnam at that time. It was between 1987 and 1989, during the second half of Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, that India conveyed its interest in being associated with the ASEAN. The initial response of ASEAN governments was reticent, because of socialist-oriented economic arrangements in India and a certain concern about Indo-Pakistan tensions being injected into the deliberations and activities of the ASEAN if India were to be admitted.

By 1990, however, both global and regional politics had undergone qualitative changes. The Soviet Union was in the process of disintegration, and the Cold War had ended. India, under the P.V. Narasimha Rao government, had embarked on a substantive and wide-ranging programme of economic reforms, restructuring and liberalisation, thereby bringing the economy in line with those of the ASEAN countries. The complementarities between the economies of the ASEAN countries and India became crystallised. The market for commerce and investment could serve a combined population of nearly 1.3 billion people of India and the ASEAN countries.

ASEAN governments responded to Indian overtures in 1992 and, between 1992 and 1996, India first became a sectoral dialogue partner of the ASEAN and in 1996 a full dialogue partner. India also joined the security entity of the ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), in 1996. India's initial suggestions to

join the security forum were rejected by the ASEAN. The reason was the ASEAN's reluctance to have the complex politico-military tensions of the subcontinent becoming part of the discussions of the ARF.

This reasoning was valid because once India became a dialogue partner of the ASEAN, Pakistan actively lobbied to become its part on similar lines. Pakistan's additional reasoning was its Islamic identity, particularly with Malaysia and Indonesia. The point to note is that it took nearly nine years from 1987 to 1996 for India to become a stable participant in the ASEAN process which culminated in the first ASEAN-India summit in Phnom Penh during November 4-6.

The omnibus statement summarising the conclusions of the Indo-ASEAN summit declared that the strategic vision of the new linkage (established in the summit) at the highest level would be translated into reality with concrete programmes of cooperation. The statement also asserted that this cooperation will comprehensively combat non-traditional security threats, including that of terrorism within the framework of the existing ARF.

The statement also confirmed that the Indo-ASEAN summit now onwards will be held once every year. The collective leadership of the ASEAN and Prime Minister Vajpayee agreed that the existing programmes and projects of economic and technological cooperation should be expanded. More significant was Vajpayee's suggestion that the programme of economic cooperation be expanded to explore possibilities of the creation of an ASEAN-India Free Trade Area by the year 2012. India also took some

specific initiatives to strengthen economic cooperation with Laos and Cambodia in the bilateral segment of the visit. In discussions with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Laotian Prime Minister Bounnhang Vorachit, Vajpayee offered a \$ 10 million credit line to each country.

Bilateral agreements were also signed with Laos and Cambodia to combat illegal trafficking of drugs, defence cooperation and expansion of trade and investment relations. In terms of formal agreements and decisions, the India-ASEAN summit had led to the most substantive results after a gap of nearly a decade. The last occasion marking such decisions was Narasimha Rao's visit to the ASEAN countries in the summer of 1993.

The framework for result-oriented directions has been finalised but future prospects have to be assessed on the basis of two criteria. First, a comparison between the content of cooperation between the ASEAN's relations with China, Japan and Korea; and second, the record of cooperation between India and the ASEAN over the last decade. India's participation in the regional security dialogue under the ARF has had hiccups because of this country's nuclear weapons tests of 1998 and the Kargil conflict and high levels of Indo-Pakistan tension. This should not be a matter of too much concern because the decision taken regarding these events were in India's interests.

It is, however, on the economic side that one should be thoughtful. China and the ASEAN have also signed an agreement on the creation of a free trade zone which will have a market of nearly 1.7 billion people.

This free trade area is likely to become operational within three to five years. Compare this to the decision only to "explore possibilities" of creating such a zone between India and the ASEAN over a period of ten years. Given the pace and substance of our economic performance, such caution is realistic, though disappointing. One suspects that caution is more on the part of the ASEAN than India.

The record of Indo-ASEAN economic cooperation is also not encouraging. The projects envisaged for cooperation in the civil aviation sector (the Singapore Airlines project), in the sector of building of highways with a Malaysian consortium, the lack of satisfactory progress about establishment of information technology parks in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have not increased our credibility in the ASEAN countries, though friendly leaders like Singapore Prime Minister Goh Tok Chung and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed continued to bat on in favour of India.

It is also relevant to note that while the ASEAN has agreed to a collective summit dialogue with China, Japan and South Korea, they have not included India in this collective summit exercise, obviously because we are not in the league of these countries in economic performance and policies. Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs R. Abhayankar correctly assessed India's performance in relation to the ASEAN when he said during Vajpayee's visit to Cambodia that India unfortunately has ignored the ASEAN and its strategic and economic potential in the past. India is now trying to redress this balance.

With increasing engagement, India hopes that the ASEAN will gain a better understanding of India's economic and security concerns. The importance of the ASEAN for India cannot be overstated. It is a mutually reinforcing relationship. A valid 'mission statement'. One hopes it will be translated into operational realities. Otherwise I would have to recall a remark made by a senior official of the ASEAN secretariat to me two years after my retirement in 1996. He said: "We keep hearing your policy-makers talk about India's 'Look East' policy. But you just keep looking, not doing much about it."

One hopes that the Cambodian visit will preclude expression of such views from friends in the ASEAN in future.

# Malaysia moves court against Quattrocchi

Vandana Saxena

KUALA LUMPUR 3 DECEMBER

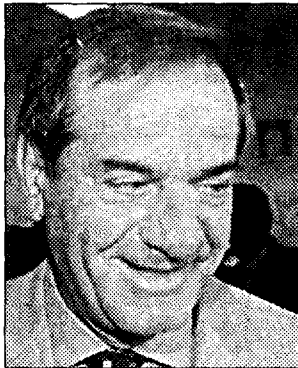
THE Malaysian authorities moved the high court here on Tuesday, challenging a lower court verdict rejecting a plea for extradition of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi to India to stand trial in the Bofors pay-off case.

The attorney general of Malaysia filed the application in the Kuala Lumpur High Court, seeking to overturn the Monday ruling of the sessions

court and also confiscate Quattrocchi's passport and re-imposition of his bail. "In our application in the high court for overturning of the sessions court's decision on the Quattrocchi extradition case, we have also appealed the court to re-impose the bail conditions

and confiscate Quattrocchi's passport," Indian government lawyers, assisting the authorities in the case, said.

High court judge Augustin Paul will hear the case on Wednesday.



OTTAVIO: FUTURE IN BALANCE

Quattrocchi's counsel said the Italian businessman, who has been living in Malaysia for the last few years, will be present in the court during the hearing.

Sessions court judge Akhtar Tahir had discharged Quattrocchi unconditionally, saying that the

descriptions of the offences in the requisition papers summated by the Indian government were "insufficient, vague and ambiguous." The CBI had informed Malaysia that it would ask for a review of the decision of the lower court.

—PTI

4 DEC 2002

*The Economic Times*

# East Timor declares emergency

Associated Press

DILI, Dec. 4. — East Timor declared a state of emergency today after police fired on student protesters, killing at least two people and sparking a rampage of looting and arson.

"I can confirm that a state of emergency has been imposed," said Ms Vic Josey, the UN's acting deputy commissioner of operations. "We are working in close cooperation with the peacekeeping forces, and there is 7 p.m. curfew imposed."

The UN assists with security in East Timor after administering the former Indonesian province for two years.

Earlier, police fired on a crowd of around 500 students outside police headquarters. At least two people were killed, witnesses said. Rioters burned down the house of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, a UN official said on condition of anonymity.

It was the second day of unrest in Dili. The protests, the worst since the poverty-stricken country became independent in May, were sparked by the recent arrest of a student from a school in the city.

Earlier, President Xanana Gusmao arrived at the scene of the riots, which were centered outside the National Police Headquarters, to try to restore order. The fighting continued, and he was escorted inside the building.

The state of emergency gives security forces extra powers of arrest and the power to impose a curfew.

Mobs also torched the Australian-owned Hello Mister supermarket, which sells mostly imported goods to UN workers and other foreigners in the country. At least one police car was also torched.

They then looted nearby shops and hotels, taking televisions and motorbikes.

UN peacekeepers were deployed, but were seemingly unable to contain the rioting.

# Time for a great leap eastwards

**T**HE recent India-ASEAN Summit in Cambodia has vindicated India's Look East Policy. The summit is an acknowledgement of India's emergence as a key player in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia, which has been a dialogue partner of the ASEAN for decades, has not been given the special status allotted to India. Having been denied the membership of APEC in 1989, India realised that it was the only regional power left out in the cold when others, far less important, were involved in deciding the future course of action in its extended neighbourhood. This resulted in the then prime minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, initiating the Look East Policy in 1991. The Rao proposal had an instant and successful fallout with India becoming a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of the ASEAN in January 1992 and a full Dialogue Partner in December 1995. In July 1996, India became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

India's formal interaction with the ASEAN began only in 1992. Considering that its involvement in Southeast Asia had begun immediately after independence in 1947, it had taken decades for it to enter into a full dialogue partnership with the ASEAN. India's closed economy, hostile geo-strategic setting and non-aligned foreign policy were just a few reasons for this failure. Its assessment of ASEAN was guided by Cold War perceptions—the ASEAN was seen as an extension of the US security alliance system. Although ties with some core members of this grouping improved in the late eighties, India's defence spending and blue water navy alarmed the member states. The fears of Indian hegemony were ultimately assuaged. Unlike China, India's record vis-a-vis Southeast Asia has been spotless.

The dialogue process with the ASEAN has enabled India to significantly deepen its relationship



For India, linking up with ASEAN makes eminent sense

MAN MOHINI KAUL

with member states. It is meant to augment its bilateral ties with its Southeast Asian neighbours. India's two sub-regional initiatives—BIMST-EC and the Mekong Ganga Project which include India, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam as members—are steps taken to forge closer links with Southeast Asia. It seems it is now eager to become a full member of ASEAN, a desire reflected in its diminishing interest in SAARC. A number of multilateral forums have been created to ensure economic cooperation between India and ASEAN. For instance, in the ASEAN-India Business Summit held in October 2002, it was decided to improve the level of economic exchanges. In addition, both

covered, a timetable for the completion of the projects and an agreement on the funding agency. So far only one project has been accomplished. The delay in the implementation of projects has often had a negative impact on the investors from the ASEAN countries.

Even though the recently released McKinsey Report on trade has painted a rosy picture of India's potential to increase trade with ASEAN from \$9 billion in 2000 to \$24-30 billion by 2007, the record of Indian-ASEAN economic ties till date has been modest. The actual inflow of ASEAN investments constitutes a meagre 3.4 per cent of total FDI flows into India. According to the CII, the two-way trade between India and ASEAN in 1998 consti-

**ASEAN is wooing India as never before. It is in India's interest to respond positively to this**

India and ASEAN have identified many non-economic areas of cooperation, like biotechnology, infotech and tourism.

It needs to be stressed, though, that initiating a new proposal each time an Indian minister visits the region is neither pragmatic nor strategically correct. It is far better to stick to a few meaningful projects. Here China's example can be emulated. Already ten road networks linking the Yunnan province with the Mekong basin countries, have either been developed or are at a stage of implementation under the Great Mekong Sub-region Development Programme. In contrast, India has yet to come up with a feasible plan delineating areas to be

tuted 10.05 per cent of India's total trade and an insignificant 1.28 per cent of ASEAN's total trade. This indicates a need for India to focus on a well-defined strategy for closer economic ties with Southeast Asia.

The slow progress in economic relations does not detract from the fact that there is a growing understanding between India and ASEAN as witnessed in the recent Summit in Cambodia. However, two crucial trends surfaced: first, the emergence of ASEAN's perception of India as a reliable partner substantiated by institutionalising the India-ASEAN multilateral dialogue at the highest level and expanding areas of cooperation from limited trade to free trade. Second,

China's strategic move at signing an agreement with ASEAN at the ASEAN Plus 3 Summit for creating a free trade zone—a calculated step towards closer integration with the ASEAN economy. It is difficult to predict the strategic implications of these trends for India's foreign policy but there is no denying that the ASEAN governments are cautious about China and beneath the bonhomie there does lurk a certain degree of nervousness.

These are turbulent times for ASEAN countries. The failure of ASEAN to respond to new challenges, such as the economic crises, environmental problems and the separation of East Timor has raised doubts about its cohesiveness as a regional grouping. With Islamic terrorist activities on the rise, as the recent Bali bombings indicated, the US and Australia have issued travel warnings to their nationals. This may cause great loss to the region's tourism industry and Southeast Asia may begin to be perceived as an unsafe destination for foreign investment. Even the FDI by its leading investor, Japan, seems to be going more to China than to ASEAN. This is an obvious cause for concern. In order to look for other alternatives, the ASEAN is wooing India as never before.

It is in India's interest to respond positively to this. After all, a weak and unstable ASEAN is not conducive to India's long-term security concerns. India should play a proactive and more meaningful role in the region's security concerns, especially with regard to terrorism and transnational crime. It is time for action. India needs to exploit the enthusiasm generated by the Cambodian summit and pay full attention to newly emerging trends in India-ASEAN cooperation.

*The writer is associate professor, School of International Studies, JNU. This piece has been written along with Vibhanshu Shekhar*

20 NOV 2002

# Myanmar asks U.N. envoy to delay visit

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MARCH 19. The Myanmar Government has asked the U.N. Secretary-General's special envoy, Razali Ismail, to delay his visit to Yangon following the attempted coup in the country.

Mr. Razali, whose visit was scheduled to begin on Tuesday, had been informed about the postponement, a military Government statement said in Yangon. "The Myanmar authorities concerned are quite preoccupied with issues that need immediate attention after the recent coup attempt," the statement said. "The U.N. envoy, Mr. Razali Ismail, has been informed and kindly requested to postpone his visit to Myanmar at a date convenient to both sides in the future," it said. Interestingly, the statement also added that the visit had been postponed on account of the

illness of the Deputy Foreign Minister (Khin Maung Win)".

Responding to the military Government's statement, a U.N. spokeswoman was quoted as saying: "We are disappointed to hear of this development, but we hope that the mission can be rescheduled as soon as possible in order to facilitate the national reconciliation process." On March 7, the son-in-law and three grandsons of the former dictator, Ne Win, were arrested by the military authorities for plotting a coup against the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Several top military commanders have also been displaced after the military Government reported the coup attempt. Western media accounts, meanwhile, are quite sceptical of the "coup plot", saying this could indicate a power struggle between the Army Chief, Maung Aye, and the intelligence boss, Khin Nyunt.

THE HINDU

20 MAR 2002

*Sanjay Barua*

# It's their choice: India

By Amit Baruah *10-11*

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 9.** "It's a choice that they have made," the Foreign Office spokesman here said in response to Pakistan's decision to indefinitely postpone the SAARC summit after India refused to confirm the dates for the Islamabad meeting. India, he claimed, had "always been committed" to the SAARC and its processes, but alleged that every meaningful proposal on trade and economic issues had been systematically "sabotaged" by Pakistan.

According to sources, Pakistan's decision was triggered by the fact that Islamabad wanted "lead time" of at least a month to prepare for the meeting but India was not ready to confirm the dates. In a sense, Pakistan has "bailed out" India from taking a public position on the SAARC meeting by announcing that the summit had been indefinitely deferred. But, the Indian establishment preferred to keep mum on the dates and wait for Pakistan to take the next step, which they have now

*10/12*  
taken. The sources said that the summit meeting had been "put off" at a time when the official-level talks on a draft treaty framework for a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) were going quite well.

In fact, yet another meeting of officials on the issue is scheduled to be held in Kathmandu later this month. On the next step, the sources maintained that informal consultations through the good offices of the SAARC Secretariat on Kathmandu would continue on a fresh set of dates. "This will take a few months," they added.

The Foreign Office spokesman took the view that the whole issue was not about agreeing to dates for a SAARC summit, but about making progress on the economic issues within the Regional Association.

From India's point of view, if the Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, had decided to travel to Islamabad on January 11-13, it would have entailed a decision on two issues — a return of the Indian High Commissioner and a restoration of civil aviation

links. The sources said if Mr. Vajpayee had travelled to Pakistan, then India would have liked to have a High Commissioner in place and, obviously, he would have flown in his special aircraft. They said Mr. Vajpayee would not have travelled by the circuitous route that is being followed by the few travellers who are able to afford travel between India and Pakistan.

At this point of time, these were two decisions that India did not want to take, given the tough line it wanted to project against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Also, though officially New Delhi doesn't want to say this, given the fact that SAARC is not supposed to take up bilateral matters, the issue of cross-border terrorism continues to loom large on the India-Pakistan horizon.

It is almost certain that Pakistan-based terrorist groups would have staged a high-profile attack before or during the visit of the Prime Minister to Islamabad. And this, clearly, was an embarrassment that India could have done without.

HO-1  
10/12

# Pak. seeks to defer SAARC summit

South Asia ✓

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD, DEC. 9.** For the third time since its inception in 1985, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) became victim to Indo-Pak. tensions as Pakistan today formally sought the postponement of the 12th SAARC Summit it had proposed here in the second week of January.

The official announcement by Islamabad, about its communication to the SAARC Secretary-General on its inability to hold the Summit in the absence of confirmation of dates by India and Bhutan, was not unexpected. The postponement has been in the air for several weeks now.

A clear sign that Pakistan was readying to postpone the event was evident when its Foreign Office, on November 29, accused India of putting "pre-conditions" for attending the meet. Pakistan asserted that it would not "countenance" such moves from any quarters, merely to ensure their participation.

New Delhi raised two arguments as to why it was not enthused over the prospect of another SAARC Summit and that too in Pakistan.

First came the charge that there was little progress on the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and the South Asian Free

Trade Agreement (SAFTA), as was agreed at the last Summit in Kathmandu, due to non-cooperation from Pakistan.

The second argument from the Indian side was that there was little purpose in a meet in Pakistan as long as it did not stop "cross-border terrorism". Replying to the first charge, Pakistan maintained that it was committed to pledges made at the last Summit but could not be hustled into trade agreements. It flatly denied the allegations about cross-border infiltration and terrorism.

A Foreign Office spokesman, Kamran Niaz, maintained that the Summit dates were advanced from April to January, on the request of the Indian side, at the meeting of SAARC Council of Ministers at Kathmandu. He claimed that at the same conference the Ministers had agreed on January 5-20 as the "band of dates" within which the Summit may be organised and Pakistan agreed to suggest specific dates.

In the last week of August, Pakistan suggested January 11-13 as the dates. At the informal meeting of SAARC Foreign Ministers on September 16, on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, it was agreed that all member-states should confirm their acceptance of the proposed dates at the earliest.

✓ It is their decision, says India: Page 11 ✓

# Making sense of SAARC

## We need to make a distinction between bilateral issues and multilateral cooperation

12 98 6  
It seems the next SAARC summit is already being treated as a diplomatic-political football, reducing its potential to the level of inanities. Pakistan, and even some elements of the international community, appear to mix up the multilateral summit due to be held next month in Islamabad with the issue of bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India. This is unfortunate since that dialogue is subject to numerous parameters that need not necessarily apply to the SAARC summit. After all, both India and Pakistan have engaged themselves in multilateral dialogue and discussions at various forums while New Delhi insists that a bilateral dialogue would remain contingent to Pakistani stopping assistance to cross-border terrorism. Every act of terrorism in India pushes the prospect of that dialogue further back.

Regional co-operation under SAARC, however, is a different issue. India, as the major country, must remain firmly committed to the principle and practice of regional co-operation. The SAARC charter itself does not allow for bilateral issues to be mixed with the multilateral process. Thus great care must be adopted by everyone to ensure that even insinuations of a bilateral summit, leave alone generating perceptions of such a process, should not be allowed to cloud the prospects of movement along the chosen path of multilateral co-operation. Thus persisting doubts

about Indian participation in the forthcoming SAARC summit needs careful handling. National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra seems to suggest that Indian participation would depend upon Pakistan implementing the decisions of earlier SAARC summit and other meetings. It is true that regional co-operation can only be as good as the implementation of the decisions that are mutually agreed upon; and without such progress SAARC would only become a 'talk shop'.

Pakistan has not granted India the Most Favoured Nation status and instituted trade arrangements required under earlier agreements. It may also be claimed that Islamabad has significantly held back co-operation in countering terrorism. Given the nature of the issues that could be involved, it is necessary for both Pakistan and India to show transparency at this time. It is important, too, that New Delhi spells out the issues which in its judgement Pakistan was to implement but has not done. This is all the more necessary to avoid any interpretation that might link up the government's ambiguity with the impending elections in Gujarat. On the other hand, Pakistan must declare, as early as possible, its commitment to the implementation of the decisions that require such action. Otherwise it would only promote the prevailing view that Islamabad does not stand by its commitments made in formal agreements.

2 DEC 2002

INDIAN EXPRESS



# Thailand showing signs of intolerance

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MARCH 6. The signs are ominous. Thailand, which was slowly crafting its democratic institutions, is showing growing signs of intolerance under the Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. And, as can be expected in new democracies, it is the press that has come to face the opprobrium of the powers that be in Thailand.

Two Bangkok-based reporters of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (FEER) were the first "casualties" — they were ordered out of the country for an article in the magazine's January issue and their fate still hangs in the balance. Both have had to surrender their passports to the Thai Government, pending an appeal of their cases.

And, now the Nation Multimedia Group, which supplied radio programmes to FM 90.5MHz, has been told to discontinue its programmes. The Government's directive was conveyed to Smart Bomb Company Ltd, the concessionaire of time on the radio station. Following the directive, the Nation Group has decided to discontinue political coverage and commentaries on its 24-hour cable news channel.

"News Channel UBC 8 views the current political atmosphere in Thailand with great concern. It appears that there are uncertainties suggesting that the Government has neither the will nor the inclination to guarantee freedom of expression as guaranteed by the Constitution," the media group said in a statement.

According to the group, without a guarantee of freedom of expression to report and comment on political news, the channel would no longer cover political stories.

For his part, Mr. Thaksin has denied that the action was taken for political reasons while warning the press to be "constructive" in its reports and not show bias against the Government. (A Government Minister claimed that the action was taken on contractual grounds).

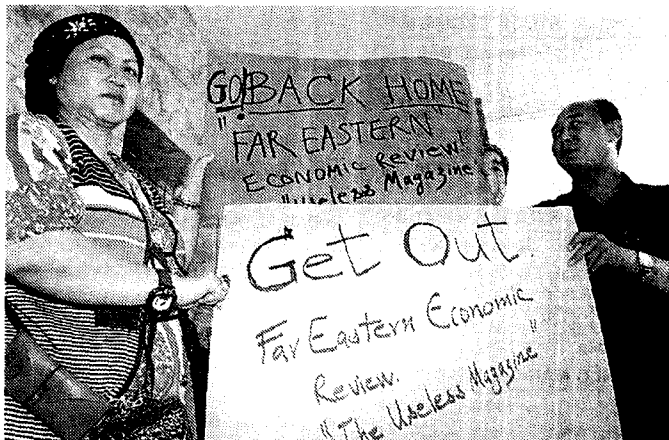
"Let's be constructive and not use emotion and criticise people without consideration for the

confusion that arises in the country," the Prime Minister was quoted as saying.

"The media are human. A columnist is a human who can write from experience or feeling. But this feeling is listened to by hundreds of thousands of millions of people. Is that beneficial to society? The country needs unity today," Mr. Thaksin claimed.

Separately, the Deputy Prime Minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, conceded that the Government was unhappy with the criticism contained in the Nation's radio programmes. "They should point out things but not criticise us," he said. In an editorial on the issue, *The Nation* argued: "Democracy is about building, through trial and error...on the other hand, dictatorship is about one man forcing others to accept his ideas - and his alone."

Mr. Thaksin has shown adequately which side of the fence he is on. All of his critics are enemies who have to be controlled, intimidated or simply wiped out.



Thal protesters hold a poster denouncing the Far East Economic Review magazine in Bangkok on Wednesday. — AP

Consequently, Thailand is becoming a country where freedom of speech is limited to those willing to admire the emperor's clothes."

Whether it is the case of the FEER reporters or the Nation's radio programmes, Government action against the press can only go to weaken democratic institutions. There has been little by

way of debate or discussion with the parties concerned, there has only been "action". In South-East Asia, where the freedom of the press in several countries is questionable, Thailand stood out for its sharp-edged press - a sign that years of control were a thing of the past. Will the press be reined in or will it continue to expose the powers that be?

THE HINDU

7 MAR 2001

# Tandjung arrest, a bold move

9/3 By Amit Baruah HD-15

SINGAPORE, MARCH 8. The arrest of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) Speaker, Akbar Tandjung, and the decision to try Tommy Suharto, son of former dictator, Gen. Suharto, on murder charges are bold moves by the President, Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Mr. Akbar's arrest, surprising as it was, comes at a time when Indonesians had come to believe that Governments were far from serious about tackling the problem of corruption.

As leader of the Golkar party, which has about 30 per cent of all seats in the House and is the second largest party in the DPR, Mr. Akbar is a powerful politician and contended for the post of President in elections scheduled for 2004.

Given the fact that Ms. Megawati's Cabinet has Golkar members, her Government could be faced with some turbulence from Mr. Akbar arrest in a case of embezzlement of U.S. \$4 million from the State logistics agency, Bulog.

Ms. Megawati's decision to order the Attorney-General's office to arrest Mr. Akbar is definitely going to win her popular support since he is the most senior Indonesian politician to face corruption charges.

Most of Gen. Suharto's cronies have gone free as has his family barring Tommy Suharto, who was an absconder from the



The Indonesian Parliament Speaker and head of former ruling Golkar party, Akbar Tandjung (right), is escorted by officials as he leaves for prayers at the Attorney-General's office compound in Jakarta on Friday. — Reuters

law after being sentenced to an 18-month jail term in a corruption case. Yesterday, the police announced that Tommy was accused in the July 2001 murder of Supreme Court judge, Syafuddin Kartasmita, the man who sentenced the junior Suharto to the 18-month jail term.

Having taken these two decisions, Indonesians will now maintain a close watch on the course these two cases take.

On Mr. Akbar's front, the next moves by Golkar will have to be closely watched. Though there are some dissident elements who had asked Mr. Ak-

bar to resign as the DPR Speaker, the Golkar leader did not oblige them.

In Jakarta, a Golkar functionary said the party may suspend its political activity in the House of Representatives. A top Golkar official and State Minister for Information, Syamsul Muarif, said that he would resign over the Akbar affair. In a related development, the Chief Security Minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, said the President was monitoring developments and was not unduly concerned by political developments.

THE HINDU

9 MAR 2002

## 30 die in raid on Myanmar army camp

ST-12  
REUTERS 24B  
S. S. S. Myanmar

BANGKOK, March 23. - Separatist ethnic Karen fighters launched one of their biggest attacks on the Myanmar army since the mid-1990s this morning, leaving about 30 dead, the Thai army said.

A Thai military source told reporters that about 100 fighters from the Karen National Union raided the large military camp, opposite Thailand's Phop Phra district of Tak province, 420 km north-west of Bangkok.

The source did not say how many Myanmar troops were among the dead. He said the camp also sheltered soldiers of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, which split away from the KNU in the mid-1990s to become allies of the Myanmar army.

It said the Thai army had detained more than 30 KNU soldiers who fled into Thailand after the raid, and would soon disarm them before sending them back into Myanmar.

OFFICIAL

24 MAR 2002

# Getting nowhere

S. P. A. Yangon junta delaying transfer of power

All hopes pinned on secret talks between Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and Myanmar's military junta which goes by the name of State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) are getting nowhere. There is little doubt that the junta's objective is to use the secret dialogue to delay the transfer of power by tiring out the Opposition and taxing its patience. Not much should be read into their assertion that the "ongoing dialogue might seem to be slow to some but it is steady and a sure process where success is imminent". Except that the junta during the dialogue process has been maintaining an informal truce by not allowing the state-controlled media to gun for Suu Kyi and her NLD reciprocating the gesture by not criticising the junta, the secret talks have achieved nothing. Although 210 NLD members including a cousin of Suu Kyi and her assistant secretary have been released from prison and "correctional facilities" during this period, there is no indication that the intrepid leader of the pro-democracy movement, held under house arrest since September 2000 after confronting the junta over restrictions on her movements, and over 800 other NLD leaders and members would be set free to hasten the process of political reconciliation. Hopes that the recent reshuffle of top military commanders might influence the outcome of the secret dialogue have also been belied because the junta insists that Suu Kyi should "drop her unrealistic demands and work for mutual understanding by letting the military share state power for advancement of democracy." Naturally such a ridiculous stance is hindering the progress of the dialogue.

But the sanctions, military and economic, that the West have imposed on Myanmar, continue to hurt the junta hard which is why the generals keep saying a reconciliation is imminent. The Americans are not fools. Only recently pressure groups in the US persuaded more than two dozen American corporations to stop importing Myanmar goods and those that sell them are coming under sustained pressure. Many Myanmar goods are products of forced labour. A drop in opium production in Afghanistan following the air strikes and the Myanmar desperation to lay their hands on hard cash to alleviate hardship have already turned Myanmar into the world's biggest opium producer. While Myanmar's isolation has increasingly driven it into China's arms, internally the situation is far from normal. Fearing student unrest the junta has locked out universities like Mandalay and the ones that have been allowed to function have been shifted. One doesn't know whether these are straws in the wind but then politics in Myanmar have always been problematic, even for the well informed.

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- 4 MAR 2002

# Myanmar coup crackdown

*S. H. Anis - Myanmar*

FROMAUNGHLATUN

Yangon, March 10 (Reuters): Myanmar's chief of police, the head of the air force and an army general have been sacked in connection with an alleged coup plot by relatives of former

military strongman, Ne Win, diplomats said on Sunday.

Over a dozen more senior officers were also set to be sacked or arrested over the plot, they said.

"As far as we know, police chief Col Soe Win, commander-

in-chief Air Maj Gen. Myint Swe, and Brig. Gen. Chit Than were relieved from their duty (on Friday)," a well-informed Asian diplomat based in Yangon said.

Chit Than was commander of the Triangle Region in Kengtung, where Myanmar, Thai and Laotian borders meet. "We heard that more than a dozen, including some high-ranking ones and a senior naval officer, will also be sacked in connection with this case. But we don't know yet how they are involved in it," he said.

Myanmar military authorities declined to comment on the report.

The military government said on Saturday they had arrested the son-in-law and three grandsons of former President U Nu, for attempting to plot a coup against the military.

Kyaw Win, Myanmar's deputy chief of military intelligence, told a news conference that Aye Zaw Win, and his three sons — Aye Ne Win, Kyaw Ne Win and Zwe Ne Win, all in their mid-20s — were arrested at a restaurant on Thursday evening while waiting to discuss their coup plot with a senior commanding officer.

Security around the lakeside residence of the 92-year-old former dictator in central Yangon had been tightened after the arrests, witnesses said.

Aye Zaw Win, a businessman believed to be in the late 50s, is the husband of Ne Win's daughter; Sandar Win, the eldest and the apple of Ne Win's eye.

Sandar Win used to be a medical doctor in the army and she resigned from her job as a major about nine years ago and entered into business.

Yangon was calm this week apart from the normal hus-



Ne Win. (AFP file picture)

tle and bustle of the capital.

Security measures across the capital were also routine, except around the Resistance Park, where they have been tightened for about two weeks because of parade drills for the 57th Anniversary Armed Forces Day on March 27.

But all 12 regional commanders were back in Yangon while the 13 members of the Yangon-based State Peace and Development Council were holding a closed-door meeting today, a military source said.

He said the military might hold another news conference next week.

Kyaw Win today said the coup plotters were dissatisfied with their loss of business privileges from the government, and the government's priorities on ethnic groups and the political and economic changes.

Aye Zaw Win and Sandar Win were two of the most privileged entrepreneurs before and during the early days of the present military government.

They used to have monopolies in hotel, fisheries and pearl-culture industries and were involved in a multi-million dollar mobile phone installation project two years ago.

The latter project was scrapped last year, leading to the removal of the minister for post and telecommunications.

The current military regime, known as the State Peace and Development Council, has ruled since 1991 when it ignored a landslide election victory of the opposition National League for Democracy headed by Aung San Suu Kyi.

Myanmar's army has for years been fighting several ethnic insurgencies over the last decade, but has agreed ceasefires with most.

**The Telegraph**

**6593**

**QUICK CROSSWORD**

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**THE TELEGRAPH**

MAR 2002

119-15  
76/3

## Junta criticises Ne Win regime

By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, MARCH 27.** Does the recent arrest of the former Myanmar strongman, Ne Win's family members bode well for Myanmar? A speech made by the State and Peace Development Council (SPDC) Chairman, Than Shwe, today would indicate that the military Government has cut the umbilical chord with the former dictator's legacy.

Addressing a gathering on Armed Forces Day in Yangon, Gen. Than Shwe, was quoted as saying: "In 1988, due to an atmosphere of general dissatisfaction based on low levels of economic performance, the situation went out of control."

In what is, perhaps, the first criticism of Mr. Ne Win and his regime, the SPDC chief said: "The responsibility to undertake a transition from one age and one system to a new age and a new system that was in line with the political, economic and social desires of the people fell on the Tatmadaw (military)."

In 1988, Mr. Ne Win gave up power following mass protests in the country. During his autocratic tenure, he isolated the country and denied the people their democratic rights. Earlier this month, the military Government announced that a son-in-law and three grandsons of Mr. Ne Win had been arrested on charges of plotting a coup against the military Government.

Gen. Than Shwe, in his speech, also made indirect references to the ongoing dialogue process with the National League of Democracy (NLD) general secretary, Aung San Suu Kyi.

"Untiring efforts are being made...to ensure that when the time comes to hand over the responsibilities of the State, succeeding governments will be able to provide leadership with rectitude and with continuity to a nation where favourable conditions of stability and peace prevail," he said.

"Our genuine goodwill and efforts have been proved and are being proved with deeds, not words," he maintained.

While there is this indirect reference to the dialogue, pressures are mounting on the military Government to produce results in the talks with Ms. Suu Kyi, which commenced way back in October 2000.

It is evident that the military Government, at the maximum, will be prepared to share power with a possible, future democratic dispensation while retaining its control on the political system and politics.

Despite the optimistic words being used by Gen. Than Shwe, the military Government cancelled a visit by the U.N. Secretary-General's special envoy, Razali Ismail, to Yangon for talks on taking the political process further.

The Yangon authorities made it plain that the rescheduling of Mr. Razali's visit was related to the Ne Win family's coup attempt and the Malaysian diplomat would be invited soon again. Mr. Razali is likely to travel to Myanmar in April.

THE HINDU

# Jakarta, Aceh rebels sign peace pact.

*10/12*  
*HO-14*  
**GENEVA, DEC. 9.** The Indonesian Government and rebels from Aceh province Monday signed a landmark accord to end the 26-year separatist war on the tip of Sumatra island. But the two sides left details of the thorny issue of disarming the province to further negotiation.

"Both sides have thus agreed that, from now on, enmity between them should be considered a thing of the past," said the six-page accord.

The U.S. mediator, Anthony Zinni, said, "Both parties represented here really want this agreement to work. This is a good starting point. But it is just the beginning, not the end."

Because of the bitterness of the conflict, however, both sides warned that the attempt to implement the accord — which grants Aceh wide-ranging autonomy but does not allow for independence — will be fraught with difficulties which could derail the peace process.

The war, which has roots going back more than 130 years, is considered one of the world's oldest armed conflicts.

"Given the firm commitment of both sides for peace, I see no reason why we cannot obtain this goal we so desire," said Wiryono Sastro Handoyo, the top Indonesian Government negotiator, after signing the accord. "There is no obstacle we can't overcome."

Zaini Abdullah, who signed the pact for the leadership of the Free Aceh Movement, said: "The achievement today is the direct result of the struggle and

sacrifices of our people. We hope the peace process will be an opportunity for them to express themselves in a peaceful and safe manner."

Although 12,000 people have

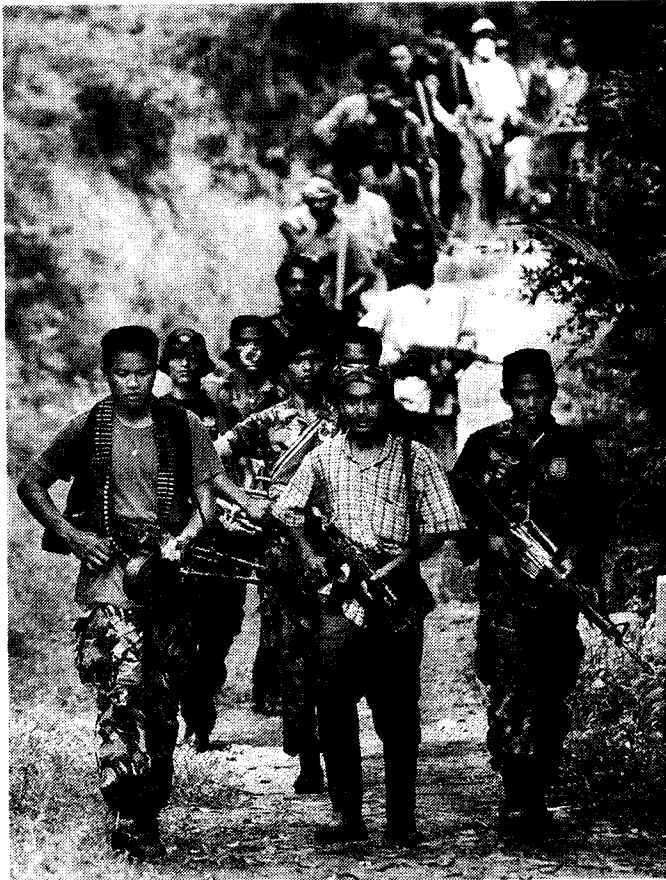
died in Aceh in the last decade, the insurgency has been dubbed "the Forgotten War" because it never managed to attract international public attention in the same way as other

*show Jurnes*  
conflicts, such as East Timor, did.

But Aceh is seen as the most dangerous of Indonesia's many internal conflicts because of the rebels' insistence on independence and the Government's resolve not to allow the province to break away — a move that many believe would lead to the disintegration of the ethnically and religiously diverse nation of 210 million people.

Monday's accord paves the way for a political process, called the "All-Inclusive Dialogue," which would bring together all political and social groups in the province to prepare for free legislative elections in the region in 2004. Mediators said other details would be ironed out on the ground when the peace pact goes into effect.

If the peace agreement — which provides for wide regional autonomy and control over significant revenues from the province's timber and natural gas resources — proves successful, it could also be implemented in other secessionist trouble spots in Indonesia. The peace accord sidestepped the sensitive issue of disarmament and demilitarisation of Aceh, a Holland-sized province of 4.1 million people on the northern tip of Sumatra island. Both sides have been under intense international pressure to make concessions. The Government has offered the timber-and oil-rich province autonomy, including regional elections in 2004 which the rebel Free Aceh Movement is likely to win. — AP



**CHARTING THE PEACE PATH:** Rebel soldiers of the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) march in their camp in Batee Iliek, Aceh province, Indonesia, in this recent photo.

# Arrests pre-empted violence: Mahathir

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, DEC. 6. The Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, today pledged to carry forward a definitive anti-terror agenda through "pre-emptive action". Dr. Mahathir's choice of such a strategic option within the frontiers of his own country has had an evocative resonance within the diplomatic community in South-East Asia, given the damage-control exercise that Australia has had to initiate following a pan-regional outcry against its Prime Minister, John Howard's recent statement of intent to take pre-emptive action if necessary.

The Malaysian leader availed himself of the celebrations of "Hari Raya" (as the Id is known) to portray his country as an anti-terror force in spite of the perceived misconceptions in the West about the connection between Islam and the current wave of worldwide terrorism.



Muslims attend morning Id prayers in Jakarta on Friday. — Reuters

He said: "We do not deny that there are terrorists in Malaysia, but we have contained them much earlier than other countries".

About the detention of suspected terrorists in Malaysia, he noted that "when we arrested these people ... many said that we (the Malaysian authorities) are undemocratic (in spirit)."

But now, he underlined, "they understand that if we want to avoid terrorism, we have to take pre-emptive action" against those suspected to be planning such violence. "Otherwise, if we wait until they (the terrorists) explode the bomb(s), many

people will die, and, at that time, it is (just) too late", he quipped.

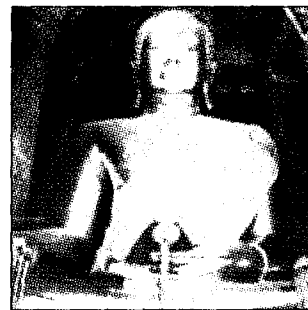
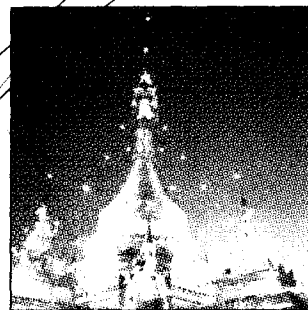
The reference to the arrests, some of which attracted criticism in the West as also Australia about his administration's human rights record, should be seen in the context of the detention of 67 members of Kumpulan Militan Malaysia, a local

outfit with suspected links to Al-Qaeda, since October last year.

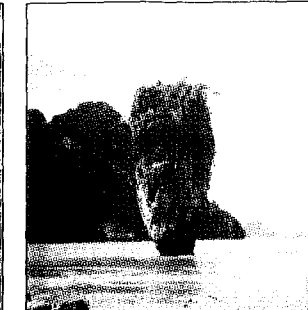
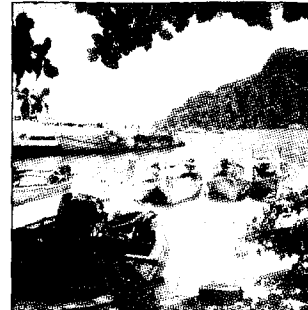
The coded diplomatic message to Mr. Howard from Dr. Mahathir cannot be missed, given the context in which the Malaysian leader spoke today about his country's initiative of a pre-emptive action against suspected terrorists. Dr. Mahathir minced no words about some Islamic countries, too, while lamenting how they had provided sanctuaries to misguided elements from Malaysia, in the overdrive towards political-Islam of the kind that caused concern to non-Muslims across the world.

Dr. Mahathir said that some Malaysians, who wished to seize power in Kuala Lumpur, went to Pakistan as also Afghanistan, purportedly to study religion, but actually to learn how to make bombs, rob banks, to kill and to topple the Government (in Malaysia) to set up a supposedly Islamic nation.





# amazing traditions



Grand Palace, Bangkok and His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej

## Indo-Thai bhai-bhai Time is ripe to take a giant leap forward...

December 5 is His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 75th birthday. Some highlights of His Majesty's special projects and achievements.

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej has initiated countless projects in order to create a better standard of living for his people, especially those in the rural areas. His rural development projects were first started in 1952 as a basic research into ideas that could help farmers earn their livelihood. The emergence of His Majesty's own projects was viewed as a social welfare undertaking that in no way overlapped the government's own responsibility as having the principle role in national development. The reason for this was that the King's projects were largely conducted in the areas where at that time the government was unable or unprepared to undertake large-scale projects.

One of the most important aspects of the Royal Projects is the use of natural methods as a means of solving natural problems. These natural methods are characterised by simplicity, frugality and an ecological balance.

His Majesty's Royal Project for the Environment received the Ramon Magsaysay Award, the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize, in 1988.

From small experiments, His Majesty's projects grew to become full blown vocations, requiring greater involvement of individuals and groups. After fifty years of initiating his ideas to help the people help themselves, His Majesty now has many agencies that are responsible for carrying out the Royal Projects such as the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, the Royal Development Study Centres and the Chaipattana Foundation.

**Steps to be taken to strengthen Indo-Thai economic, social and cultural ties further, to reach an "optimum" relationship.**

First of all, I would like to emphasise that relations between India and Thailand are extremely cordial. Unofficially, the people of the two countries have interacted for centuries. Officially, we have established diplomatic ties for over fifty years.

In order to further deepen and strengthen this friendship and reach the "optimum" relationship, I think, both countries should promote a greater knowledge and awareness of each other by creating opportunities for people of both the

countries to meet and network.

Economically, we should encourage businessmen and economic officials to meet and mutually benefit from their economic transactions. A good example is the free trade area that is being discussed. The same applies in the social and cultural fields as well. We have started to conduct more activities such as the Thai food festivals and Thai cultural performances in different cities in India so that Indian people can experience the different facets of Thailand.

Thailand, one of the gateways to other destinations in the Far East and beyond, as a major commercial hub in comparison to countries like Malaysia and Singapore.

Thailand is situated in the centre of Mainland South East Asia and is the gateway to Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar. It has many seaports in the eastern and southern parts of the country. Moreover, compared to neighbouring countries like Malaysia and Singapore, Thailand has cheaper labour wages and lower cost of doing business.

**Any special incentives and concessions to cash in on the advantage of Thailand being a preferred travel destination of the Indians.**

Thailand is a destination that is not only cheap but also has the best value for money. There is practically everything for everyone, be it golf, spas, adventure tourism etc. The economical rates of travel and hotel stay and the variety of attractions offered in Thailand is more than enough to attract tourists.

In addition, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) also facilitates groups of tourists who travel to Thailand under the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conference and Exhibition) scheme.

The TAT coordinates with hotels to get even lower rates than those given to individual tourists and also helps organise cultural performances and outings. For individual and group tourists alike, the TAT tries to facilitate their stay through such initiatives like VAT refund centres, the tourist police, and cooperation with the business community to hold mega sale events.

Present level of business between Thailand and India in terms of imports and exports. Whether peripheral trade in fabrics, electronic

items etc will leapfrog in the future.

Currently, the trade volume between Thailand and India accounts for merely 1% of the total trade between Thailand and other countries. In 2001, the total volume was to the tune of \$ 1,154.1 million, of which Thailand imports from India constituted \$671 and exports \$ 483.1 million. This means that Thailand has a trade deficit with India. But this doesn't worry us so much. We should find ways and means on how to increase the trade volume between us. The main products exported from Thailand are computer parts and components, yarn and fibre, textile

and plastic resin. Thailand imports gems and jewellery, iron and steel, chemicals and machinery. I see a lot of potential in trading with India since it's in the path of economic development and there is a great demand for goods and services.

On the major and minor roadblocks to the progress of Indo Thai relations.

The roadblock I see is the lack of knowledge about each other. The Thai people do not know Indians as well as they should. And the same goes for Indians. This needs to change. Other wise it becomes difficult to interact and encourage activities between the two countries.

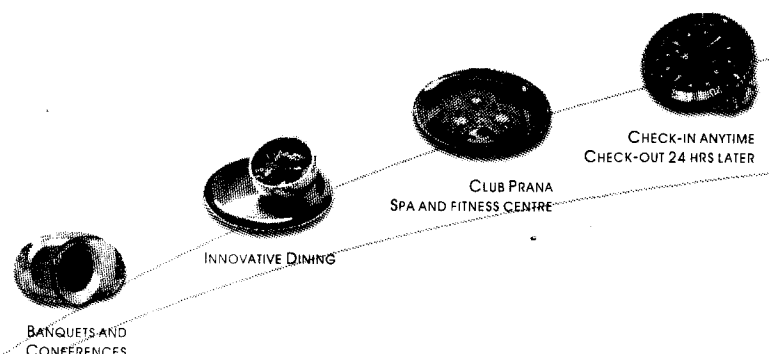
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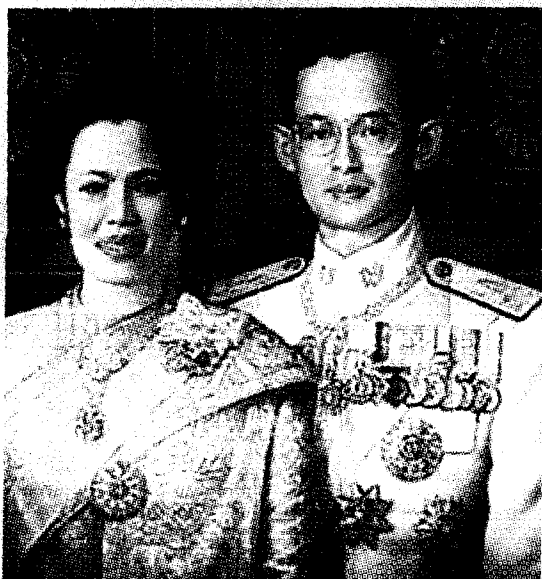
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For His Excellency Ambassador Bandhit Sotipalalit, the India posting has by far been the best. With Indo-Thai relations on the upswing, he has been one of the busiest Thai Ambassadors in the recent past. The volume of trade between the countries is set to increase. Thailand has successfully emerged from the 1997 economic crisis. Travel between the two countries has grown multifold — a clear sign being Thai Airways pushing for more seats out of India.

The Ambassador spoke to Sujay Gupta on wide ranging issues on the eve of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 75th Birthday.

Known in Thai as 'Wan Chalerm', the occasion is marked by an outpouring of love and reverence by Thai people throughout the kingdom and around the world. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, or King Rama IX, the world's longest reigning monarch ascended the throne on 9th June 1946. The King has won a special place in the hearts of the Thai people through his combination of devotion to the welfare and development of his people, and a keen understanding and awareness of political and social issues. As an institution, His Majesty has provided a



firm foundation for the country to weather the trials and turmoil that have beset the region since the end of World War II. Today, His Majesty continues to play a central role in a wide spectrum of national and social development schemes.

and plastic resin. Thailand imports gems and jewellery, iron and steel, chemicals and machinery. I see a lot of potential in trading with India since it's in the path of economic development and there is a great demand for goods and services.

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## Sea, Sand and the King

IT'S a small town by the sea. It's also a royal small town by the sea. Hua Hin sounds like an exotic Chinese dish savoured on occasions, delectable and yummy. Well, the town is a complete feast. For the stomach, the gullet, and the eyes. It's also His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's favourite retreat complete with an ornate and beautiful palace.

Two and half-hours south of Bangkok, Hua Hin hugs the Gulf of Thailand. A quaint little place, Hua Hin could have just been that. Till the back packers discovered it, in the 1920s. Like a child growing into an adult, the town started growing and acquiring the frills of adulthood. Hotel chains, spas, resorts and tourists have added bulk to the place. But Hua Hin still remains child like. Look at the railway station, straight out of an Enid Blyton book. You can almost picture a steam engine plodding in and a Noddy or a Tessie bear jumping out of one of its carriages.

If you manage to get away from the shopping, the massages and the roadside foodstalls of Bangkok, take a chill pill and head out for Hua Hin. There is an air service but it's really not worth it. The train ride is exotic but its best to be on the road. This is the only way you get to sample the rural country ride. On the road to Hua Hin, you'll cross the town of Cha-am in the region of Petchaburi. Cha-am is 25 kilometers from Hua Hin. A good taxi ride to Hua Hin from Bangkok should cost in the region of 650 Bahts (Rs 1000+) or slightly more.

Unlike most other tourist destinations, Hua Hin has grown but the sea and the ambience seems to have soaked in the growth and not made it oppressive. You have the five star chains like the Hilton, Mar-



Hua Hin beach

riott, Anantara, Sofitel and Eva Som and the world famous Spa, Chiva-Som, but these exist within smelling distance of the Greek, Italian and Austrian road side restaurants on either side of cobbled streets. Hua Hin looks very English — in fact it looks more European than Thai. The Chocolate mousse and the Lebanese chicken roll co-exist. As do the countless pubs and the big, big one at the Hilton, the abode of most die-hard beer drinkers called the Hua Hin Brewing Company.

In Hua Hin, you could talk of architecture and places to see. But that would



be for most towns. It's an ideal land for Lotus-eaters where the most taxing thing that you could think of is lazing. If you are the kind who loves paragliding, windsurfing, playing beach volleyball, good luck to you.

There's plenty of that and more. But there's nothing more "exciting" than an evening at the Hua Hin Brewing Company. Here you can relax and unwind over the home-brewed beers, feast on the fresh catch of the day and enjoy the tunes as the sun sets over the sea. The beers brewed in the microbrewery are based on old recipes dating back to 1923, when Khun Sopchoke, an old salt of the sea, decided to start trading his homemade

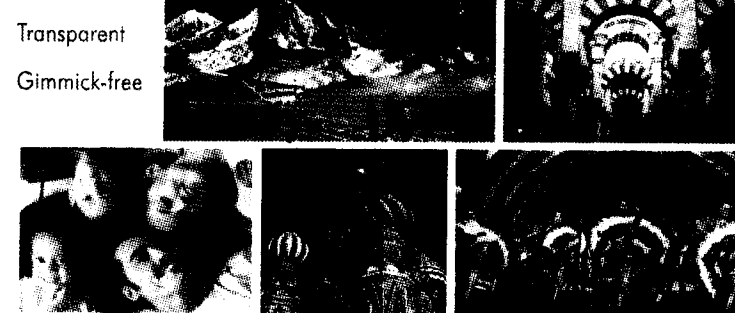
beers for fish. The village took to his brewery and soon the old seafarer had the first microbrewery in Hua Hin slaking the thirst of sailors and fishermen everywhere. Today the brewery continues in the tradition of yore, serving up Elephant Tusk Dark ale, Sabai Sabai Wheat beer and dancing monkey lager as well as delicious seafood.

The hotel chains, meanwhile, must be commended for preserving the original beauty of the place. Each hotel organises a major event like ballooning, a car rally and so on. The big hotels are expensive with prices ranging from \$150 upwards. But there are small hotels and holiday homes where you can shack. And, in any case, the beach and the fresh air is free.

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# Malaysia may review ties with Australia

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The Star/Asia News Network

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec. 4. — The Malaysian government will review its co-operation with Australia if it persists in blaming Malaysia for its own inability to prevent acts of terrorism, said Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the government had been co-operating as much as it could with other countries in the war against terrorism.

"But if they are going to blame us, then we are going to rethink about co-operating with them," he said, after visiting former conjoined twins Azama and Azami Kamarulzaman at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital Paediatric Ward here Wednesday.

Dr Mahathir added that Australia was going to lose out in South-East Asia if its Government's present attitude remained.

"Certainly they are not going to be very welcome (in South-East Asia)," he said.

He added that Malaysians and Australians had always gotten along fine.

"We have good relations with Australians as a people. They are here, we do business with them and we send our students to study there because they have good schools and teachers but they have a leader, who is totally insensitive.

"Not all Australians support this kind of arrogant attitude of Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

"He has obviously been very arrogant and we have never had any good relations with him at all," said Dr Mahathir.

Asked whether Asean members would make a collective stand against pre-emptive strikes by foreign countries against terrorists in the region, Dr Mahathir said not all Asean members thought alike.

"Maybe there are some Asean countries

which will welcome it but not all of them have made (known) their stand. The Philippines is obviously critical, so is Indonesia. I don't know about Thailand. Other countries have not responded," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting here next year would probably make a stand on the different views held by world powers and smaller nations in tackling terrorism.

He said developed countries were not able to "think straight" anymore since the events of 11 September.

"They do things which only aggravate matters, not in the interest of fighting terrorists," he said.

The MCA Youth urged Mr Howard to relook his foreign policy towards Asia as it has failed to build a meaningful relationship between Asia and Australia.

Its international affairs bureau chief Mr Fam Lee Ee said Mr Howard has refused to recognise the importance of having a strong relationship with Asia.

"Mr Howard still thinks that Australia is located in Europe or North America, which is tragic. Unless Howard emphasises more importance towards Asia, there will be a diplomatic strain between Asia and Australia," he said in a statement.

Mr Fam added Mr Howard appeared to have backtracked from his earlier stand that he was prepared to act against terrorists in Asian countries and that the UN charter should be changed to empower nations to strike pre-emptively against terrorists who planned to attack them.

He said the clarification by Australian foreign minister Mr Alexander Downer would not help to mend the deteriorating ties between many Asian countries and Australia.

# Philippines gunmen free 20 hostages

Philippine Daily Inquirer/ ANN

ILIGAN CITY (Philippines), Dec. 3 — Gunmen freed all their 20 captives today after a 10-hour hostage drama at the village of Dulag near here, police and military officers said.

Colonel Ernesto Boac, chief of the Army's 401 Infantry Brigade, said the armed men released the hostages and left Dulag around 1 p.m. and "the Army is now pursuing the suspects. The residents are unharmed".

Col Boac had earlier threatened his troops would engage the gunmen if they failed to release the captives.

Some 30 gunmen attacked the remote farming village and held about the 20 people hostage for more than 10 hours, apparently in connection with a blood feud, a senior police officer, Mr Roger Nuneza said.

The hostage takers, led by Bocari Alindo and his brother Tungoy Alindo, entered the village at dawn and took hostage three local officials and 17 other people, Mr Nuneza said. The Alindos are engaged in a blood feud with a number of Dulag families, he said. They had reportedly demanded the return of blood money paid out over an earlier killing in exchange for the hostages.

The gunmen escaped through a cordon of pro-government militiamen and abandoned the hostages after armymen arrived in the area in the afternoon, officials said.

The Iligan mayor, Mr Franklin Quijano, said the Alindos belong to a political clan in the neighbouring town of Kapai.

Large clans here often have armed followers and vendetta killings are common in parts of the strife-torn main southern Philippine island of Mindanao.

4 DEC 2002

THE STATESMAN

# End of Abu Sayyaf near: Manila

By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, MARCH 1.** The Philippines today claimed that the end of the Abu Sayyaf militant outfit was near as a top U.S. military commander denied that the anti-terrorist exercise in the country was a Vietnam-type "slippery slope". "We have killed about 190 Abu Sayyaf members and captured quite a lot of them and many surrendered, also because of the intense pressure of the military. So, we are now seeing the end-game, the end is near as far as the Abu Sayyaf is concerned," the Philippine National Security Adviser, Rolio Golez, said in Manila.

According to Mr. Golez, the group whose strength stood at a little over 1,000 in the regions of Basilan and Sulu in the southern Philippines in May last year, was now down to about 180. Though Mr. Golez sounded confident, the fact remains that



**Four year old Raffy Ulla holds the photograph of his father, Roland Ulla, a kidnap victim of the Abu Sayyaf Muslim extremists, while his mother Joy Ulla and second child Roland II look on from their house in Zamboanga city on Friday. — AFP**

the security forces have not been able to "crush" the Abu Sayyaf so far — a promise that

has been repeatedly made by the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration. The joint Philippine-American military exercises in Basilan have also raised concerns about long-term U.S. involvement in the Philippines. There has been sharp domestic criticism of the Government for allowing American troops to take part in "exercises".

Testifying before a U.S. House of Representatives Committee in Washington, the U.S. Pacific Commander, Dennis Blair, praised the Philippine President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, for her security cooperation, but said the war against the Abu Sayyaf could not be won by "military operations alone". "Improvements in law enforcement, intelligence, economics, business, information, media, academia, community leadership and religion will have enduring and important roles in the battle," Admiral Blair was quoted as saying.

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Narendra Modi risks criminal prosecution under international law

# Crimes without borders

BY A.G. NOORANI

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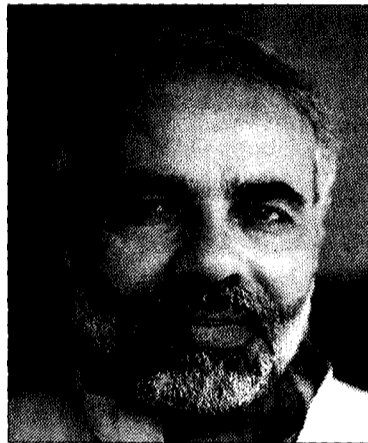
IT DOES no credit to a government which aspires to win for India a permanent seat in the UN Security Council to act so petty as to refuse to permit Amnesty International to send observers to Gujarat and Kashmir. This is compounded by the churlish official comment that we do not need 'lectures' from anybody. Amnesty is no lecturer. It is an internationally recognised sentinel of human rights and its observance is recognised by international law to be a matter of legitimate international concern. It might interest New Delhi to know that for his lapses documented in our press, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi risks arrest and prosecution in Belgium should he be so rash as to step on its territory. Perhaps, in Canada as well. Human rights are of global concern.

On June 26, the appeals court at Brussels ruled a case against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as inadmissible. The case was brought to court by 23 Palestinians a year ago over Sharon's role in the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in Lebanon. The court held that the case could not proceed because Sharon had not been inside Belgium when it was lodged. Sharon was Israel's defence minister when Israeli-allied Christian militants entered Sabra and Chatila in September 1982, killing 800 to 2,000 Palestinian refugees. Culpable neglect is ground for prosecution.

The Palestinians' case was based on a "law of universal jurisdiction" that enables Belgian courts to try people for alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide even if they took place outside Belgium.

Formerly, customary international law granted States jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territory or by or against its nationals abroad. Piracy was regarded as an exception because, as the World Court ruled, "It is an offence against the law of nations." The offender is "the enemy of mankind... whom any nation may in the interests of all capture and punish". To this solitary exception were added, in the last half century, war crimes, genocide, 'crimes against humanity', torture, terrorism and drug-trafficking, hijacking and slave-trading.

International conventions sanction the extension. But they have come to be regarded as embodying principles of customary interna-



THE WORLD IS WATCHING: Augusto Pinochet and Narendra Modi

tional law enforceable even if the State has not signed or ratified the convention. Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie was arrested by French officials in Guyana and tried in France because the French court of appeal ruled in 1988 that crimes against humanity "do not simply fall within the scope of French municipal law but are subject to an international criminal order to which the notions of frontiers and extradition rules arising therefrom are completely foreign".

The effect of this extension of the principle is precisely described by the famous English barrister, Geoffrey Robertson, Q.C. in his book *Crime Against Humanity*. He writes: "Jurisdiction over ordinary crimes depends on a link, usually territorial, between the State of trial and the crime itself, but in the case of crimes against humanity, that link may be found in the simple fact that we are all human beings." It is this "simple fact" which inspired the establishment of Amnesty in 1961 and which sanctions international concern for violations of human rights.

A Canadian law of 1987 permits prosecutions for crimes against humanity if they were regarded, at the time of their commission, as contravening international law or "criminal according to the general principles of law recognised by the community of nations". This, indeed, is the crucial test and it is one prescribed by customary international law even in the absence of a treaty. This is the core of the concept of 'universal jurisdiction' over crimes against humanity.

In October 1998, a Spanish magistrate issued a warrant of arrest

against Chile's former dictator Augusto Pinochet and secured his arrest in London. The next month, a Belgian court recognised universal jurisdiction as a basis for prosecuting Pinochet for crimes against humanity based directly on customary international law and despite the absence of any Belgian law on the matter at the time of the offences he was charged with.

Finally, on February 10, 1999, the King of Belgium promulgated an act passed by Parliament entitled "Act Concerning the Punishment of Grave Breaches of International Humanitarian Law". It recognises a universal jurisdiction for Belgian courts in respect of grave breaches irrespective of the place of their commission or the nationality of the offender or the victim. Definitions of offences are based on those in international conventions.

Article 1 concerns genocide which is defined to include "killing members" of an ethnic, religious or racial group "as such" as also "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group". Crimes against humanity cover murder, rape, torture and "prosecution against any identifiable group". Article 2 prescribes punishments for these offences. Article 4 brings within the sway of the law incitement to commit offences, orders to commit them and "failure to act to the extent available to them by persons who had knowledge of the orders given" to commit these offences. Wilful inaction comes within the ambit of the law.

Article 5 is important. It says: "No political, military or national interest or necessity, even on grounds of reprisals, can justify the breaches."

Godhra, such as it was, is no excuse for the pogrom in Ahmedabad. Article 7 says: "The Belgian courts shall be competent to deal with breaches provided for in the present Act, irrespective of where such breaches have been committed."

The first application of this law was in March 2001, in the Court of Assises. The accused were two Benedictine sisters, a former professor at the National University of Rwanda (since then at the Catholic University of Louvain), and a former businessman and minister (husband of the daughter of the personal doctor of Rwandan President Habiarimana). All four were tried and convicted. But all were physically present in Belgium at the time they were charged with these crimes — unlike Sharon.

However, on April 11, 2000, Belgium issued an international arrest warrant against Abdoulaye Verodia Ndombasi, the Democratic Republic of Congo's acting minister of foreign affairs. The warrant was issued by an examining judge at the Brussels Tribunal of first instance, pursuant to Article 7, and sought his extradition for alleged "grave violations of international humanitarian law". On October 17, 2000, Congo filed an application with the International Court of Justice at the Hague requesting that the court annul Belgium's arrest warrant. It challenged Belgium's assertion of extraterritorial jurisdiction, as well as the propriety of Article 5 of the Belgian law, which negates an official immunity.

The case before the ICJ raised two issues. The first was whether Belgium's universal jurisdiction without any connection to that State is a valid exercise of jurisdiction. The second is whether the exercise of such universal jurisdiction contravenes the 1969 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

On February 14 this year, the ICJ ruled against Belgium on the issue of diplomatic immunity. The issue of universal jurisdiction is open. This includes the Gujarat pogrom. One would prefer that its perpetrators and those guilty by their inaction or otherwise be made to answer to the law in India. That is utterly unlikely. However, for the rest of his life, Narendra Modi is assured of hostility in any country that he decides to visit. In Belgium he will risk criminal prosecution. The best course for him is to vow, like Charles II, never "to go again to (sic) my travels" again.

# Japan-N. Korea to improve ties

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 26. Japan and North Korea today papered over their profound differences and set a deadline of a month to decide whether the two could launch negotiations for the normalisation of their relations. This was the message that the two parties conveyed to the international community through a joint statement issued at the end of their two-day official-level meeting in Pyongyang today.

An official version of the joint statement was that Japan and North Korea shared the view that the normalisation of their ties would be essential for peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region. With this objective, the two sides had begun exploring the possibility of considering a

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"package solution" to settle their disputes. However, the path to progress would be determined by whether Tokyo and Pyongyang could first agree to resume the contentious normalisation talks that have remained suspended for nearly two years.

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Coinciding with today's limited accord at Pyongyang, the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, said he was aware that "a lot of difficult issues" were on the horizon. Yet, he was looking for "a sincere response" from North Korea to Japan's seriousness of purpose. No agreement was either anticipated or achieved at the latest meeting in Pyongyang on the major issues that still separate Japan and North Korea.

Topping the list of Japan's

concerns is its insistence on knowing the whereabouts or the fate of at least 11 of its citizens who are believed to have been kidnapped by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s in connection with its espionage activities. Tokyo is also keen to take the wind out of North Korea's sails as regards its suspected clandestine programme of making weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. The Kim Jong-Il regime in Pyongyang, on its part, has been harping on the need for Japan to apologise for its colonisation of the entire Korean peninsula, including the northern portion, in the first half of last century. Another key North Korean demand is that Japan should pay compensation for its imperialist past.

27 AUG 2002

## Taiwan moves to ease tensions with China

AP-15  
TAIPEI, AUG 7. Amid rising tensions with China, Taiwan's military cancelled a submarine-hunting exercise scheduled for next week, a military spokesman said today.

Though the military would not say whether the decision was directly related to the recent friction with China, the military spokesman said that Taiwan called off the drills to avoid creating new "misunderstandings."

"It was a routine drill, but we were afraid that the public and the media would read too much into it," said the spokesman, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

The exercise, code named "Sea Shark" was purely defensive in nature and was to be held next Thursday on Taiwan's eastern coast, near the

city of Hualien, the spokesman said.

Taiwanese and foreign media were invited to cover the event.

China is Taiwan's biggest military threat.

The two sides split amid civil war in 1949, and Beijing has repeatedly threatened to use force to take over the island.

Tensions flared up after the Taiwanese President, Chen Shui-bian, said last weekend that there was "one country on each side" of the Taiwan Strait — the 160-km-wide body of water that divides the rivals.

Beijing viewed the comment to be a serious challenge to its sacred belief that self-governed Taiwan belongs to China and that the democratic island had no right to seek formal independence. — AP

REF ID: A66202

8 AUG 2002

9/11  
E Asia  
M13

## We stick to our stand on joint patrol: Fernandes

✓

**TOKYO, JULY 8.** Asserting that terrorism emanating from Pakistan continued in Jammu and Kashmir, the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, today said India still stuck to its proposal for joint patrolling with Pakistan of the Line of Control to stop infiltration.

"We are still ready for joint surveillance of the LoC," Mr. Fernandes, who is on a three-day visit to Japan at the invitation of his Japanese counterpart, told presspersons here. But to realise it, there would first have to be "a certain level of understanding" between the two sides as well as "confidence with each other on the borders".

"It will take some time before confidence-building measures can be brought into action... because we have our troops on our side, they have their troops on the other side. They are looking at each other not as friends, not as people having trust in each other."

Pakistan has already dismissed the suggestion as "unworkable".

Cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Fernandes said, continued despite the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's "solemn promise"



**The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, with the Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, at her office in Tokyo on Monday. — PTI**

conveyed to the U.S. President, George Bush, in early June that he would put a "permanent" stop to infiltration and close down militant training camps. After that promise, India had initially acknowledged a decrease in the infiltration of militants across the LoC.

But "we discovered that in mid-June once again terrorism got on the upswing, and what

we now have are ups and downs — there isn't any complete end to terrorism and one never knows when it will crop up again".

He said that just ahead of his departure for Japan there were "a couple of incidents" in which alleged terrorists tried to sneak into India from Pakistan, but they were "shot down on the border". — PTI



# Japan for global monitors

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, MAY 31.** Japan today advocated positioning of international monitors along with Indian and Pakistani observers to verify any reduction of infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC).

"The situation could develop into de-escalation if infiltration is stopped and that is verified by the international community and India," said the special Japanese envoy and Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Seiken Sugiura, who is in the subcontinent with alternatives to de-escalate tension on the Indo-Pak. border.

Maintaining that the international community was continually exchanging views on avoiding an Indo-Pak. military confrontation, Mr. Sugiura said Japan intended consulting the United States and Britain "who share similar concerns and will keep on working on Pakistan to prevent cross-border terrorism and persuade it to take concrete and visible action towards that end".

Speaking to presspersons after rounding off his interactions with senior Indian policy makers, Mr. Sugiura said his Government concurred with Indian sentiments on the situation and appreciated the patience shown so far by New Delhi.

India, however, chose to put across its views explicitly by telling the envoy that its patience was running low after enduring 12 years of Pak-sponsored terrorism and that its war against terrorism had already started.

Giving his impression of discussions with Indian leaders, including the National Security Ad-

viser, Brifesh Mishra, the Japanese Minister said the Indian side had "strong determination" and "there is a strong possibility of the situation escalating into a military confrontation".

He also conveyed Japan's apprehension over the tension escalating into a multi-conflict situation including nuclear exchanges.

Ever since Pakistan conducted the missile tests, there was growing concern over the conflict developing into a nuclear exchange in which the whole subcontinent would suffer immense damage. At the same time, even a small-scale conflict would impact negatively on the global fight against terrorism.

"Such kind of use of force would only benefit terrorists," he said.

During his visit to Islamabad, Mr. Sugiura said, he had "told them the essence of what India is insisting".

In other words, Pakistan was again asked to take substantial and discernible measures to curb cross-border infiltration. To a question, he maintained that the issue of imposing sanctions on the two countries was not aired.

## 'No-first-use policy'

In another development earlier in the day, top Army sources said India remained committed to the "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons though the "other side may have a different perception".

Brushing aside Pakistan's threat to use nuclear weapons even in a conventional war, they said India's no-first-use policy would not constrain its conventional forces in any manner.

THE HINDU

0 1 MAY 2002

# 'India well qualified to be UN permanent member'

For 50 years, India and Japan have shared a relationship that largely remained turbulence-free till the 1998 nuclear tests. India extended a warm hand to Japan when it was annihilated after the Second World War. These gestures haven't been forgotten in Japan. In the War Crimes Tribunal only one Indian justice, Radhavinod Pal, spoke out against the indictment of the Japanese. India was the first country to export iron-ore for Japan's reconstruction, later followed by Brazil and Australia. In fact, there were no animals in Japanese zoos until Jawaharlal Nehru gifted the elephant Indira. In response, Japan's first Official Development Assistance was given to India in 1958 and it has continued to this day. Last year, India received the highest Japanese ODA in the world, nearly 1 billion USD. And in 1991, during the foreign exchange crisis, Japan was the first country to offer emergency loans, even before the IMF and the World Bank. Ambassador Hiroshi Hirabayashi tells SONIA TRIKHA that he now wants to take this relationship into a "higher orbit".

## Cold War era...

THE Cold War put some distance between the two coun-

tries. We were part of the so-called Western Bloc where India was part of the Non-aligned bloc. In our view that was tilted towards the Soviet Union.

## ... and after

IN 1991, India started to reorient its policy. From the non-

aligned movement it moved to the Look East policy and towards a major engagement with western powers. New Delhi's relations with the US and EU and with Japan have again started to warm up. But India needs to build on its economic reforms.

## Money talk

WE want India to look at investment reforms. We hope for investment impediments to be removed. The post-nuclear sanctions have all gone. That chapter is already over. There are no more sanctions.

There are two factors, one, that it is very fast-paced and the other problem is of lack of knowledge about its defence forces. We want to ask China to increase its transparency of military policy. To be a positive force in reduction of nuclear weapons, non-proliferation of nuclear technology.

## Strategic issues

THE Cold War is over but Asia is still plagued by uncertainties. Japan and India are two stable factors here; we are both democracies and mature countries. Both have military forces that are well-disciplined and under civilian control. India is the only developing country where the military has not resorted to a coup. This is one of India's biggest assets. The three guardians of Indian democracy are the press, the judiciary and the military. I'm not sure about the bureaucracy.

We are faced with small sea lanes and if India and Japan safeguard the sea lanes then we will contribute greatly to not only our national security but to Asian stability.

## China factor

CHINA is not a threat but its military build-up is a source of concern for its neighbours.

sources. Also, we must raise momentum for the issue of reforms in the UN, especially in the Security Council. Both India and Japan are well qualified to be permanent members. The Security Council does not reflect the reality of international politics of today. The UNSC is made for the international environment of many decades ago and so now its legitimacy and authority is being eroded. Countries that cannot dream of being permanent UN members are opposing our membership. Pakistan opposes India and Korea opposes Japan.

We want China to not encourage its hardware trade in military goods. Japan and India are not ganging up against China but we want to talk to China so that its neighbours are assured that its build-up is not a threat.

## Global partners

WHEN Yoshiro Mori came to India he agreed with Atal Bihari Vajpayee that we create a global partnership. We agreed to solve such problems as global warming, the fight against terror, drug trafficking, piracy and the development of energy re-

## Gujarat

MY government has made no comment on the issue of Gujarat. But we continue to watch the situation carefully in Gujarat. Hopefully the situation will gradually improve. I believe in the wisdom of India to overcome this.

**'China isn't a threat but its military build-up is a source of concern for its neighbours. We want to ask China to increase transparency of its military policy, to discourage trade in weapons'**

# India and Japan

By N. Krishnaswami

India & Japan

HD-10  
28/9

**T**HE JAPANESE knew India as the country where Lord Buddha was born, and this Buddhist connection is repeated *ad nauseam* from the highest echelons to the common man and woman in both the countries to reinforce "age-old" bonds of friendship between the two. But the Japanese in assimilating Buddhism transferred it from a universal system of belief into something applicable nowhere else in the world. A huge gap exists between their deepest feelings and their outward manifestations and Japan as a nation owes more to the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, than to Gautama Buddha.

There is still a lack of warmth and depth in bilateral relations. This is notwithstanding the role of India in rehabilitating Japan in the comity of nations after World War II and in spite of 50 years of diplomatic relations to date. Reason: the Japanese knew of only two countries, China and India, before they came into contact with the Europeans, and they had negative opinions of both of them, for different reasons. Such an insular thinking continued till the middle of the 20th century with the result that Japan's concept of Asia does not extend beyond Myanmar even today.

In recent times, there has been an apparent increase in interaction between Japan and India — probably indicative of a greater interest among intellectuals and policy-makers in search of new friends. But there is something missing in the entire gamut of Indo-Japan relations. This used to be explained as due to the differences in perceptions, both in the political and the economic spheres, in the post-war years — Japan's cosiness with the U.S. and India's tilt towards the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and India's experiments with planned and regulated economy and Japan's commitment to free market through its own brand of controlled capitalism, on the other. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the inauguration of

economic reforms in India seemed to mark the beginning of a new era in Indo-Japan relations. But a psychological barrier in the minds of the Japanese and an absence of will on the part of India's policy-makers appear to deter the union of hearts.

Yet, the last decade of the last century witnessed Indo-Japan economic relations coming out of hibernation. In the wake of India's economic liberalisation since 1991, if the Japanese have not arrived with the speed ex-

building on the commonalities in various issues — economic, strategic and cultural — and institutionalise a bilateral dialogue at the top level. The two obstacles to better relations — India's nuclear tests and Japan's economic sanctions — were set aside and a new "global partnership" over issues of worldwide importance was envisaged. But Mr. Mori did not fail to mention that both Japan and India had a common goal of creating a nuclear free world and he "strongly" ex-

pected India's early signature to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

ket potential which stands at a staggering \$ 17 billion, Indians must start learning Japanese fast and well, besides taking a quick course in Japanese history, culture, business ethos and practices.

A new Japanese Government under a new and different kind of Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, raised hopes of a real thaw in bilateral relations. The sojourn of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to Japan last December was claimed to be "a success beyond expectations". The Vajpayee-Koizumi discussions underpinned closer economic cooperation and sealed a political understanding through a joint declaration.

But the Indo-Japan relationship can be stabilised only if the sensitivities of the two sides about the nuclear issues and other related matters are sorted out in a mutually acceptable manner. The Japanese have continued to pooh-pooh India's investment climate — its poor infrastructure, high tariffs, red tapism, labour troubles and cultural differences. Contrary to this, several of the top American and Fortune 500 Companies feel comfortable doing business with India. Japan is already India's most important economic partner. But the Japanese are not too effusive by nature, and to get closer to each other the two parties have first to overcome prejudices built up on both sides over time. In view of the pre-eminent position this economic superstar enjoys in the world, Government of India would do well to do some rethinking even on the level of diplomatic relations — if this could be raised to the stature and status of Indian Missions in the U.K., the U.S. and the former Soviet Union. Such a move will not only bolster Japan's self-image but also would give India a privileged position in the corridors of power in Tokyo. Given the level of inhibitions, reservations and mental blocks on both sides, the interaction should be less formal, more frequent and at higher levels if anything worthwhile is to be achieved.

## *There is something missing in the entire gamut of Indo-Japan relations.*

pected in India, there were and are a number of restraining factors on potential investors from Japan. The world's economic giant once, Japan has been suffering from a decade-old "burst" economy. And, in spite of tall claims about India's economic reforms, the results achieved so far have been halting. The Japanese would like hardcore areas such as fiscal deficits, privatisation, infrastructure development etc. taken up seriously and fast, and they also want the reforms to percolate to the States to derive the full benefits of liberalisation.

Pokhran-II of May 1998 brought everything in bilateral relations to a dead halt. The Japanese Government may say its position was "neither more harsh nor more lenient than any other member of the G-8", but it is very difficult to digest this. As the only victim of a nuclear holocaust, it is not surprising that Japan becomes emotional on the subject of nuclear proliferation. But it is sad that Japan is not able to show the same concern when it comes to India's security concerns.

Tokyo's relations with New Delhi, which nose-dived in the wake of Pokhran-II, showed signs of an upswing thanks to the five-day official visit to India of Yoshiro Mori as Prime Minister in August 2000. Mr. Mori's intention was to work with India in

pected India's early signature to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Mr. Mori's eight-point agenda for an Indo-Japan global partnership laid top priority on "IT promotion". He believed that IT was the key to prosperity in the 21st century and could not think of a better country than India to sell his wares. Being perceptive businessmen, the Japanese could visualise the benefit that could accrue to their economy by exploiting India's IT talents. But IT is not capital intensive and cannot be a cure for Japan's ills. On the other hand, the "digital divide" which Mr. Mori wanted to bridge between the haves and the have-nots had several speed breakers in Japan such as the "language divide", the "cultural divide" and the "ethnic divide", besides several bureaucratic hurdles in the form of rules and regulations. But it is to Mr. Mori's credit that he initiated a road map for high level political dialogues at the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister levels on a regular basis, encouraged the setting up of an Eminent Persons Group from both the countries and unshackled the Japanese private sector, leaving it free to invest in India. But the last is not that easy, for we in India are prone to quick-fixes while the Japanese are more interested in a long-term approach. If our IT industry wants to exploit the Japanese mar-

HD-11  
9/9

# New Delhi, Seoul to intensify defence ties

India  
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By C. Raja Mohan

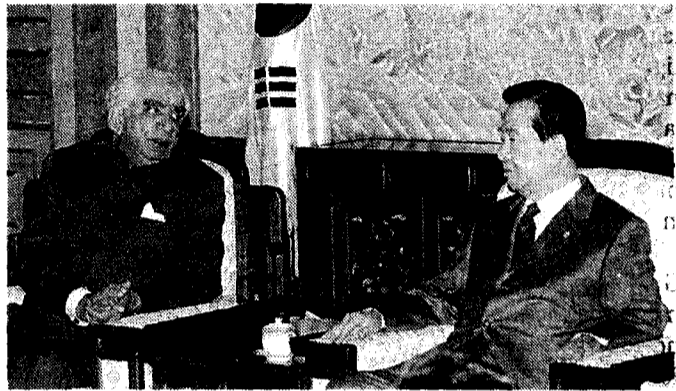
**SEOUL, APRIL 3.** Building on the growing convergence of their interests in Asia, India and South Korea today agreed to intensify contacts in the defence sector, initiate consultations on combating international terrorism, and expand political cooperation in multilateral forums.

These decisions follow an intensive round of consultations between the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, and the South Korean leadership here and reflect the determination of the two sides to inject some strategic content into the bilateral relationship, limited until now to economic cooperation.

Mr. Singh, who arrived here last evening, called on the South Korean President, Kim Dae-jung, and the Foreign Minister, Choi Sung-hong, today. He also chaired the first ever meeting of the joint economic commission. The decisions of the commission, established in 1996, are expected to give a boost to the flagging economic cooperation between the two countries.

Describing his talks with the Korean leadership as "very successful and satisfactory," Mr. Singh emphasised that there were no political or ideological conflicts between the two countries, and that the scope for bilateral cooperation was "immense." At a press conference here, he said India and South Korea had "decided to have consultations on terrorism, security issues, and increase the level of bilateral military exchanges."

India and South Korea are both members of the international coalition against terror-



The South Korean President, Kim Dae-Jung (right), with the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, at the Blue House in Seoul on Wednesday. — AFP

ism and are actively involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The two Foreign Offices will explore ways of enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism and other security issues when they have their next round of formal consultations.

India and South Korea also agreed to expand their bilateral defence engagement, including in the areas of training and exchange of military delegations. South Korea has been a military ally of the United States for more than five decades and India is rapidly expanding defence cooperation with the U.S.

Both India and South Korea are massive importers of energy resources from the Persian Gulf, and future talks between the two countries could involve greater cooperation on preserving the security of the sea-lanes in the Indian Ocean region.

India and South Korea are keen on establishing a stable balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. With no direct conflict of interests between them, they are natural partners in try-

ing to build a new security order in the region.

The two are also going to chair the second meeting of the Community of Democracies here later this year. The initiative to promote greater cooperation among democracies in the world and share their experiences with the new democracies was launched by the U.S. in 2000.

Mr. Singh's meeting with Mr. Kim lasted about 45 minutes and covered the full spectrum of regional, international and bilateral issues. Mr. Kim pointed to the strong affinity of the Korean people towards India and Mr. Singh expressed the Indian admiration of Mr. Kim's pursuit of the Gandhian example of peace and non-violence. He also conveyed the strong Indian support to the efforts of Mr. Kim to find peace and reconciliation in the divided Korean peninsula.

Mr. Singh will address the captains of industry here tomorrow and depart for Thailand.

4 APR 2000

THE HINDU

# Jaswant visit to boost ties with S. Korea

By C. Raja Mohan

SEOUL, APRIL 2. The External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, arrived here today from China to renew political contact with South Korea and intensify the engagement with one of India's important economic partners.

Mr. Singh's three-day visit is being seen as part of a conscious strategy in New Delhi to raise the Indian profile in the East Asian region.

It follows his visit to China and the trip to Japan late last year by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Mr. Singh will call on the South Korean President, Kim Dae-jung, and have substantive consultations with the Foreign Minister, Choi Sung-hung.

The last time an Indian Foreign Minister came here was nearly ten years ago.

Since the end of the Cold

War, political and economic relations between the two countries have moved forward with considerable speed. South Korea is now the fifth largest foreign investor in India.

But the East Asian economic crisis that broke out in 1997 has had some impact on the commercial ties between the two nations.

The Joint Economic Commission, to be chaired by the two Foreign Ministers, will meet tomorrow to explore ways of arresting the current slowdown and intensifying the economic relationship.

Although the Commission was set up in 1996, this is the first time it is meeting. Mr. Singh is also conferring with the heads of large industrial houses — or Chaebols — to encourage them to step up Korean investment flows into India.

India and South Korea have growing ties in the area of sci-

ence and technology, including some strategic sectors. India has sold in the past some heavy water, within the framework of international nuclear regulations, that can be used in the civilian nuclear programme of South Korea. India also launched a South Korean satellite in 1999.

Mr. Singh is expected to review the complex security situation unfolding in North East Asia. After the U.S. President, George Bush, identified the North Korean regime as part of the "axis of evil" at the end of January, tensions in the volatile and divided Korean peninsula have increased.

The Bush administration's reversal of the Clinton administration's approach of engaging the North Korean regime has also complicated Mr. Kim's attempts to make peace and reconcile with the North.

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THE HINDU

## 'Japan expects Pak. to take concrete action'

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JAN. 11.** Japan's Leader of the Opposition, Hatoyama Yuki, today strongly condemned terrorism "in any form" and stated categorically that his country expected the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to take concrete action against terrorists and put an end to terrorism.

Mr. Hatoyama, Leader of Japan's Democratic Party, is here on the invitation of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Today, he met the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, for an hour and held detailed discussion on Kashmir, the India-Pakistan standoff and terrorism. It was a one-to-one meeting for 30 minutes and for the rest of the time, the delegation also participated in the discussions.

At the end of the delegation's three-day visit, he addressed the press jointly with the BJP president, Jana Krishnamurthi, at the BJP central party office here. Mr. Hatoyama said Mr. Vajpayee had explained in detail the manner in which cross-border terrorism took place with trained infiltrators coming across the border and committing acts of terrorism.

"We have the same opinion as the Indian Government that terrorism of all kinds has to be eliminated," Mr. Hatoyama said in response to questions on Pakistan's stand that the incidents in Kashmir were related to the "free-

dom struggle" of the people. Mr. Hatoyama and his delegation, including two MPs, visited Kashmir on Thursday and saw for themselves the damage to the Assembly building in Srinagar.

Another important leader of Japan's Democratic Party will be visiting Islamabad tomorrow. The two visits were not an attempt to strike a "balance" between India and Pakistan, Mr. Hatoyama said, but "it was the effort to talk to people, visit the countries and see for ourselves what the truth is," he said. He agreed that responsibility needed to be fixed for the attacks on the Srinagar Assembly in October and Parliament in December. "Terrorism is terrorism, whatever the reason. Japan condemns all kinds of terrorism," he stated.

Asked whether in his view Pakistan was responsible for terrorist acts in India, Mr. Hatoyama said that "as far as he could see and on the basis of what he had been told, if it was true that trained men come from across the border and carried out terrorist activities, Pakistan was responsible for terrorist acts."

Mr. Hatoyama's visit is part of the BJP's effort to develop party-to-party contacts in several countries. Japan has also been anxious to play a greater role internationally, especially in the context of the global war against terrorism.

**'OBVIOUSLY, PAKISTAN NEEDS TO TAKE STRONG ACTION'**

Tokyo<sup>(11)</sup>  
echoes<sup>(11)</sup>  
Delhi on  
militancy<sup>(11)</sup>

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Jan. 11: The BJP's offensive against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism got a little boost today after a Japanese delegation, led by Hatoyami Yukio, the leader of the Opposition who is from the Democratic Party of Japan, said terrorism in any form or manifestation was "hateful" and had to be eliminated.

Yukio, who had separate meetings today with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and BJP president K. Jana Krishnamurthi, condemned the attacks on the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly — he visited the site in Srinagar yesterday — and Parliament. Addressing the press at the BJP headquarters, Yukio said he expected President Pervez Musharraf to take action against the terrorists in Pakistan and curb their activities at all levels.

The Japanese dignitary said the former Prime Minister of Japan, who is from his party, is expected to call on Musharraf tomorrow in Islamabad and request him to "maintain self-restraint and curb terrorist activities more strongly" and stressed that "obviously Pakistan needs to take strong action".

"Japan does not possess nuclear arms and the reasons are well known. Countries with nuclear arms should be extra cau-



The Japanese delegation, led by parliamentary Opposition leader Hatoyami Yukio, pay homage to the securitymen who were killed in the attack on Parliament. (PTI)

tious and under no circumstances they should be used again," Yukio said.

On his meeting with Vajpayee, Yukio said while the Prime Minister said he wanted to have talks with Pakistan "he made it clear that talks on one hand and terrorism on the other don't go together".

When the leader of the Opposition sought to know from Vajpayee what his pre-condition was for resumption of dialogue

with Pakistan, the Prime Minister's reply was: "As long as terrorist activity is dubbed freedom struggle talks cannot take place."

Vajpayee also informed him that one-third of Jammu and Kashmir was occupied by Pakistan. The remaining two-thirds had merged with India, constitutionally and legally. He also said elections would be held there by the end of the year but added, "Pakistan does not believe

strongly in elections."

Asked if he held Pakistan responsible for cross-border terrorism, Yukio sounded cautious: "At least to the extent we have been told in meetings and discussions that people cross over from Pakistan and do terrorist activities. If Pakistan is responsible for terrorist activities, it needs to be curbed strongly." He said the objective of their visit was "to find out the truth and confirm things with our eyes".

THE TELEGRAPH

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